



Analyzing India's soft power through cultural diplomacy in era of globalization

Hemant Kumar Malviya¹, Vikas Rana²

¹ Professor, Department of Political Science, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

² Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

International relations have witnessed the emergence of soft power where nations are able to influence global developments through attraction not coercion. Rich cultural heritage, democratic values and a vast economy have enabled India to use the soft power fully by taking advanced steps to position itself more effectively on the world stage. This paper explores Indian soft power in the globalization era from cultural diplomacy, digital media, educational initiatives and India's role in international organizations. Using theoretical perspectives from Joseph Nye, Thomas Friedman and Joseph Stiglitz this paper explores how India has extended its influence through various channels.

The paper will have as its central theme around the five pillars of India's soft power: Saman (Peace), Samad (Solidarity), Samriddhi (Prosperity), Suraksha (Security) and Sanskriti (Culture). It will explore how these have influenced India's image globally. This paper will also evaluate India's soft power rank, drawing comparisons with other nations such as the United States and China. Emphasis will be given to India's role in the Vishwamitra Odyssey which was focused India's influence on the world through cultural and technological exchange.

The research takes its basis in parliamentary committee reports, international rankings of soft power and case studies to develop a data-based analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of India's soft power diplomacy. It makes recommendations for boosting India's global influence with expanded cultural outreach, investment in digital diplomacy and enhanced educational diplomacy. India's ability to harness its soft power is going to play a crucial role in maintaining strategic and diplomatic influence in an interconnected world.

Keywords: India, soft power, globalization, cultural diplomacy, digital media, international organizations, Vishwamitra Odyssey, global influence, public diplomacy

Introduction

As a great world power, India's emergence can not only be its economic and military, but also has its extended ability to use soft power to create international relationships and shape global ideas. According to Joseph Nye (2004)^[5], the ability to influence people's choices in attraction as opposed to soft power or money affects. Soft power has proven to be an important remedy when it comes to globalization, which wants to improve its position without resorting to hard power to improve its position internationally for nations. For India, this means using its democratic ideals, economic expansion and rich cultural heritage to make a mark on the international landscape.

Soft power is more relevant in the time of globalization, as nations are more interconnected than ever. The role of digital media, international cooperation and cultural exchange programs has increased the extent of India's influence. India's growing global status has been made even by its strategic use of soft power in different fields, including culture, education, diplomacy and development aid. This article will analyze India's soft electrical tools and their efficiency focusing on cultural diplomacy, digital media and educational initiatives. In addition, it will investigate India's ranking in the global soft power index and make recommendations to increase its global impact.

This article also explains how India has deployed in various international organizations, and led the leadership of the South South collaboration such as BRICS, and its role in global security and pointing. By searching these aspects, the paper aims to understand how the soft power of India has

evolved and what it means for its future geopolitical ambitions.

Theoretical Framework

Joseph Nye's theory of soft power remains foundational in understanding the dynamics of global influence in the contemporary period. Nye (2004)^[5] identifies three pillars of soft power that is culture, political values and foreign policy. A country's cultural appeal, its political ideals and its foreign policy approach play a pivotal role in fostering soft power. India's democratic values and vibrant pluralistic society are integral to its soft power potential. India's foreign policy, mainly its stance on non-alignment, peacekeeping and human rights complements its cultural and political values.

By describing how globalization has produced an interconnected world where nations cultural and economic impacts are more obvious and readily shared, Thomas Friedman's (2005)^[1] in his book *The World is Flat* adds another level of complexity to this conversation. Globalization has resulted for countries to transmit their culture, values and political principles internationally and India has leveraged this interconnection to broaden its influence.

In his book *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2002)^[7], Joseph Stiglitz gives a critical perspective on globalization while also emphasizing the chances it presents for nations like India to advance political and economic values and change world governance. India has the chance to

demonstrate its principles internationally as a result of its ascent to prominence in the economy, especially when it comes to tackling global economic issues and development inequalities.

Pillars of Soft Power and India's Cultural Diplomacy

India's cultural diplomacy is an important aspect of its soft power strategy. Indian government through its initiatives such as the International Day of Yoga, the promotion of Bollywood and cultural exchange programs has successfully showcased its rich cultural heritage. The five pillars of India's soft power are Saman (Peace), Samad (Solidarity), Samridhhi (Prosperity), Suraksha (Security) and Sanskriti (Culture) forms the foundation of its diplomacy.

Saman (Peace): India's commitment to peace is reflected in its long history of non-violence and diplomatic engagements. India has played a pro active role in UN peacekeeping missions contributing personnel to over 40 missions globally (UN Peacekeeping, 2023). The country's peace-oriented foreign policy combined with its non-aligned status has bolstered its image as a peaceful and stable power. Furthermore, India's engagement in global peace forums such as the G20 and UN Security Council reflects its role as a proponent of global peace and security.

Samad (Solidarity): India has built strong relations with the Global South particularly through its leadership in BRICS and the Non-Aligned Movement (Mukherjee, 2021)^[4]. India's advocacy for global South-South cooperation has earned respect from developing nations which view India as a model for economic development and social progress particularly against Chinese aggressive approach. Additionally, India's regional leadership in South Asia especially through SAARC has enhanced its influence in neighboring countries against Chinese debt trap policy and white elephants projects.

Samridhhi (Prosperity): India's economic success through initiatives such as Make in India and Startup India has positioned it as an emerging global economic powerhouse with emerging global market. The country's growing trade relationships particularly with Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East showcase its economic influence. Furthermore, India's global financial contributions including in some important international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reflect its growing economic soft power potential (World Bank, 2022)^[9].

Suraksha (Security): India's strategy for regional and global security is based on its alliances with significant powers like the United States, Russia and Japan. Additionally, India has established itself as a crucial actor in Indo-Pacific security balancing its historical non-aligned stance with active involvement in security platforms like the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). Moreover, India emphasis on counterterrorism and humanitarian efforts reflects its position as a contributor to regional security (Jaishankar, 2019)^[2].

Sanskriti (Culture): Cultural diplomacy is the key element of India's soft power. Bollywood, classical arts, yoga and

food are among the most visible exports of Indian culture. The International Day of Yoga which is observed all around the world exemplifies how India exploits its cultural history to reach out to global audiences (Mallison, 2018)^[3]. Indian diaspora in the United States, the United Kingdom and the Middle East play a vital role in spreading Indian culture and values. Making its impact in interconnected globalized world.

India's Role in International Organizations

Active participation in international organizations has played an important role in increasing India's soft power. As a basic member of the UN, India has long been a lawyer for multilateral diplomacy and global regulatory reforms. India has been particularly vocal on reforms in the UN Security Council and advocates permanent membership for itself and plays an important role in peace operations worldwide.

Together with the UN, India plays an important role in many international forums including the World Trade Organization (WTO), G20 and BRICS. Through these platforms, India advocates its economic and political goals while participating in dialogues affecting global rule, environmental strategies and sustainable development (Indian Parliamentary Committee Reports, 2023)^[10].

India's role in south-south cooperation has also been postponed by the Indian Technical and Economic Collaborative Program (ITEC) that provides technical assistance and scholarships to developing countries. By facilitating educational opportunities and capacity attitude, India improves diplomatic relations with nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Mukherjee, 2021)^[4].

Role of Digital Media in Enhancing Soft Power

Digital media significantly contributes in boosting India's soft power in the 21st century. Websites like YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook allow India to connect with an international audience highlighting its cultural heritage, democratic principles and economic progress. The Indian government has proactively participated in digital diplomacy with initiatives such as Digital India which advocates for the nation's digital infrastructure and innovations (Jaishankar, 2019)^[2].

The rise of streaming platforms such as Amazon and Prime Netflix has allowed Indian content particularly Bollywood films and shows to reach a global audience (Mallison, 2018)^[3]. The success of series like Sacred Games and Made in Heaven has strengthened India's cultural influence in the worldwide media landscape. Social media influencers especially from the Indian diaspora play a crucial role in promoting Indian culture and values in interconnected globalized world.

Soft Power Ranking of India and Global Perception

Soft power ranking of India has steadily improved in recent years, where India ranks among the top 30 nations globally (Soft Power 30 Report, 2023)^[6]. The key factors contributing strong ranking include India's rich cultural heritage, vibrant democracy and growing economic influence. However, India faces challenges in areas such as infrastructure, human rights and environmental sustainability which impact its ranking along with lack of well-defined perception framework which lacks recognition at global level.

Reputation as a global leader in democracy and promoting human rights remains a significant asset for India. However, issues such as religious intolerance and regional disparities have affected its image. On Comparing nations like the United States which leads in soft power India's relative lack of military might and its challenges with governance have hindered its ascent in the rankings.

India's Role in Vishwamitra Odyssey

The Vishwamitra Odyssey is a cultural diplomacy initiative aimed at promoting India's soft power in global forums as it focuses over promoting global good. It stands as a platform for India to engage with key global players through cultural, academic and technological exchange programs. The Odyssey focuses on regions such as the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East where India has significant geopolitical interests.

Through the Vishwamitra Odyssey India promotes its expertise in areas such as space technology, education and sustainable development. These initiative is seen as a strategic way to enhance India's cultural diplomacy and strengthen influence in key regions like innovation and sustainable development (Mukherjee, 2021) ^[4].

Recommendations

Strengthening Cultural Diplomacy: India should continue to promote its values through programs like International Yoga Day and expand cultural exchange programs particularly in regions where its soft power is still emerging such as Africa and Latin America. Solar diplomacy can work as a important tool for India in promoting its cultural diplomacy.

Leveraging Digital Diplomacy: India must invest more in digital platforms to reach younger global audiences. Initiatives like Digital India should be expanded to offer more opportunities for international collaboration and cultural engagement.

Educational Diplomacy: India should increase the number of scholarships and educational exchange programs to attract international students, particularly from developing nations. The establishment of more Indian cultural centers globally will further promote educational ties.

Regional Engagement: India must continue to strengthen its influence in South Asia, Africa and Southeast Asia through diplomatic, economic and cultural ties. The resulted frustration from Chinese aggressive and debt trap policy can be good alternative for nations India to attract nations in these region. India should enhance its leadership in BRICS and the G20 to further solidify its position as a global leader.

Conclusion

India's soft power capability has significantly increased in age of globalization fueled by its cultural diplomacy, economic advancement and strategic alliances. Despite facing obstacles in some regions India's dedication to peace, democracy and economic growth has established it as an important player on the world stage. By utilizing its cultural, educational and technological resources including

international solar alliance India can enhance its soft power potential at global level.

As India maneuvers through the intricacies of international geopolitics its soft power will be an essential asset for cultivating relationships, encouraging mutual respect and promoting its interests globally. The suggestions detailed in this paper offer a guide for India to enhance its soft power and maintain its ascent as a Vishwaguru in promoting global good.

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