

"INDIA 2047: STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES TO BECOMING A DEVELOPED NATION" -PAPER - II



On August 15, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his first address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort after securing a third consecutive term in office. The speech was not merely a reflection on India's past achievements but primarily focused on charting a transformative vision for the country's future.

At the heart of this vision lies an ambitious goal: transforming India into a developed country by 2047, when the nation will celebrate its 100th year of independence. This bold vision reflects a deep sense of commitment to lifting India out of its current economic and social challenges, propelling it toward an era of unprecedented growth, prosperity, and global influence. However, realizing this vision will require comprehensive reforms, a focus on inclusivity, and a clear strategy that balances economic growth with social development.

In this article, we will explore the strategies, challenges, and key themes discussed by the Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech. We will also delve into the NITI Aayog's recent approach paper, which outlines the pathways to achieving this goal. Furthermore, we will discuss the role of concepts like "Design in India, Design for the World," "One Nation, One Election," and the Uniform Civil Code in shaping India's development trajectory.

The Prime Minister's Vision: A Developed India by 2047

Prime Minister Modi's speech outlined a roadmap for India's development over the next two decades, focusing on accelerating growth across all sectors, enhancing governance, and fostering innovation. The government's vision of a developed India by 2047 is built on multiple pillars: economic prosperity, social inclusion, improved infrastructure, technological advancement, and robust governance. Mr. Modi highlighted that the government had received ideas from citizens across the country and that some of these suggestions were already being implemented to accelerate progress.

One of the key points of the speech was the call for comprehensive reforms at both the national and state levels. Mr. Modi urged state governments to establish clear policies, create land banks, and ensure good governance to attract investments. Recognizing the critical role that states play in driving India's growth, he emphasized that businesses primarily interact with state-level machinery and that reforms at the state level are crucial for improving the ease of doing business. He also encouraged all levels of government to implement at least two reforms every year to collectively enhance the country's growth prospects.

Is the Goal Ambitious?

There is no doubt that the goal of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047 is highly ambitious. Currently, India's per capita GDP stands at around \$2,700, placing it at the lower end of the middle-income countries.

For India to achieve developed-nation status, its per capita income would need to increase by at least eight times over the next two decades. This would require sustained economic growth at rates significantly higher than those seen in the past two decades. According to the NITI Aayog's recent approach paper, India will need to grow at an annual rate of 8-9% over the next 23 years to achieve this target.

The challenges to achieving this growth are immense. India's economic landscape is marked by structural inefficiencies, a significant informal sector, and persistent income inequalities. Furthermore, the global economic environment remains uncertain, with disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions, shifting trade dynamics, and technological changes.

However, India's large and growing workforce, coupled with its robust democratic institutions, offers a unique opportunity to achieve this ambitious goal if the right policies are implemented.

NITI Aayog's Approach Paper: Pathways to Development

The NITI Aayog's approach paper, which has been a focal point in the debate on India's development trajectory, lays out a detailed roadmap for the country's transformation. The paper highlights the need for broad-based reforms across multiple sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure, and services. It emphasizes the importance of enhancing productivity, improving governance, and fostering innovation.

According to the paper, one of the primary requirements for India to achieve developed-nation status is a significant increase in per capita income. This will necessitate creating millions of new jobs in high-productivity sectors, attracting large-scale investments, and ensuring inclusive growth. The paper also underscores the importance of improving human capital, with a particular focus on education, healthcare, and skill development.

To support this growth, the paper recommends a series of targeted interventions, including investment in physical infrastructure, digital transformation, and financial inclusion. It also calls for policy reforms to enhance the ease of doing business, improve labor markets, and streamline regulatory frameworks. The paper's recommendations align closely with the themes discussed in Prime Minister Modi's Independence Day address, particularly in terms of encouraging states to take a proactive role in driving reforms.

India's Development Strategy: The Role of "Design in India, Design for the World"

One of the critical elements of India's development journey will be its ability to harness its demographic dividend—a young and growing workforce. To do this, India must significantly improve the quality of education and skills training. In his speech, Prime Minister Modi emphasized the need for a holistic approach to education that bridges existing gaps and equips young Indians with the skills needed for a rapidly changing global economy.

The government's focus on concepts like "Design in India, Design for the World" reflects this vision. The idea is to transform India into a global hub for innovation and manufacturing, where products are not only made in India but also designed with global markets in mind. Achieving this goal will require substantial investments in research and development (R&D), fostering a culture of innovation, and building robust supply chains.

The government has already introduced several initiatives in this regard, including the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes that aim to boost domestic manufacturing in key sectors. However, to realize the full potential of "Design in India, Design for the World," India will need to address challenges related to infrastructure, logistics, and the regulatory environment. The quality of the workforce will be a decisive factor, and the government's plans to add 75,000 new medical college seats over the next five years is a step in the right direction. Improving higher education and encouraging research in advanced fields will also be crucial.

The Political Dimensions: "One Nation, One Election" and the Uniform Civil Code

Beyond economic and social reforms, Prime Minister Modi's speech also touched on politically significant issues like "One Nation, One Election" and the Uniform Civil Code. Both these ideas have been the subject of intense debate in recent years and are likely to have far-reaching implications for India's governance structure.

The concept of "One Nation, One Election" seeks to synchronize elections for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies, thereby reducing the frequency of elections and streamlining

governance. The Prime Minister noted that continuous elections across different states disrupt the policy environment and decision-making processes, as governments are often in campaign mode. However, implementing this idea will be challenging, given the constitutional and logistical hurdles involved. It will require broad political consensus and careful planning to ensure that the transition is smooth and that all stakeholders are on board.

Similarly, the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is a proposal that has long been part of the political discourse in India. The UCC aims to replace personal laws based on religious customs with a common legal framework applicable to all citizens. While proponents argue that a UCC is essential for ensuring equality and national integration, critics warn that it could undermine cultural diversity and religious freedoms. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of building broad consensus before moving forward with this reform, recognizing the sensitivities involved. Ultimately, the government's focus should remain on economic growth and social development, ensuring that these political reforms do not distract from the core objective of transforming India into a developed nation.

The Government's Strategy: Balancing Reforms and Inclusivity

The government's strategy for achieving developed-nation status by 2047 revolves around a multi-pronged approach that emphasizes economic reforms, infrastructure development, human capital enhancement, and governance improvements. At the heart of this strategy is the need to create an environment conducive to investment and innovation. The Prime Minister's call for states to establish clear policies, create land banks, and ensure good governance reflects this focus on improving the business climate.

In addition to economic reforms, the government recognizes the importance of social development. Initiatives aimed at improving education, healthcare, and skill development are central to this strategy. The focus on the use of the mother tongue in education, as highlighted in the Prime Minister's speech, is particularly significant. By promoting education in regional languages, the government aims to make learning more accessible and inclusive, ensuring that young minds are not held back by language barriers.

The government's plans to create 75,000 additional medical college seats over the next five years is a clear indication of its commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure. This move is expected to address the shortage of healthcare professionals and improve access to medical education, particularly in underserved regions. Furthermore, the emphasis on improving higher education quality will be crucial for retaining talent within the country and reducing the brain drain that has been a persistent challenge for India.

The Road Ahead: Opportunities and Challenges

The road to transforming India into a developed nation by 2047 is fraught with challenges, but it also presents significant opportunities. India's large and youthful population is both a strength and a challenge. On the one hand, it provides a vast pool of talent that can drive innovation and productivity. On the other hand, it requires substantial investments in education, healthcare, and social services to ensure that this demographic dividend is fully realized.

One of the biggest challenges will be creating enough jobs to absorb the millions of young people entering the workforce each year.

This will require a strong push towards industrialization, coupled with efforts to modernize agriculture and boost productivity in the services sector. The government's focus on attracting investments, improving infrastructure, and fostering innovation is well-placed, but it will need to be complemented by social policies that ensure inclusive growth.

MAIN PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question 1:

Critically analyze the feasibility of India's goal to become a developed nation by 2047 in light of the socio-economic challenges it faces. Discuss the role of governance, infrastructure, and human capital in achieving this vision.

To address this question, students should evaluate the ambitious target of India becoming a developed nation by 2047. The answer should begin with a brief overview of the goal and then critically analyze whether this objective is achievable given the current socio-economic conditions. Key areas to explore include:

1. **Governance:** Students should discuss the role of both central and state governments in implementing policies that foster economic growth, improve the ease of doing business, and enhance public services. The impact of political stability and corruption on development should also be considered.
2. **Infrastructure:** Analyze the importance of physical infrastructure, such as transportation, energy, and digital connectivity, in driving economic growth and social development. Highlight recent government initiatives like the Gati Shakti program and their potential impact.
3. **Human Capital:** Discuss the significance of education, healthcare, and skill development in transforming India's young workforce into a productive and innovative engine for growth. Students should consider both current gaps and ongoing initiatives aimed at improving human capital.

The answer should conclude by weighing the strengths and challenges, offering a balanced assessment of the feasibility of this ambitious goal.

Question 2:

Evaluate the potential impact of the “One Nation, One Election” and Uniform Civil Code on India's political and socio-economic landscape. What are the key challenges in implementing these reforms?

This question asks students to critically examine two significant proposals discussed in recent political discourse. The answer should be structured as follows:

1. **Overview of Proposals:** Provide a brief introduction to the concepts of “One Nation, One Election” and the Uniform Civil Code, including their intended objectives.
2. **Potential Impact on Governance and Policy Implementation:** Discuss how synchronizing elections across the country could lead to better policy continuity, reduced administrative costs, and a more stable political environment. Explore whether the Uniform Civil Code can promote social cohesion while ensuring equality under the law.
3. **Challenges and Criticisms:** Identify key challenges in implementing these reforms, including logistical, legal, and constitutional issues in synchronizing elections, and the potential resistance from diverse communities regarding a uniform civil law. Discuss the need for broad-based consensus and inclusivity in the decision-making process.