

India is a World Power
Or
Emergence of a Vibrant India
Or
India of the Future
Or
India of Your Dreams
Or
India in 2020

Essay No. 01

When Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the President of India took over as the President, he gave to the people of India a vision, a dream of India in 2020. He foresaw an India that would lead the world not only in the fields of science and technology but in all other fields also. Swami Vivekananda, the great India saint had declared more than a hundred years ago that India would rise to its full stature and glory and lead the world in all spheres—spiritual or material. That dream of the people of India appears to be coming to its fulfillment whenever one casts a glance over the big strides India is taking in all fields, especially that of knowledge through information technology.

India is now in race to be recognized as a world power in the next few years. In the field of space programme, India took a big jump on May 5, 2005 with the successful launch of the 44-meter tall four-stage Polar satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV –C6 from the Indian spaceport at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. This has placed India on a stage where it can now receive launch orders from other countries.

The Indian IT industry is already leaving several countries behind. There are more than 600,000 persons working in the Indian IT industry responsible for creating a wealth to the tune of 16 billion dollars. India is going to take bigger strides and touch the 50-billion-dollar mark in the export of software soon. The 'on-line' is becoming the in-line in every Indian home and the day is not far when every Indian village panchayat will be fully computerized.

Indian immigrants in USA are the richest amongst the immigrants. According to reliable estimates, there are some two lakh millionaires of Indian origin in USA alone. The size of the Indian entrepreneur market in the Silicon Valley alone comprises 200,000 people. It is only because of their hard work, perseverance and dedication to duty that the people of India are finding a place of pride in the fields of technology, health and corporate business all over the world. Anybody can be proud of Indian firms like the Mittal Steel Corporation which now operates in 14 countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the USA.

Gone are the days when our leaders used to go to the advanced countries with a begging bowl for aid and expertise. The roles appear to be reversed now. India is now in a position to help several countries with money as well as expertise in several fields. The Delhi Metro and the Konkan Rail Project are being looked upon as the best project comparable to any such project anywhere in the world. Several countries are already trying to replicate the Delhi Metro model and are approaching India for the purpose. Projects like the Golden Quadrilateral and the linking of rivers in the country will certainly revolutionize in the infrastructure in the country within the next ten years.

Only a little while ago, Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State eulogized India as a global power and backed India's candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

There is no doubt that the country has changed beyond recognition during the last 50 years. India and Indian products are now becoming synonymous with quality and durability all over the world. That is why the Indian export figures are jumping higher and higher every year.

India is certainly on the march. It is going to be a different India in the year 2020. It is going to be an India of our dreams, an India that can hold

its head high in the comity of nations. Once again India will occupy the seat of a jagad guru in the world.

Essay No. 02

India and the World

Since ancient times, the people of India have been having an active relationship with the peoples of the outside world. As this relationship was generally cordial and accommodative in nature, many races, from time to time, could settle in India and become part of it. Indian culture, which is a synthesis of the differing legacies of these races, is therefore composite and highly complex.

India's hospitable approach to the rest of the world was both advantageous and disadvantageous. While on the one hand, it helped enrich India's culture, on the other, it was responsible for many later conflicts, that culminated in India's colonization by outsiders. However, the ethos of accommodation, solidarity and equality, besides the tradition of tolerance for varying opinions and viewpoints, continues to guide India's relations with other countries in modern times also.

The timing of India's return to freedom is also a factor that determines its outlook to the world. The world, in the middle of the twentieth century, when India won independence, had been crippled by two world wars and divided on ideological lines. Matching the USA and other capitalist countries, in both power and popularity, was the group of socialist nations headed by the former USSR India, which had itself suffered the evils of divisions and exploitation, was naturally not willing to encourage a divided world. Therefore, it sought cordial relations with both the groups, without preferring either over the other.

Instead of supporting divisions among countries, India devoted its energies towards helping those Countries in Asia and Africa that were still under colonial rule, achieve independence. India looked to the people of these countries for support of its ideals of egalitarianism and solidarity. Furthermore, with its own experience under colonial rule. India could identify itself more with the newly emerging nations of the so-called 'third world', in terms of problems and hopes. Realizing the advantages of collective work in

overcoming the problems caused by poverty and other social evils, India was more for cooperation than confrontation among nations. For healthy and fruitful co-existence, India based its foreign policy on the 'Pancha Sheela', or the five principles, and encouraged others to do so. The solidarity among the newly independent, but less-developed states, gave rise to the non-aligned movement (NAM), which would act as a moderator in the hostile debate between capitalism and socialism.

The non-aligned movement, unlike the two divisive ideologies, believed more in appreciation and accommodation of differing ideas than in their conflict and elimination. Its spirit of accommodation enabled NAM to have such diverse nations as Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe as its members. It is an indication of the movement's popularity, that unlike the other groups, it has been able to increase its strength to over a hundred nations. The versatility of the movement is also evident from the fact that the ideological fronts, after fighting a 'cold war' for over four decades, have exhausted themselves and decided to disband. Each is now offering the other the ideals of peace and cooperation, which were originally espoused by the non-aligned countries.

The ideal of non-alignment may be a jewel in India's foreign policy crown, but it is not the only jewel that makes up the crown. India has aroused world conscience and espoused the cause of morality by its tough and timely actions on more occasions than one. India's forceful opposition to Apartheid made it the first country to sever diplomatic relations with South Africa. Its consistent and continued support to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa finally managed to kill the evil policy. Similarly, India's opposition to Israel and support to the Palestinians' fight for a homeland has also started bearing fruit. As its problems with both South Africa and Israel have been solved, India has moved quickly to restore full diplomatic relations with these countries. This exercise amply illustrates that India opposes only policies but not people. It was the approach to international relationships based on virtuous policies and principles that enabled India to have healthy and fruitful relationships with both the USA and the former USSR, even when the cold war simmered.

But even though its foreign policy has gained respect and appreciation worldwide, quite ironically, India's relations with its immediate neighbors have not always been pleasant. While Pakistan and China are the major adversaries, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka often have grudges and grievances

against India. The dispute over Kashmir, and a general distrust of India after the events of 'partition', keep India's relations with Pakistan consistently volatile, whereas dispute over territories in the Himalayas is a cause for stress in India's relationship with China.

The issue of Tamil settlers in Sri Lanka and that of water sharing with Bangladesh have caused relatively minor tensions with these countries. India's large area and population may be the cause of our neighbors' anxiety. But on considering our outlook to the world since ancient times, it is clear that such an anxiety has no basis. It may be hoped that the efforts made in recent times to improve the confidence and trust of our neighbors in us will change their outlook towards us for the better. Such a change will ensure that India's foreign policy will serve as a healthy model for others to emulate.