

EVOLVING DYNAMICS OF  
**INDIA'S**  
FOREIGN  
**POLICY**



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# INTRODUCTION



India has risen as a major player in the geo-politics at an international level. Part of this rise can be attributed to its dynamic and adaptive Foreign Policy. With changes in regimes, India's emphasis on its Foreign Policy has wavered over the years in response to shifting global geopolitical dynamics. Some things have remained constant; some things, however, have brought changes in the position of the country in the global world.

The dynamics of India's foreign policy is something that affect us as citizens and residents of India in some form or the other. In order to understand this, we need to understand the meaning of the term 'Foreign Policy', what is India's Foreign Policy, how has India's foreign policy evolved over the years, how India will relate to a changing global landscape, what are the challenges for India in a contemporary world that is constantly evolving and what strategies would be relevant for India to make a path ahead that would serve its national priorities, as well as claim its place on the international stage. In this edition, we will attempt to answer these questions.

## WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY THE TERM 'FOREIGN POLICY' ?



- Foreign Policy is a **set of principles and decisions**, a plan of action and a thought out course of action adopted and used by a nation **for conducting relations with other nations** and all international actors with a view **to secure the preferred and defined goals** of her national interest.
- Foreign Policy objectives are **achieved through 'Diplomacy'** which is a profession, skill and art of managing country's relations with the rest of the world.
- Key principles for the development of any foreign policy** are:
  - Maintaining geographical integrity and political independence with other states.
  - Accelerating the process of social and economic development within the state.
  - Increasing the individual strength of a state.
  - The foreign policy goals of a state must complement international standards.

### India's foreign policy has Four important goals:



- Protect India from traditional and non-traditional threats.
- Create an external environment which is conducive for an inclusive development of India.
- Ensure that India's voice is heard on global forums and that India is able to influence world opinion on issues of global dimensions.
- Engage and protect Indian Diaspora.

## WHAT ARE THE CORE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND FEATURES OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY?



The underlying principles of India's foreign policy are rooted in the Indian ethos, culture and traditional Indian thinking and helps achieve foreign policy goals. These principles are potrayed through **PANCHSHEEL**:

- PANCHSHEEL**, or Five Virtues were formally enunciated in the India-China Agreement in 1954 and later evolved to act as the basis of conduct of international relations globally. These Five Principles are:



**MUTUAL  
RESPECT FOR EACH  
OTHER'S TERRITORY-  
RIAL INTEGRITY &  
SOVEREIGNTY**



**MUTUAL  
NON-  
AGGRESSION**



**MUTUAL  
NON-  
INTERFERENCE**



**EQUALITY  
AND MUTUAL  
BENEFIT**



**PEACEFUL  
CO-EXISTENCE**

## THE ABOVE FIVE PRINCIPLES FORM THE BASIS OF FOLLOWING FEATURES OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY:



- ➡ **Opposition to Export of Ideologies and Change of Regimes:** India believes in and supports Democracy; however, India does not believe in the export of ideologies nor does it endorse the idea of regime change or violation of territorial integrity in a particular country by use of force or other means (Ex. US interventions in Iraq, Libya, Syria or Russia's intervention in Georgia, Ukraine etc.).
  - ❑ At the same time, India also promotes democracy by proactively providing assistance in capacity building and strengthening the institutions of democracy, albeit with the explicit consent of the concerned Government. (Ex. In Afghanistan).
- ➡ **India does not endorse unilateral sanctions /military actions** against any individual country by another country or a group of countries unless these sanctions/military actions have been approved by the United Nations as a result of international consensus. India therefore contributes only to such Peace-Keeping military operations which are part of the UN Peace-keeping Forces.
- ➡ **Intervention but not Interference:** India does not believe in interference in the internal affairs of other countries but supports quick and timely intervention in case the country has the potential of impinging upon India's national interests. (Examples: Bangladesh (1971), IPKF in Sri Lanka (1987-90), Maldives (1988)).
- ➡ **Constructive Engagement over Aggression:** India believes that violent retaliation and confrontation can only complicate the matters. However, India resorts to aggression as and when situation demands. Examples include Surgical strike to target terrorist –launch pads in POK and Air Strike at terrorist camps in Balakote.
- ➡ **Strategic Autonomy:** Since independence, India has vowed to chart an independent course in its foreign relations and partnerships and follow **proactive neutrality through Non-Alignment**. Accordingly, India believes in issue based partnerships and shuns alliances, particularly military alliances.
  - ❑ For example, by abstaining from voting against Russia in the UNSC, while insisting on an immediate cessation of violence, India have managed to showcase its neutrality.
- ➡ **Global Consensus on Issues of Global Dimensions:** India advocates a global debate on issues of global dimensions such as world trade regime, climate change, terrorism, intellectual property rights, global governance etc.
- ➡ **Diplomatic Outreach:** It helped a qualitative upgrade in existing bilateral relationships and enhanced coordination on a range of regional and global issues. It revitalised and reinvigorated relations and at the same time opened new doors for mutually nourishing partnerships in a wide array of areas.

### Indian Diplomacy: Indian in thought

Indian diplomacy is guided by bearings that arise from Indian thinking influenced over centuries by **Kautilya's Arthshastra** or ancient texts such as the **Mahabharata** and the **Bhagvad Gita**.

The idea of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** (The World is One Family) portrays India's philosophy of conducting International Relations. This entails:

- o Tradition of the Middle Path
- o Human-centric globalization
- o Strategic Independence





# EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Three main phases of the global political and security order and India's Foreign Policy response to the same:

## 1947 to 1991:

In the bipolar world order dominated by two rival super powers, the USA and the USSR, **India followed the policy of non-alignment** so as to overcome its severe political, social and economic stress and degradation, after two centuries of colonial rule.

## 1991 to 2008:

With USSR split, foreign currency crisis in India and emergence of unipolar world order dominated by USA, India weaned itself away from non-alignment to a **multi-polar alignment**, incorporated globalization and paid greater attention to its immediate neighbourhood.

## 2008 to the present times:

Financial crisis and recession was followed by Rise of China and other emerging countries and multilateral institutions and shifting of fulcrum of global power from the West to the East. Evolving Indian diplomacy is primarily focused on the USA, China, other P-5 member countries, and our neighbourhood. Africa has loomed into focus along with Latin America and **Economic diplomacy has taken the pole** above that of political and security issues.

## STABILITY AND DYNAMISM IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY DOMAIN



### Static factors which contribute to stability in India's foreign policies are:



Political stability



Socio-religious balance



Reduction and elimination of poverty



Strategic independence



The continuity provided by the Indian Foreign Service (IFS)



### Factors that make India's Foreign Policy process dynamic and responsive are:



India's geopolitical potential



India's military might



Demographic dividend



China's aggression



Rivalry among countries



Digitization



Indian diaspora



Growing Indian market



Crisis situation like covid-19





Putting the health sector on priority, covid 19 gave a different dimension to India's foreign policy. This COVID crisis also brought up many opportunities for India to cement its position as a responsible and constructive member of the global community.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY DURING COVID-19:

- **Health Diplomacy:** Through initiatives like Operation Sanjeevani, Vaccine Maitri, the deployment of medical Rapid Response Teams in several countries, the linking of health professionals and pooling of health capacities, and supply of essential medical products, India has reinforced its credentials as a provider of net health security and first responders thereby condoning its belief of '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**'.
  - ❑ India's approach **contrasted with the "vaccine nationalism"** that characterized pandemic policy in the United States and other high-income countries.
- **Putting Domestic Priorities First:** With burgeoning domestic needs in the fight against COVID-19's second wave and faltering domestic vaccine production, India banned export of vaccines and accepted foreign aid after 17 years.
- **Commitment to Multilateralism:** India's push for reformed multilateralism became stronger than ever before during the crisis followed by the failure of UN and WHO to tackle the crisis effectively.
- **Digital Diplomacy:** India has been agile in its efforts in continuing our foreign policy operations through its virtual participation in G20 and NAM Summits, the Global Vaccination Summit, BRICS, SCO, and RIC meetings.
- **Commitment to Regional Cooperation:** Initiatives like launching dedicated fund to fight the pandemic, high level engagements through BIMSTEC and SAARC summits, providing aid to ASEAN Covid-19 Response Fund and launching Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES) highlighted India's leadership role in promoting regional cooperation to deal with the crisis.

## WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC THRUST AREAS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE PRESENT TIME?



### PRIORITIZING AN INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOOD



- **Neighbourhood first policy:** It aims to address the trust deficit, reset relations and build bridges of friendship and understanding through mutually beneficial cooperation through Platforms like SAARC and BIMSTEC. A massive effort has been made to improve connectivity in our neighbourhood.
  - ❑ Railway projects with Bangladesh and Nepal; Chabahar and Sittwe Ports in Iran and Myanmar; and multi-modal transport corridors in Bangladesh are some concrete examples of progress.
- **Outreach towards extended neighbourhood:** Not only to bolster its economic and strategic engagements with the region but also to emerge as a potential security balancer in the region. Act East Policy, Look West policy, Connect Central Asia policy and India-USA-Japan-Australia Quad are pointers in that direction.

### LEVERAGING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE INDIA'S DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT



- **Strategic Balancing of relations between major powers:** India has the ability to balance comprehensive strategic relations with major powers like US and Russia while maintaining strategic autonomy.
  - ❑ India has repeatedly stressed that it views its relationship with Russia and the US independent of each other and will not let either of them dictate its foreign policy.
- **Outreach to middle powers:** India's ties with Germany, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, supports objectives in enhancing its economic and technological growth. Likewise, successful outreach to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia has enhanced India's quest for stable energy supplies and increased foreign investment while also limiting their traditional support for Pakistan.
- **Diplomacy for Development:** India aims to bring innovative and inclusive solutions to foster development. Foreign collaborations for several flagship schemes such as Skill India, Smart Cities, Make in India, Digital India for creating a new India by 2022 are steps in this direction.

- ↻ **Entering into Free Trade Agreements:** India has signed various FTA's with countries like Japan, Korea, UAE and with groupings like ASEAN to accelerate economic integration and making India a vital cog in the Global supply chains.

## ENSURING A STABLE AND MULTIPOLAR BALANCE OF POWER



- ↻ **Commitment to multilateral and plurilateral solutions and understandings:** India participate and shape the thinking of multilateral organisations such as UNSC, COP26, G7, BRICS and SCO and is the major supporter of plurilateral initiatives such as BIMSTEC and the Indian Ocean Rim Association.
  - Plurilateral initiatives also known as minilaterals allow more like-minded nations to come together for a purpose and has emerged as a reaction to failing multilateralism.
- ↻ **Upholding a rules-based international order:** India is committed to evolve a world order underpinned by the rule of law, transparency, freedom of navigation in the international seas, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and peaceful resolution of disputes.

## ADVANCING INDIAN REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP ON MATTERS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE



- ↻ **To be a force for global good:** With its ethos of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, India have been at the forefront of extending humanitarian assistance in natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods even during the darkest days of the pandemic.
- ↻ **Support for human security:** India has made an enormous effort to improve the security situation in its neighborhood and extended neighborhood. This include measures such as anti-piracy patrols; pollution control and maritime search and rescue operations; joint exercises etc.
- ↻ **Responsible and constructive actor on the world stage:** India is an active participant in the global conversations on climate change, terrorism, connectivity and maritime security. As a responsible global power, India has co-founded institutions such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure to bring about greater cooperation in renewable energy and disaster preparedness and relief.
- ↻ **Development of defence capabilities:** There has been a renewed focus towards achieving self-reliance in defence capabilities so as to reduce its dependence on other countries and also to enhance India's global stature.
  - Recently commissioned INS Vikrant, is a significant milestone in India's pursuit of self-reliance.

## LEVERAGING SOFT POWER POTENTIAL TO ADVANCE INDIA'S GLOBAL INFLUENCE



- ↻ **Non-Prescriptive Development assistance:** This involves a judicious mix of outright grants and soft loans linked to project/ commodity exports. Also, India is judiciously working to ensure that the "goodwill" thus earned must get translated into concrete political and economic dividends.
- ↻ **Deployment of soft power resources:** India's spiritualism, yoga, movies and television soaps, classical and popular dance and music, its principles of non-violence, democratic institutions, plural society and cuisine have all attracted people across the world.



## SHIFTING OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST

United States, India, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to set up a new joint working group often touted as '**new Middle East quad**' to coordinate strategy. India partnering with the US, Israel, and the UAE in the region is a reflection of how fundamentally India's foreign policy in the Middle East has shifted. Keeping its distance from the United States, Israel, and the Persian Gulf states on regional issues has long been India's default mode in the Middle East.

### KEY REASONS BEHIND THE GROWING SYNERGIES WITH THE MIDDLE-EAST COUNTRIES:

- ↻ **Maritime security:** Strait of Hormuz situated between Persian and Gulf regions is very important for securing India's economic and security interests.
- ↻ **Energy security:** Cordial relations with the major oil and gas suppliers to India, including Iran, UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia is a must.
- ↻ **To counter Pakistani influence in the Gulf region:** Using the platform of OIC and making connections with Arab countries, Pakistan is trying to get support on Kashmir issue.
- ↻ **Rising importance of Israel:** Israel has been very important to India due to technical, intelligence, and military support. While India's Muslims hold a soft-corner towards Palestine. India pursues a careful balance of diplomacy between Israel and Palestine
- ↻ **To combat international terrorism:** Middle-east has been the hub of international terrorism through groups like Al Qaida and ISI in Iraq, Syria, Jordon, Yemen and other places.



India has transitioned from a protest voice on the fringes of global climate policy to one that is actively shaping international efforts to combat climate change. Shifts in India's stance runs parallel to its domestic priorities and its rising developmental status in the world.



**The Beginning  
(1972-1990s)**

**Voice of Protest**

- At the first global conference on the environment in **Stockholm, 1972**, Indian PM's speech initiated an intellectual tradition in **Indian climate policy that pits socio economic development against environmental protection** and accuses the developed countries of the North for causing global environmental problems.
  - Report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), called 'Global Warming in an Unequal World' and accused developed countries of **“carbon colonialism”**.



**Early 1990s till  
2000s**

**Active role in  
global climate  
negotiations**

- Starting with the **UNFCCC at Rio Earth Summit in 1992**, India identified itself with the Group of 77 (G77), i.e. developing nations who urged developed countries to take action on climate change while arguing that developing nations might only take on voluntary commitments conditional on receipt of finance and technology transfers from industrialised nations.
  - Subsequently, **The principles of Equity, Common But Differentiated Responsibilities' (CBDR) and Respective Capabilities(RC) were championed by India.**
  - The negotiations eventually resulted in the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 which emphasised the continued relevance of the differentiation between nations with respect to the burden of responsibility for climate action.



**2000 till 2011**

**Shift towards  
more realistic  
assessments**

- There was a **shift in the climate discourse** in India as a result of a growing recognition of the **co-benefits approach** where policies to address climate change are mainstreamed into domestic priorities of poverty alleviation and economic growth.
  - In 2002, **India reversed its scepticism of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)** of the Kyoto Protocol and began to gain funding for projects in India.
  - At COP 13 in Bali in 2007, **India accepted that developing countries should participate in the global mitigation effort**, on a voluntary basis in line with their capabilities.
  - On a domestic level, **India released its National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** in 2008. India along with other BASIC countries **announced voluntary targets to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP.**



**2011 onwards**

**Shaping of  
International  
processes with  
strong Indian  
engagement**

- COP17 in Durban in 2011 marked a **shift towards a bottom up architecture** for climate governance wherein all countries would make pledges for climate action under a system of peer review.
  - At COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013, the **idea of Nationally Determined Commitments** was first mooted and eventually led to the final version of **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).**
  - **India also submitted its INDCs, launched the International Solar Alliance on the side lines of COP 21 and is aggressively pushing for expansion of its renewable energy program.**







## REGIONAL INSTABILITY AND NON-CONDUCTIVE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT



- **India and its immediate periphery:** India often lacks the economic instruments of influence—deep trade links, significant financial investments, or extensive physical connectivity—and cannot easily utilize its military forces without putting at risk other national goals.
  - ❑ This often unnerves its immediate neighbours and prompts them to look outside the subcontinent for sources of countervailing assistance and support.
- **China's emergence as one of the pre-eminent powers:** China's rise in the international system has immense consequences for India because of factors, like the unresolved border dispute; Chinese military modernization; uncertainties regarding Chinese intentions; its relation with India's neighbours; the potential expansion of its maritime power into the Indian Ocean; sharing of river waters; the potential for resource competition in West Asia, Latin America and Africa and many others.
- **Engaging Pakistan:** Repeated cease fire violations at LOC and the bellicose statements from Pakistan strongly suggest that a period of increasing tension, instability and heightened possibility of terrorist and militant attacks is here to stay.
- **Churning in the Europe:** Ukraine conflict has potentially significant implications for the Indo-Pacific and US-India cooperation. On the one hand, Russia's success may embolden China's territorial claims in the Indo-Pacific region which could impede US-India strategic cooperation in the region. On the other hand, differences between US and India's approach to conflict have potential to create tensions in their relationship.
- **India being a swing power in the asia-pacific region:** Its military ties with Moscow, the economic importance of Beijing and America as a strategic counterweight to China are the major variables that India often have to balance according to its priorities.
- **Reshaping middle east:** Stability and democracy are two key factors that India seeks to restore in the region to secure her vital interests that include the safety and security of her expatriates, energy supplies, investments and projects in the region, combating maritime security, piracy and the sensitiveness of her vast Muslim community.

## EXTERNAL ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING INDIA'S INTEREST



- **Stressed economic situation:** A tardy recovery from the 2008 financial crisis and a slowdown in global trade are challenges independent of and predating the pandemic induced slowdowns. Economic realities imposed by the pandemic have further revealed vulnerabilities associated with global supply chains.
- **India's dependence for its energy security:** Despite of other alternate sources of energy available today, India's dependence on hydrocarbon sources such as coal and crude oil, continues to be very high. Such a dependence on imports has exposed our economy to the oil price and availability shocks that take place from time to time.
- **Disintegrating global frameworks for cooperation:** The COVID pandemic has bolstered the prevailing inefficacy of these organisations in arriving at unanimous decision and questioned their utility to address global challenges. Due to vested interests and institutional inertia, consensus seems impossible and reforms remain elusive.
  - ❑ For instance, the Doha round of trade talks has been abandoned, while the expansion of permanent seats at the UN Security Council appears unattainable.

## WEAKNESSES AT HOME



- **Systemic constraints:** Factors such as state's interference in foreign policy matters as in Teesta water agreement, disrupted Indian economy post pandemic, lack of global competitiveness of Indian products and substandard domestic investment in human capital hampers the full realisation of foreign policy.
- **Lack of resources for effective engagement with diaspora:** Lack of authentic database, exclusion of low skilled diasporic population, high number of unresolved greivances and lack of a clear diaspora policy hinders the effective engagement with Indian diaspora.





- **Evolving maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific** : Nature of the threats has expanded from the 'traditional', based on hard-core power imbalances, to the 'non-traditional', such as climate change, piracy and other trans-national crime, illegal fishing etc. thereby **constraining the exploitation of opportunities**.
- **Water and food security**: The steady rise in the global population, finite resources like land and water, and anticipated future decline in food productivity requires the alertness to this problem.
- **Nuclear weapons**: The danger posed by an increasingly weaponized world, including proliferation of nuclear weapons technology is a challenge. The US-Russia nuclear weapons roll back programme and the Iranian nuclear deal are in disarray posing an uncertain security scenario.
- **Pandemics, drug trafficking and human trafficking** are among the other major problems that the international community needs to work together to curb the fallout of these issues.
- **New and emerging technologies**: Technology and the Internet have created a whole new spectrum of sub-conventional security challenges to democracies and open societies like India. **Infodemics** are being touted 'as great a threat as pandemics'.

## TECHPLOMACY: EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AS A PILLAR OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY



- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has recently announced the establishment of the **New, Emerging and Strategic Technologies (NEST)** division that will engage in 'tech diplomacy'. The NEST division is tasked to provide policy guidance on how India can shape international rules related to emerging technologies, navigate competition over strategic supply chains to capture a larger share of global technology flows, align India's domestic technology policies with international regimes.

### CHALLENGES FOR INDIA'S TECH DIPLOMACY

- **Managing Technology Interdependence with China**: Chinese investors are the largest actors in India's technology landscape. India needs a long-term plan to continue to attract investments from China, restrict some markets where national security is at stake, use legal and regulatory tools to obtain technology and know how, and create oversight mechanisms.
- **Navigating Global Technological Protectionism**: These relates to new export controls, sanctions regimes, and a broader instinct to guard technology ecosystems that are fast emerging that can have uncertain implications for Indian interests. For instance US announced a new export control regime for geospatial imagery software.
- **Global Data Governance**: The subject of data flows is fast becoming a contested issue of global governance. India would need to align its domestic policy positions on data governance with international policy tools.
- **Norms, Standards and Rule-Making**: Lack of India's unified approach augurs poorly for its capacity to participate in norm-setting processes with international institution around a range of esoteric technologies.

### WAY AHEAD FOR INDIA

- **Responsibilities for NEST**: NEST must be empowered to connect domestic policymaking on data governance, fabrication facilities, AI research and more with its bilateral and multilateral engagements.
- **Mapping India's Technological Dependencies**: India must build capacity to identify its position in the technology value chain, dependencies on critical imports, and the risk it faces from foreign or international rules.
- **Leveraging on global tech partnerships**: India has established partnerships with Japan and Finland on AI and robotics, with Israel on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and with Australia on cyber technology. These partnerships must be supported by clearing domestic bureaucratic roadblocks, improving the ease of setting up enterprises, and easing tax - regimes.
- **Harnessing India's Technological strengths**: Harnessing the potential of critical areas such as Fintech and Biotech can cement India's leadership credentials and can translate into Indian influence in the global tech landscape.
- **Joint development of technology standards in critical technology areas**: This entails reaching out to other techno-democracies to develop and push forward credible standards at international standard- setting bodies.
  - ❑ The recently proposed T-12 (or the Technology 12) alliance is a perfect platform in this direction.

# WHAT SHOULD BE THE MAJOR FOCUS AREAS FOR INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TO NAVIGATE THE TURBULENT INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT?



- **Tactful dealing with china:** Even as India continues to engage with China to promote better understanding on border management, trade, climate change, global governance and a host of other issues of mutual interest, it needs to put in place a robust strategy to defend its territorial integrity and its interests in the region and the world.
- **Mindful efforts in Pakistan:** While preparing to meet any eventuality, India must continue to reinforce its efforts to see Pakistan emerge as a stable, secure and prosperous democracy.
- **Expanding the domain of strategic autonomy:** Expansion of India's strategic autonomy demands a re-orientation of its foreign policy towards mobilising the larger constituency of developing countries and emerging economies with which it has convergent interests and advance them through reinforcing multilateral institutions and processes.
- **Pursuit of multi-alignment:** It enables India to overcome the risks by combining national strengths and external relationships in a virtuous interaction where all major relationships, centered on strategic convergence remain positively in play so that one can be used to make gains in the other.
- **Dropping the risk aversion strategy and adopting greater realism:** A traditional and low-risk foreign policy on the grounds of nation's material weakness, was only likely to produce limited rewards. In contrast, when India acted boldly, it was able to enjoy spectacular gains.
  - ❑ For instance, the 1998 nuclear tests forced the world to accept India's nuclear weapons program and opened the door to its eventual integration into the global nuclear order.
- **Secure its national interests:** It includes for instance: securing our borders to protect territorial integrity, countering cross-border terrorism, energy and food security, cyber security, non-discriminatory global trade practices, equitable global responsibility for the protection of environment, reform of institutions of global governance to reflect the contemporary realities, disarmament, regional stability, international peace and so on.
  - ❑ This will require working and building concerts and alliances with the like-minded.
- **Focusing on self-development:** Accelerating economic reforms domestically, strengthen India's institutions, preserve its constitutional ethos, and protect the nation's internal cohesion, and improving on social development indicators such as malnutrition, illiteracy and healthcare can cement India's progress externally.
- **Engaging diaspora population:** One of the major objectives is to engage them and derive maximum benefits from their presence abroad, while at the same time protecting their interests to the extent possible.
- **Nurturing a feminist dimension in its neighbourhood first policy:** India's regional policies remain predominantly a masculine affair. India will be able to better achieve its regional interests by adopting a feminist approach in areas like HADR, refugee policies, health policies, economic cooperation etc.
- **Playing a bridging role:** India has the potential to serve as a bridge between the established and emerging orders and can play a leadership role in enhancement of the international rule of law in order to reinforce multilateralism and enhance global governance capabilities.

## CONCLUSION



India's foreign policy has evolved and changed over the last seventy years, usually at a steady pace, but sometimes drastically to respond to fast changing global or regional scenario. India has been fortunate to enjoy good growth and prosperity for the last three decades. This has provided greater leverage to India's foreign policy, and allowed far greater resources to be allocated for the conduct of diplomacy, including consolidating and strengthening our diplomatic presence all across the globe. India has clearly demonstrated its will to play a leading role in the global arena and be counted as 'pole' in its own right. Continued stability and prosperity at home and political consensus on broad foreign policy parameters, will help India reach its goal.

# TOPIC AT A GLANCE

Foreign Policy is a **set of principles and decisions**, adopted and used by a nation **for conducting relations with other nations** and all international actors with a view **to secure the defined goals of her national interest**.

## INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY GOALS



**Protect India from traditional and non-traditional threats.**



**Create an external environment which is conducive for India's inclusive development.**



**Ensure that India's voice is heard and India is able to influence world opinion on global issues.**



**Engage and protect Indian Diaspora.**

### CORE PRINCIPLES AND FEATURES OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY



**FIVE PRINCIPLES UNDER PANCHSHEEL FORMS THE BASIS OF FOLLOWING FEATURES:**

- **Opposition to Export of Ideologies and Change of Regimes** or violation of territorial integrity.
- **India does not endorse unilateral sanctions /military actions**
- **Intervention over interference** in internal affairs of other countries.
- **Constructive Engagement over Aggression**
- **Strategic Autonomy**
- **Global Consensus on Issues of Global Dimensions**
- **Diplomatic Outreach** leading to bilateral relationships and partnerships.

### EMERGING CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY GOALS



- **Regional Instability** due to factors like border disputes, terrorism etc.
- **Non-conducive external environment** as a result of rivalry between major powers, Russia-Ukraine war among other reasons.
- **Stressed global economic situation post COVID.**
- **India's huge dependency for its energy security**
- **Disintegrating global frameworks for cooperation**
- **Domestic Systemic constraints** and lack of resources for effective engagement with Diaspora population
- **Rise of Non-traditional challenges and threats** like maritime geopolitics of Indo-Pacific, Nuclear weapons, Pandemics and emerging technologies.



### SPECIFIC THRUST AREAS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE PRESENT TIME

- **Prioritizing an integrated neighbourhood** through Neighbourhood First Policy and Outreach towards extended neighbourhood
- **Leveraging international partnerships** to promote India's domestic development which includes Strategic Balancing of relations between major powers, Outreach to middle powers etc.
- **Ensuring a stable and multipolar balance of power** through its commitment to multilateral and plurilateral solutions and emphasising on a rules-based international order.
- **Advancing Indian representation and leadership** on matters of global governance with its ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.
- **Leveraging Soft Power Potential** in fields like spiritualism, yoga etc. to advance India's global influence.



### NEEDED FOCUS AREAS FOR INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TO NAVIGATE THE TURBULENT INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- **Tactful dealing with China** which entails constructive engagement and defending India's territorial integrity.
- **Mindful efforts to stabilise Pakistan** yet be prepared to deal with any eventuality.
- **Expanding the domain of strategic autonomy** by engaging with developing and emerging economies.
- **Pursuit of multi-alignment** where all major relationships, remain positively in play.
- **Dropping the risk aversion strategy and adopting greater realism.**
- **Secure national interests like border security**, energy and food security, non-discriminatory global trade practices etc.
- **Focusing on self-development** by accelerating domestic economic reforms, strengthening institutions, etc.
- **Nurturing a feminist dimension in its Neighbourhood First policy** to better achieve regional interests
- **Playing a leadership role in enhancement of the international rule of law.**

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