Dilemmas of India's Great Power Ambitions

What is the issue?

Even though domestic inabilities will continue to moderate New Delhi's ability to influence the world order, being unwilling to be a 'global rule shaper' would be a strategic blunder.

Why India should be a global power?

- **India's relation with International nations**- India has maintained good relationship with global powers.
  - Russia- Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation since 1971, and it is a strategic defence partner to India.
  - US- India signed three military agreements over logistics, military intelligence and secure communication.
- **India's relation with neighbourhood countries**- India need to maintain strategic defense in all its borders.
  - Nuclear countries- China and Pakistan close to its borders.
  - India is sandwiched between Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) and Golden Triangle (Laos. Myanmar, Thailand)
- **Indian Economy**- It is world's ***5th largest economy***, where the nominal GDP could *soon touch 4 trillion dollar.*
  - Foreign exchange reserve has grown to around ***$600 billion,*** FDI inflows in India is consistently increasing from 2015-16, with highest share from Mauritius in FY2022-23.
- **Defence-** It is one of the largest militaries in the world with over a hundred nuclear weapons.
  - *As per SIPRI report 2022, India ranks **4th in global military expenditure.***
- **Geopolitical significance**
  - QUAD- It is a quadrilateral security dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia to contain China.
  - Peace talks- India is believed to mediate talks between Russia and Ukraine to end war.
- **G20 Presidency-** With the theme of "*One Earth, One Family, One Future*" it is striving for inclusive, action-oriented, ambitious agenda.
- **Dynamic foreign policy-** India stands with the motto *"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" which means "the world is family".
- **Health-**
  - *Vaccine diplomacy-* Around 71 countries received vaccines during COVID pandemic.
  - *Pharmacy of the world-* India stands 1st in the supply of low cost generics, vaccines and affordable HIV medicines

Why India should focus on governance?

- **Poverty-** As per Niti Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023, *1 in 7 Indians are multidimensionally poor* due to marginal improvement in indicators like nutrition and access to education.
- **Per Capita Income-** India's GDP per capita was *1,947 dollars in 2021* whereas Bangladesh GDP per capita was 2,227 dollars.
    - Bangladesh is 40th largest military spending in the world it focus more on the wellbeing of the citizens.
- **Poor skill deficit-** India has the largest demographic dividend but it accounts for *only 10% formal sector.*
- **Infrastructural deficit**- India still lacks connectivity and infrastructure growth in rural and remote areas.
- **Governance issues-**There are issues of corruption, red tapism which poses a major challenge as bureaucratic hurdle.
    - As per *Corruption perception index 2022*, India ranks ***85*** among 180 countries.
- **Domestic challenges-** Regionalism, caste conflicts, ethnicity related issues still plague India's internal security
- **Unemployment-** The strategic shift from agriculture to service sector leads to jobless growth in India.
- **Gender inequality-** India ranks *135* out of 146 countries as per *Global Gender Gap Index 2022.*

What lies ahead?

- **Embrace power-** India should influence and shape the global order to meet its foreign policy objectives which would have significant impact on its growth and security.
- **Climate Change-** As developed countries show less interest in financing developing countries, India should voice the concern of Global South countries.
- **Job creation**- India should open up avenues for skill development and foster employment opportunities.
    - Schemes like *PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana* should be used optimally to utilise its potential.
- **Gender Sensitisation-** There is a need to inculcate the values of gender equality through gender awareness program, increase labour force participation rate.

References

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