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India as a Leading Global Power: Opportunities and Challenges in Achieving the Vision of Viksit Bharat @2047

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Abstract
India's aspiration to emerge as a leading global power by 2047, coinciding with the centenary of its independence, reflects a strategic vision that integrates economic growth, democratic governance, technological innovation, sustainable development, and proactive international engagement. As global power shifts from a unipolar to a multipolar order, India is increasingly positioned as a significant actor in regional and global affairs. This paper examines the opportunities and challenges associated with India's rise as a leading global power within the broader framework of *Viksit Bharat @2047*. The study employs a qualitative research design based on the analysis of secondary data drawn from government reports, international organizations, policy documents, and scholarly literature. The findings reveal that India's demographic dividend, expanding economy, digital public infrastructure, strategic location in the Indo-Pacific, growing defence capabilities, and leadership among the Global South provide a strong foundation for enhancing its global influence. At the same time, challenges such as socio-economic disparities, infrastructure gaps, environmental sustainability, regional security concerns, technological dependence, and geopolitical competition continue to shape India's global trajectory. The paper argues that achieving global power status requires balancing domestic development with strategic diplomacy, institutional reforms, innovation-driven growth, and active participation in global governance. It concludes that India's journey towards becoming a developed and influential nation by 2047 will depend on its ability to convert its emerging strengths into long-term strategic advantages while addressing persistent structural constraints.
Keywords: Viksit Bharat @2047; Global Power; Indian Foreign Policy; Global Governance; Indo-Pacific; Strategic Autonomy; Sustainable Development.

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed a profound transformation in the global distribution of power. The gradual transition from a predominantly unipolar international system to an increasingly multipolar order has created opportunities for emerging powers to influence global political, economic, and strategic affairs. Among these emerging powers, India occupies a distinctive position owing to its democratic political system, expanding economy, technological capabilities, youthful population, and growing diplomatic engagement. As the world's most populous country and one of the fastest-growing major economies, India is increasingly viewed as a pivotal actor in shaping the future international order. This transformation has acquired greater significance through the national vision of **Viksit Bharat @2047**, which seeks to transform India into a developed, inclusive, and globally influential nation by the centenary of its independence. The vision emphasizes sustained economic growth, technological advancement, social equity, environmental sustainability, and effective governance as the foundation for India's emergence as a leading global power.

The concept of a **global power** extends beyond military capability or economic size. Contemporary international relations scholarship recognizes that global influence increasingly depends on a combination of economic competitiveness, technological innovation, diplomatic credibility, institutional strength, cultural influence, and the capacity to contribute to solutions for global challenges. In this context, India's rise is characterized not only by rapid economic development but also by its commitment to democratic values, strategic autonomy, development partnerships, and active participation in multilateral institutions. India's leadership during its G20 Presidency, expanding engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, increasing defence cooperation with strategic partners, and advocacy for the interests of the Global South illustrate its growing international profile. Simultaneously, initiatives such as Digital India, Make in India, Startup India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and investments in Digital Public Infrastructure have enhanced India's developmental capacity and international reputation as a model of inclusive digital transformation.

India's foreign policy has also undergone significant evolution over the past two decades. While preserving its long-standing principle of strategic autonomy, India has expanded strategic partnerships with major powers, strengthened regional cooperation, diversified economic diplomacy, and actively participated in global governance initiatives. The country's increasing role in organizations such as the G20, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Quad, BIMSTEC, and the International Solar Alliance reflects its aspiration to contribute to a stable, rules-based, and multipolar international system. Moreover, India's achievements in vaccine diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, renewable energy, and space technology have reinforced its image as a responsible and constructive global stakeholder.

Despite these remarkable achievements, India's aspiration to become a leading global power is accompanied by several structural and strategic challenges. Persistent socio-economic inequalities, regional disparities, infrastructure deficits, environmental pressures, energy security concerns, technological dependence in critical sectors, and human capital constraints continue to affect the pace of national development. Externally, India's geopolitical environment remains complex, shaped by border disputes, maritime security challenges in the Indo-Pacific, great-power competition, evolving trade dynamics, and the need to balance relations with diverse strategic partners. These factors underscore that global leadership depends not only on economic expansion but also on institutional resilience, innovation capacity, and effective governance.

Against this backdrop, the present study critically examines the opportunities and challenges associated with India's emergence as a leading global power within the broader framework of **Viksit Bharat @2047**. Unlike studies that focus exclusively on economic growth or foreign policy, this paper adopts a multidisciplinary perspective by integrating political, economic, strategic, technological, and governance dimensions. It argues that India's long-term success will depend upon its ability to strengthen domestic institutions while simultaneously expanding its influence within regional and global governance structures. The study further contends that India's global aspirations require a balanced strategy that combines sustainable development, technological self-reliance, democratic governance, and proactive diplomacy.

The paper seeks to address the following research questions:

- What are the principal opportunities that support India's emergence as a leading global power?
- What domestic and international challenges could constrain India's global aspirations?
- What policy measures are necessary to realize the objectives of **Viksit Bharat @2047**?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the growing academic discourse on India's evolving global role and offers policy-oriented insights into the strategic pathways that can facilitate India's transformation into a developed, equitable, sustainable, and globally influential republic by 2047.

2. Literature Review

The emergence of India as a significant global actor has attracted considerable scholarly attention over the past two decades. Existing literature broadly examines India's rise through the dimensions of economic development, strategic autonomy, foreign policy, regional security, global governance, and soft power. While there is a growing consensus that India is an emerging power, scholars differ on the extent to which it has acquired the capabilities necessary to exercise sustained global leadership.

One strand of literature emphasizes India's economic transformation as the principal driver of its growing international influence. Rapid GDP growth, expanding digital infrastructure, a vibrant innovation ecosystem, and increasing integration into global value chains have enhanced India's strategic relevance in the global economy. Government initiatives such as *Make in India*, *Digital India*, *Startup India*, and the *National Infrastructure Pipeline* are widely regarded as important milestones in strengthening India's competitiveness and developmental capacity.

A second body of research focuses on India's evolving foreign policy and strategic engagement. Scholars argue that India's external relations have shifted from traditional non-alignment towards strategic autonomy, enabling the country to deepen partnerships with major powers while maintaining an independent foreign policy. India's active participation in forums such as the G20, BRICS, Quad, BIMSTEC, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and the International Solar Alliance demonstrates its increasing willingness to shape regional and global governance. Studies also highlight India's role in promoting the interests of the Global South through development partnerships, humanitarian assistance, and South-South cooperation.

Another significant area of scholarship examines India's growing soft power. Democratic institutions, cultural diversity, yoga, Ayurveda, cinema, education, diaspora networks, digital public infrastructure, and vaccine

diplomacy have collectively strengthened India's international image. Several researchers argue that India's ability to combine economic progress with democratic governance provides it with a distinctive comparative advantage in an increasingly polarized international system.

Despite these positive assessments, many scholars caution that India's rise remains constrained by persistent domestic and external challenges. Income inequality, unemployment, infrastructure deficits, educational disparities, environmental degradation, energy security concerns, and regional imbalances continue to affect inclusive development. Similarly, geopolitical challenges—including border disputes, maritime competition in the Indo-Pacific, technological dependence, and an evolving global strategic environment—require sustained policy responses if India is to translate its potential into enduring global influence.

Although the existing literature provides valuable insights into India's growing international role, relatively few studies examine the country's global power aspirations within the integrated framework of **Viksit Bharat @2047**. Much of the available research concentrates either on foreign policy or economic development, without adequately connecting domestic transformation with international leadership. This paper attempts to bridge that gap by analysing how India's internal development agenda and external strategic engagement together shape its prospects of becoming a leading global power by 2047.

3. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a **qualitative and analytical research design** based exclusively on secondary sources of information. Data have been collected from Government of India publications, NITI Aayog reports, Ministry of External Affairs documents, Reserve Bank of India publications, World Bank reports, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations reports, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), policy papers, peer-reviewed journal articles, and recent scholarly books on Indian foreign policy and international relations.

The study follows a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the opportunities and challenges associated with India's emergence as a leading global power within the framework of **Viksit Bharat @2047**. Secondary data are critically interpreted using the perspectives of Realism, Liberal Institutionalism, and Constructivism to understand India's strategic behaviour, multilateral engagement, and evolving global role. Wherever appropriate, recent statistical indicators and international indices are incorporated to support the analysis.

4. India's Rise as a Leading Global Power: Opportunities

India's aspiration to become a leading global power is supported by several structural, economic, technological, diplomatic, and demographic advantages. These strengths collectively enhance the country's ability to influence regional and global affairs while contributing to the realization of **Viksit Bharat @2047**.

4.1 Economic Growth and Global Economic Influence

India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing major economies, demonstrating remarkable resilience despite global economic uncertainties. Strong domestic consumption, expanding manufacturing, increasing foreign direct investment, and improvements in infrastructure have strengthened India's economic foundations. The government's emphasis on production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes, logistics development, industrial corridors, and digital financial inclusion has enhanced India's attractiveness as an investment destination. As global supply chains diversify, India possesses significant opportunities to position itself as a major manufacturing and innovation hub.

4.2 Demographic Dividend and Human Capital

India's youthful population represents one of its greatest strategic assets. With one of the world's largest working-age populations, the country has the potential to sustain long-term economic growth through investments in education, skill development, entrepreneurship, and innovation. If effectively harnessed, this demographic advantage can substantially enhance productivity, technological advancement, and global competitiveness.

4.3 Digital Transformation and Technological Leadership

India's achievements in digital governance have attracted global recognition. Digital Public Infrastructure—including Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), DigiLocker, and CoWIN—has transformed public service delivery and financial inclusion. These innovations have demonstrated scalable governance models that are increasingly being studied and adopted by other developing countries. Simultaneously, growing investments in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, cybersecurity, quantum technologies, and digital entrepreneurship are expanding India's technological capabilities.

4.4 Strategic Location and Indo-Pacific Significance

India occupies a strategically important position at the centre of the Indian Ocean, connecting major global trade routes linking Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. This geographical advantage enhances India's role in maritime security, regional connectivity, disaster response, and economic cooperation. India's active participation in the Indo-Pacific strategy further strengthens its geopolitical relevance.

4.5 Leadership in Global Governance

India's diplomatic influence has expanded considerably in recent years. Its successful G20 Presidency, advocacy for African Union membership in the G20, active engagement in BRICS, Quad, SCO, and the International Solar Alliance reflect its growing leadership in multilateral diplomacy. India has consistently emphasized reform of global institutions to ensure greater representation for developing countries, particularly through its longstanding demand for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council.

4.6 Defence Modernization and Strategic Autonomy

India has significantly enhanced its defence preparedness through modernization, indigenous defence manufacturing, and strategic partnerships. The emphasis on *Atmanirbhar Bharat* in defence production, combined with increasing naval capabilities and defence diplomacy, contributes to national security while strengthening India's credibility as a responsible regional security provider. At the same time, India's policy of strategic autonomy enables it to maintain balanced relations with multiple global powers without entering rigid military alliances.

. Challenges to India's Global Leadership

Although India possesses significant strengths to emerge as a leading global power, its journey towards **Viksit Bharat @2047** is accompanied by several structural, economic, technological, environmental, and geopolitical challenges. Addressing these issues is essential for sustaining long-term development and strengthening India's international standing.

5.1 Socio-economic Inequality and Inclusive Development

Despite remarkable economic growth, socio-economic disparities continue to remain one of India's most pressing developmental challenges. Regional imbalances, income inequality, unemployment, and unequal access to quality education and healthcare affect inclusive growth. While India's expanding economy has lifted millions out of poverty, the benefits of development have not been distributed uniformly across regions and social groups. A leading global power must possess not only economic strength but also high levels of human development, social cohesion, and equitable opportunities. Therefore, reducing inequality through inclusive public policies, skill development, and employment generation remains central to India's long-term aspirations.

5.2 Human Capital and Skill Development

India's demographic dividend offers enormous opportunities, but it can become a liability if adequate investments in education, research, healthcare, and vocational training are not sustained. The rapidly changing global economy increasingly demands advanced skills in artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, semiconductor technology, cybersecurity, and digital innovation. Strengthening higher education institutions, promoting research and development, and improving industry-academia collaboration are essential for enhancing India's global competitiveness. The World Bank has similarly emphasized that sustained investment in human capital and higher labour-force participation are essential if India is to achieve developed-country status by 2047.

5.3 Infrastructure and Urban Development

Although India has significantly expanded highways, airports, ports, railways, and digital connectivity over the past decade, infrastructure gaps continue to constrain industrial productivity and investment. Rapid urbanization has increased pressure on housing, transportation, water resources, sanitation, and public services. Sustainable urban planning, smart city development, and resilient infrastructure are therefore indispensable for supporting long-term economic growth. International assessments suggest that sustained investment in infrastructure and productivity-enhancing reforms will remain crucial to achieving India's development ambitions.

5.4 Climate Change, Energy Security and Sustainability

Climate change represents one of the most significant long-term challenges confronting India. Increasing temperatures, irregular monsoon patterns, water scarcity, natural disasters, and environmental degradation threaten agricultural productivity, public health, and economic stability. Simultaneously, India's growing economy requires reliable and affordable energy supplies. Balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability will require accelerated investment in renewable energy, green hydrogen, energy efficiency,

climate-resilient infrastructure, and sustainable urban development. NITI Aayog's studies on **Viksit Bharat and Net Zero** emphasize that achieving both development and sustainability will require large-scale investment, technological innovation, and international cooperation.

5.5 Geopolitical Competition and Regional Security

India operates within an increasingly complex geopolitical environment characterized by strategic competition among major powers. Border disputes, maritime security concerns in the Indo-Pacific, cross-border terrorism, cyber threats, and regional instability continue to influence India's security environment. Simultaneously, India seeks to maintain strategic autonomy while strengthening partnerships with countries such as the United States, Japan, Australia, France, and European nations without compromising its long-standing independent foreign policy. Maintaining this diplomatic balance will remain one of the defining challenges of India's foreign policy over the coming decades.

5.6 Technological Dependence and Innovation Capacity

The future global order will increasingly be shaped by technological leadership. Although India has emerged as a global leader in digital governance and information technology services, dependence on imported semiconductor technologies, critical minerals, advanced manufacturing equipment, and emerging technologies remains a strategic concern. Strengthening indigenous research, innovation ecosystems, intellectual property generation, and public-private collaboration will be necessary for achieving technological self-reliance and enhancing India's global competitiveness.

6. Policy Recommendations

India's aspiration to become a leading global power by 2047 requires a comprehensive strategy that simultaneously strengthens domestic governance and enhances international engagement. Based on the foregoing analysis, the following policy recommendations are proposed.

First, India should continue to prioritize **high and inclusive economic growth** by expanding manufacturing, promoting innovation, encouraging entrepreneurship, and improving the ease of doing business. Structural reforms that increase productivity and labour-force participation will be essential for sustaining long-term growth.

Second, greater investment in **education, healthcare, research, and skill development** is necessary to fully utilize India's demographic dividend. Universities, research institutions, and industry must collaborate more effectively to promote innovation and technological advancement.

Third, India should strengthen **digital governance and emerging technologies** by expanding investments in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, cybersecurity, quantum computing, biotechnology, and space technology. These sectors will determine future global competitiveness.

Fourth, **climate-resilient and sustainable development** should become an integral component of national planning. Accelerating renewable energy deployment, promoting green industrialization, strengthening climate adaptation, and advancing the circular economy will contribute simultaneously to economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Fifth, India's foreign policy should continue to strengthen **strategic autonomy** while deepening partnerships with developed and developing countries alike. Leadership in the Global South, active participation in multilateral institutions, and advocacy for reforms in global governance should remain central pillars of India's diplomacy.

Finally, governance reforms should focus on enhancing institutional efficiency, transparency, cooperative federalism, judicial effectiveness, and evidence-based policymaking. Strong institutions remain indispensable for sustaining economic growth, social stability, and international credibility.

7. Conclusion

India's aspiration to emerge as a leading global power by 2047 represents a transformative national project that extends beyond economic development to encompass strategic influence, technological leadership, democratic governance, and sustainable development. The country's expanding economy, demographic advantage, digital transformation, strategic geographical location, defence modernization, and increasing diplomatic engagement provide a strong foundation for achieving this objective.

Nevertheless, India's global ambitions will ultimately depend on its ability to address persistent domestic and international challenges. Inclusive growth, human capital development, infrastructure modernization, climate resilience, technological innovation, and institutional reforms are essential for converting India's potential into

enduring national strength. Equally important is the need to maintain strategic autonomy while constructively engaging with an increasingly complex and multipolar international order.

The vision of **Viksit Bharat @2047** should therefore be understood not merely as an economic target but as a comprehensive national development framework that integrates prosperity, equity, sustainability, and responsible global leadership. If supported by sustained reforms, cooperative federalism, innovation-driven growth, and proactive diplomacy, India possesses the capacity to emerge not only as a developed nation but also as one of the principal architects of the twenty-first-century international order. This objective, however, demands consistent policy implementation, institutional resilience, and broad societal participation over the coming decades. Recent analyses by the World Bank similarly conclude that maintaining high growth, deepening structural reforms, investing in human capital, and embedding sustainability are critical if India is to realize its aspiration of becoming a developed economy by 2047.

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