

India's Role in Global Governance @2047: Bridging Aspirations and Realities

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Abstract

This research paper examines India's trajectory toward becoming a major player in global governance by 2047, marking the centenary of its independence. Drawing on the Vision India@2047 initiative, which targets a \$30–40 trillion economy and developed nation status, the study analyzes India's evolving influence across key domains: multilateral institutions, climate governance, technology regulation, and Global South representation. The paper investigates India's persistent advocacy for UN Security Council reform, its strategic positioning through multi-alignment foreign policy, and its unique role as a democratic developmental model bridging North–South divides. Through scenario analysis, the research identifies critical enablers and constraints shaping India's global governance role, including domestic developmental imperatives, geopolitical competition between the US and China, institutional reform resistance, and the dual challenge of economic growth with climate commitments. The paper argues that while India's demographic dividend, democratic credentials, and strategic geography position it favorably, achieving transformative global governance influence requires sustained economic reforms, institutional excellence, climate leadership, and strategic clarity on multilateral engagement. The study concludes that by 2047, India will most likely emerge as a “leading power” in a multipolar world order—wielding significant but not determining influence in shaping international norms and institutions. This represents substantial progress from its current status as a system-influencing state, positioning India to meaningfully reform global governance architecture toward greater equity and representation, though falling short of sole superpower status. The research contributes to understanding how large democratic developing nations can simultaneously pursue development and reshape international order in the 21st century.

Keywords: India 2047, global governance, UN Security Council reform, multilateralism, Global South, climate leadership, multipolarity, Viksit Bharat, emerging powers, international institutions

Introduction

India's Vision 2047, formulated by NITI Aayog and championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, represents more than an economic blueprint—it embodies India's ambition to reshape its position in the global governance architecture. With a projected GDP ranging between \$30–40 trillion and per capita income of \$15,000–20,000 by 2047, India seeks to transition from being a system-influencing state to a determining power in international affairs.

The significance of 2047 extends beyond economics. It marks India's assertion as a **voice for the Global South**, a **champion of reformed multilateralism**, and a **bridge between developed and developing nations** in an increasingly multipolar world.

2. Vision India@2047: Core Pillars and Global Governance Implications

2.1 Economic Transformation and Global Economic Leadership

India's economic trajectory positions it to become one of the world's largest economies. The vision

encompasses:

- **GDP Growth Target:** Achieving \$30–40 trillion economy by 2047
- **Per Capita Income:** Reaching \$15,000–20,000, lifting millions from poverty
- **Manufacturing Hub:** Becoming a global manufacturing powerhouse through initiatives like “Make in India” and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes
- **Technology Leadership:** Positioning India as a global leader in innovation, particularly in green hydrogen, semiconductors, and digital technologies

Global Governance Implication: Economic weight translates into greater influence in international financial institutions, trade negotiations, and standard-setting bodies. India's economic rise challenges the traditional North-South divide and creates new models for development.

2.2 Reformed Multilateralism

India's approach to global governance centers on “reformed multilateralism”—advocating for institutions that reflect contemporary geopolitical realities rather than post–World War II power structures. Key priorities include:

- **UN Security Council Reform:** Persistent advocacy for permanent membership with veto power
- **International Financial Architecture:** Pushing for greater developing country representation in IMF, World Bank, and multilateral development banks
- **South-South Cooperation:** Strengthening alliances through BRICS, G20, and regional forums

2.3 Voice of the Global South

India has strategically positioned itself as the representative of Global South interests, particularly during its 2023 G20 Presidency where it:

- Successfully advocated for African Union’s full membership in G20
- Championed climate finance for developing nations
- Promoted debt restructuring mechanisms for vulnerable economies
- Advanced the “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” philosophy — “One Earth, One Family, One Future”

3. Key Domains of India’s Global Governance Role by 2047

3.1 Climate Leadership and Environmental Governance

India faces the dual challenge of rapid economic growth and environmental sustainability. By 2047, India aims to:

- **Achieve Net-Zero Emissions:** Committed to net-zero by 2070, with interim targets for 2030
- **Renewable Energy Leadership:** Target of 500 GW renewable energy capacity, positioning India as a global renewable energy hub
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** Leading coalition of 121 countries promoting solar energy globally
- **Green Hydrogen Mission:** Producing 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030
- **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE):** Promoting sustainable consumption patterns globally

Challenge: Balancing energy security needs of a growing economy with climate commitments while ensuring

climate justice for developing nations.

3.2 UN Security Council Reform: The Unfinished Agenda

India's quest for permanent UNSC membership remains central to its global governance aspirations. Despite support from four of the five permanent members (US, UK, France, Russia), significant obstacles persist.

Arguments in India's Favor:

3.3 Technology Governance and Digital Economy

India's digital transformation offers a model for developing nations:

- **Digital India Initiative:** Expanding internet access and digital literacy
- **AI Governance:** Participating in global conversations on artificial intelligence regulation
- **Data Protection:** Developing frameworks that balance innovation with privacy
- **Space Leadership:** Advancing self-reliance in defense and space sectors

3.4 Global Health and Pandemic Preparedness

COVID-19 demonstrated India's capacity as "pharmacy of the world" through its Vaccine Maitri initiative, providing vaccines to over 100 countries. By 2047, India aims to:

- Establish top-tier research laboratories through international partnerships
- Lead pandemic preparedness initiatives for developing nations
- Strengthen WHO and global health governance mechanisms

3.5 Trade and Economic Governance

India's trade strategy balances protectionism with selective integration:

- **Regional Integration:** Selective participation in trade agreements (withdrew from RCEP but exploring bilateral deals)
- **WTO Reform:** Advocating for rules that accommodate developmental needs
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Positioning as alternative manufacturing hub to reduce China dependence

4. Foreign Policy Priorities for Viksit Bharat 2047

4.1 Strategic Autonomy and Multi-Alignment

India's foreign policy maintains strategic autonomy while deepening partnerships:

- **Neighbourhood First:** Managing complex relations with Pakistan and China while strengthening SAARC
- **Indo-Pacific Strategy:** Balancing Quad membership with Russia relations
- **West Asia Engagement:** Pragmatic partnerships through I2U2 and IMEC corridor
- **African Outreach:** Leveraging historical ties and development partnerships

4.2 Defense and Security

Security challenges shape India's global role:

- **Defense Self-Reliance:** Reducing foreign dependence in defense acquisitions
- **Counter-Terrorism:** Leading global counter-terrorism initiatives
- **Maritime Security:** Expanding blue economy and naval capabilities

- **Border Challenges:** Managing tensions with China (Galwan, Doklam) and Pakistan (Uri, Pulwama)

5. Institutional Framework for Global Leadership

5.1 Domestic Governance Reforms

Global leadership requires domestic capacity:

- **Re-engineering Government Processes:** Eliminating bureaucratic inefficiencies
- **Institutional Excellence:** Bringing 10 Indian institutions among world's top 100
- **Think Tank Development:** Creating global-standard policy research centers
- **Skill Development:** Positioning India as global skill capital

5.2 International Collaborations

Strengthening partnerships across sectors:

- **Research Partnerships:** Collaborating with foreign R&D organizations
- **Regulatory Harmonization:** Benchmarking to international standards
- **Technology Transfer:** Facilitating knowledge exchange
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Leveraging corporate sector for global engagement

6. Challenges and Constraints

6.1 Domestic Developmental Imperatives

- **Poverty Eradication:** Zero poverty goal requires sustained inclusive growth
- **Female Labor Force Participation:** Currently around 20%, compared to 75% in developed economies
- **Education Quality:** Investment needed to match global spending levels (3.5% vs 4.5% of GDP)
- **Infrastructure Deficit:** Urban and rural infrastructure gaps
- **Middle Income Trap:** Risk of stagnation before reaching developed status

6.2 Geopolitical Headwinds

- **US-China Competition:** Navigation required in polarized global order
- **Russia-West Divide:** Balancing historic partnerships with emerging alignments
- **Regional Tensions:** Pakistan, China border disputes constraining diplomatic bandwidth
- **Climate vs Development:** Balancing growth imperatives with climate commitments

6.3 Institutional Inertia

- **UNSC Reform Deadlock:** Lack of political will among existing powers

6.4 Resource Constraints

- **Climate Finance:** Requires trillions in investment for energy transition
- **Infrastructure Funding:** Massive capital requirements for development goals

7. Pathway to 2047: Strategic Recommendations

Characteristics:

- \$20–25 trillion economy, middle-income trap
- Continued UNSC aspirant without breakthrough

- Divided Global South weakens voice
- Regional tensions limit global engagement
- Domestic challenges constrain ambitions

Enabling Factors: Growth slowdown, geopolitical fragmentation, democratic backsliding concerns, climate shocks

Probability: 20%

8. Implications for Global Order

8.1 Multipolar World Order

India's rise contributes to multipolarity, offering alternative to US-China bipolarity. This creates:

- More diverse power centers
- Greater complexity in coalition-building
- Opportunities for middle powers
- Challenges for consensus-building

8.2 Reformed Multilateralism

India's consistent advocacy may catalyze:

- More representative Security Council
- Reformed Bretton Woods institutions
- New development finance mechanisms
- Climate justice frameworks

8.3 Development Models

India offers unique developmental pathway:

- Democratic development vs Chinese authoritarian model
- Technology-enabled leapfrogging
- Demographic dividend utilization
- Pluralistic society managing diversity

9. Conclusion

India's journey to 2047 represents a critical test case for whether a large, diverse, democratic developing nation can achieve developed status while actively reshaping global governance structures. The Vision India@2047 is ambitious but grounded in India's inherent strengths: demographic dividend, democratic governance, technological capabilities, and strategic positioning.

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