

INDIA AS EMERGING SUPERPOWER

Written by *Abhinav*

4th year BALLB student, Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University

Introduction

Since ancient times, India has been a premiere country in terms of culture and economy. In 17th century, India was the world's richest country. In 1700, it had 22.6% share in the world income which was slightly lesser than the entire Europe combined.¹ It was India's wealth which invited European countries to colonise and exploit and worsen it. Continued exploitation of India and drainage of wealth to Europe decreased India's share in world income to a meagre of 3.8% in 1952.² After independence, India gradually began to recover and it is one of the fastest growing economies of the world. Today, it is considered to be one of the possible emerging superpowers in the world³ and it is the world's fastest growing economy.⁴ Factors in India's favour and against shall be discussed in this essay along with certain suggestions from the author.

Factors in favour

Geographic advantages- Geography of a country plays a pivotal role in country's economy. India has a lot of geographical advantages owing to its key location.

- It has a large coastline which is adequate for development of ports.
- Almost half of its land is situated in the temperate zone which has moderate temperatures. Such moderate temperatures are necessary for workers to work tirelessly for hours.
- India is tropical country which receives sufficient sunlight which can be converted into electricity. It has about 300 clear sunny days in a year and theoretically calculated solar

¹ Europe's share in world income was 23.3%; Angus Madison: "Chinese Economic Performance in the Long Run", OECD, Paris, 1998.

² Ibid.

³ "USATODAY.com - Prediction: India, China will be economic giants". Retrieved 11 September 2015.

⁴<http://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/indicators/imf-expects-india-to-retain-worlds-fastest-growing-econom-ytag/articleshow/49245651.cms>

energy available for India is 5000 trillion kilowatts per year. In 2009, a USD 19 billion plan was launched to produce 20 GW of solar power by 2020.⁵

- With large tracts of plain areas and windy coasts, India has a huge potential for developing wind power. The potential for wind farms was measured to be more than 2000 GW in 2011.⁶ India has installed capacity of 27,676.55 MW and is the fourth largest installed wind power capacity in the world.⁷
- Its key geographical position provides monsoon winds which bring adequate rainfall to cater the needs of a predominantly agricultural economy. South west summer monsoons is the Earth's most productive wet season.⁸ Almost 60 crore people live on agriculture which comprises of 20% of the national GDP.

Natural Resources

India is blessed to be rich in natural resources. It has rich reserves of coal and bauxite. Exploitation of these resources generates a huge amount of money and creates employment opportunities for people. Apart from this, India has large tracts of plain fertile land, particularly in the Gangetic plains in Uttar Pradesh and Sutlej basin in Punjab which are most suited for agriculture.

Demographic advantages

India is the second most populated country which provides a huge workforce to the country.⁹ It has approx. 65% of population below the age 35 and declining fertility rate shall create a demographic dividend.¹⁰ While other countries will experience reduce in workforce, India will witness a drastic increase in workforce in coming years.

Tourism

India has a rich culture and fascinating past. It is rich in arts, music, culture & spiritual which has escalated the tourism industry. India was ranked as 4th most preferred tourism destination in

⁵ India to unveil 20 GW solar target under climate plan, Reuters, 28 July 2009.

⁶ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_power_in_India ; Last visited 2:30 p.m., 24-11-16.

⁷ World Wind Energy Report, 2015

⁸ Floods, Droughts and Climate Change, Collier, W, University of Arizona Press, 2002.

⁹ Michael Lingenheld. "Demographics Will Power The World's New Growth Leader: India". Forbes. Retrieved 11 September 2015

¹⁰ "India's potential `demographic dividend`". The Hindu Business Line. Retrieved 11 September 2015.

2006.¹¹ Tourism gives employment to 4 crore people and contributes 6% to GDP.¹² Government is also promoting tourism by launching campaigns such as Incredible India program, etc. India has the potential to become a hotspot industry hostspot.

Instances of India as an emerging superpower

Military Strength

India is keen on increasing its military strength. It has the 3rd largest army, 4th largest air force and 5th largest navy in the world. It has about 120 active nuclear warheads and it is equipped with nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers and inter-continental ballistic missiles such as Agni-5. It has been ranked 4th in Global Firepower Index.¹³ It is also one of the largest arms importer estimated to about USD 16.97 billion.¹⁴ It is also the largest contributor to UN peace keeping force.¹⁵ It is already a regional superpower and an emerging global superpower.

Economic Boom

India is the third largest GDP in the world. It is also a world leader in Information Technology. People also describe India as a technology superpower.¹⁶ It is considered as World's Office and a leader in service sector. This is due to availability of large pool of skilled workmen, low labour costs and a huge english speaking force.¹⁷

India's industrial sector is also experiencing remarkable growth. India has liberalised norms for doing business and has allowed FDI in various sectors thereby leading to economic development.

International Standing

India's international standing is steadily increasing. It has liberalized norms for doing business and has jumped 12 places in the ease of doing business.¹⁸ It has surpassed Japan to become third largest

¹¹ India's incredible tourism story only gets better (http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/8131_1821301,00160138.htm) by Saikat Neogi, October 16, 2006.

¹² Ibid

¹³ India Military Strength, www.globalfirepower.com.

¹⁴ "Aspects of India's Economy No. 41". Retrieved 11 September 2015.

¹⁵ Indian Embassy (http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Peace_Keeping/history_india_UN_peace_keeping.htm)

¹⁶ Information Technology in India (<http://www.emergence.nu/events/budapest/ahuja.pdf>) The Emergence Project.

¹⁷ India IT (http://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/story.cfm?c_id=323&ObjectID=10329364) NZ Herald

¹⁸ [Indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com); October 26, 2016 8:36 a.m.

economy and it has jumped many spots to reach at 55th place in global competitiveness index. It has been ranked 6th in Space Competitiveness Index.¹⁹

India has joined the elite space club by sending a mission to mars and will soon be having its own navigation system at par with GPS.

It has been a premiere country in counter terrorism measures and has helped Afghanistan to come out of its terror-torn stature. Recently, it also constructed a parliament house for Afghanistan.²⁰ It is also developing Chahabar port in Afghanistan.²¹ It has contributed USD 100 billion to the BRICS Development Bank. It has forwarded aid to many countries at the time of crisis. It helped Nepal during earthquakes of 2015 by sending medical supplies and lending financial help.

These instances show that India's stand in international arena is increasing and it is, indeed an emerging global superpower.

Limitations

India has a lot of factors which favour its growing stand as an emerging superpower. However, certain factors stand in its way of becoming a superpower. A few of them are:-

- Regional Disputes- India currently has two hostile neighbours- China and Pakistan. Consequently, it has to spend a substantial amount of money in guarding its border against them.
- Internal disturbances- Increasing activities of naxalites and maoists pose a serious threat to the national security of India. These activities also disallow economic development in naxal hit areas such as Chattisgarh and Orissa.
- Poverty- According to 2011 census, 21.9% of India's population lives below poverty line.²² This happens when the poverty line is set at a very minimal level.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Modi Inaugurates new parliament house built by India in Kabul, Hindustan Times, 25-12-15.

²¹ Anirbun Chowdhary, Five Things about Chahabar port and how India gains from it, The Economic Times, 23-5-16.

²²(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Poverty-declines-to-21-9-in-2011-12-Planning-Commission/articleshow/21276053.cms>)

- Unemployment- Unemployment could create instability in India. Unemployment rates hit a record high in 2010 at 9.4%. However, it has shown signs of improvement and hit a record low in 2011 to 3.4%. A huge working force is an advantage to the economy but if the government is not able to provide employment to its massive work force, it becomes a burden on its economy.
- Low literacy rate- India has low literacy rate at 74.04 % according to 2011 census. An uneducated population cannot significantly contribute to the development of country since it lacks basic skills.
- Communal violence- India has diverse culture and India frequently suffers from tensions of communal violence. A few instances of communal violence include Hindu-sikh riots after 1984, the 2002 Gujarat riots and the recent muzaffarpur riots in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

Conclusion

India has everything which is needed to become a superpower but there are a few hurdles in its way which must be crossed. Recent steps taken by government such as demonetisation and introduction of the Benami Transactions Bill show the willingness and attitude of the government to push development into India and to make it a global superpower. Recent trends have shown a positive attitude and have given a ray of hope. A little change in the attitude of people could go a long way in making India a superpower. People must contribute in their own way to improve the economic condition of the country. For instance, they must stop paying bribes to corrupt official, they must responsibly pay tax to the government, etc. These minor changes in the minds of public can go a long way in making India, a global superpower.