



ROLE OF INDIA-US RELATIONS IN INDIA'S RISE AS A GLOBAL POWER

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ABSTRACT-----

India, a prominent power in the Global South, seeks regional and global influence in a future multi-polar world. It has maintained a neutral stance during Cold War rivalries while bolstering its economic and military capabilities, positioning itself as a "swing state" capable of shifting the global balance of power. For the United States, relations with India are crucial for countering the growing China challenge, accessing India's expanding markets, and benefiting from its skilled workforce, particularly in IT and healthcare. Shared democratic values further strengthen this partnership. India, in turn, relies on the US for technological advancements, economic opportunities, and support in dealing with regional adversaries like China and Pakistan. The US-India relationship is pivotal for both countries' ambitions: the US seeks to retain its global supremacy, while India strives to become a major global power and a developed nation. However, tensions occasionally arise, particularly when India aligns with other Global South nations like BRICS, which challenges US hegemony. Thus, India's management of its relationship with the US will play a critical role in determining its future status and influence in global affairs.

KEYWORDS: India, United States, Global South, BRICS, Global Power-----

1.1: INTRODUCTION

India's journey from a struggling post-independence nation to a growing economic and political power has been marked by significant challenges and transformation. Initially, the country faced numerous issues such as poverty, population growth, and border disputes with hostile neighbours. However, since the early 1990s, India has undergone dramatic economic changes, particularly in its Information Technology (IT) sector, which has helped the country emerge as a key player on the global stage. This paper explores the evolving relationship between India and the United States (US), focusing on the transformation from historical tensions to a strategic partnership.

1.2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF INDO-US RELATIONS

Early Perceptions and Initial Cooperation: When India gained independence, the United States viewed it as a potential ally due to its democratic ideals. The initial trajectory of Indo-US relations was positive, but tensions arose due to India's policy of non-alignment and its strong ties with the Soviet Union, which led to divergences during the Cold War.

The Cold War Era and Divergences: India's non-alignment stance, especially during key geopolitical moments like the India-China War of 1962 and the India-Pakistan conflict of 1971, led to US discomfort. The US's support for Pakistan during these conflicts further strained relations, while India's reliance on Soviet military supplies solidified the relationship between India and the Soviet Union.

1.3: POST-COLD WAR SHIFT IN RELATIONS

Economic Transformation and Global Perception: By the late 1990s, India's economic reforms and rise of the IT sector shifted its international image. No longer seen as a "basket case," India was now recognized as a rising economic powerhouse with substantial global potential.



The 2008 Civil Nuclear Agreement: A turning point in Indo-US relations came with the 2008 Civil Nuclear Agreement (123 Agreement), which symbolized a shift from rivalry to cooperation. This agreement, along with subsequent military accords, laid the foundation for a stronger strategic partnership.

1.4. THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: ECONOMIC AND MILITARY DIMENSIONS

Economic Cooperation: The US recognized India's growing economic power, and mutual trade relations expanded significantly. India's booming IT sector and large consumer market have become vital to the US economy. The bilateral relationship has evolved, with the US seeking access to India's markets, labor, and innovation.

Military Cooperation: Alongside economic ties, military cooperation has significantly increased. Agreements such as BECA, LEMOA, and COMCASA have strengthened military-to-military relations, positioning India as an important partner in countering regional threats, particularly from China.

1.5. INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS: A COMPLICATING FACTOR

Continued Ties with Russia: Despite strengthening ties with the US, India's historical relationship with Russia remains a key aspect of its foreign policy. India continues to rely on Russia for military equipment, and cooperation in energy, space, and nuclear technology persists.

Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War: India's neutral stance on the Russia-Ukraine war raised concerns in the West but also led to a greater understanding of India's security concerns and the necessity of maintaining good relations with Russia. This has been reflected in the US granting India a CAATSA waiver for purchasing the S-400 missile defence system from Russia.

1.6. THE ROLE OF THE INDIAN-AMERICAN DIASPORA

Growing Influence in the US: The Indian diaspora in the US has become an influential community in various sectors, particularly in technology, healthcare, and politics. The contributions of Indian-Americans, along with their increasing political representation, have played a significant role in fostering a positive relationship between the two countries.

Bipartisan Support for Stronger Ties: The Indian-American community's influence has helped solidify bipartisan support in the US for stronger relations with India, acknowledging the country's democratic values and growing importance in global politics.

1.7. CHALLENGES AND IRRITANTS IN INDO-US RELATIONS

1. Criticism of India's Domestic Policies: The US has occasionally criticized India on issues related to democracy, human rights, and freedom. India perceives such criticisms as condescending, particularly as the US itself faces internal challenges regarding its democratic values.

2. Balancing Neutrality and Strategic Interests: India's position on global issues, such as its neutrality in the Russia-Ukraine war and its ongoing relations with Russia, continues to be a source of tension with the US and its allies. However, the US has acknowledged India's geopolitical position, especially in the face of growing Chinese assertiveness.

1.8. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL POWER DYNAMICS

China's Growing Influence: As China rises economically and militarily, India's strategic partnership with the US has become increasingly important in countering Chinese dominance, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. India's role in the Quad, along with its strategic importance, reinforces its positioning as a key player in regional and global affairs.

India's Global Aspirations: India's aspirations to become a global power, with a more significant role in global governance, particularly through a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, align with US interests. The growing partnership between India and the US is central to both countries' ability to address global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, and regional security issues.



1.9: CONCLUSIONS

Continuing positive trends and growth in India-US relations in the economic, military, technology and diplomatic realm are likely to lead to a win-win situation for both sides – for achieving their strategic goals and objectives. For India, US support is critical towards economic and technological progress and achieving its aspirations to play a leadership role in the Asian region and the Global South. For the US, India's cooperation is crucial towards dealing with the challenge of Chinese belligerence in the Asia-Pacific region. At this point both countries are cooperating vigorously at various levels of government to strengthen their mutual relationship and achieve their goals. The relationship is poised to grow further and help India achieve its aspirations of achieving developed country status as well as becoming a leading global power, with a more prominent role in influencing regional and global affairs.

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