



THE EXPANSION OF INDIAN MILITARY POWER IN 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract:

In this era of globalization almost every country of the world today is busy in increasing their military strength. According to the Global Fire Power Index, India ranks fourth in the list of militarily powerful countries. The United States is at the top of that list, Russia is at second and India's neighbour China is at third. According to the World Index 2023 report, Britain ranked fifth and South Korea is in sixth position. While Pakistan is weak in terms of finances, it ranked seventh in terms of military. It is followed by Japan, France and Italy respectively. The Ultimate Military Strength Index is created based on various factors, such as the number of military personnel, the total amount of money allocated by the government to the public sector, the total number of personnel to take up the air force and the military, their average salary, the weight of weapons held by the military, etc. India has gradually taken care of all these issues since its independence and today it has emerged as the fourth largest military powerful country in the world, where everyone lives unitedly, irrespective of caste, creed and classes. There is unity and diversity in everything which is the main factor that holds India's territory.

Post-independence India has faced many internal disturbance and foreign invasions from neighborhood at various times but no part of India's territory was lost. Today India is the most populous country in the world due to which there is no lack of sufficient workers in the country. So it can be said that military power has helped to increase national power in India. But there are many reasons behind how India became such a powerful country today.

For example, China's aggression and threat to India during Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister, which resulted in the Indo-China War of 1962, the debut of China's nuclear power in 1964, the Indo-Pak War in 1965, etc., led India to expand its military capabilities for self-defense. Just 10 years after China's nuclear debut, India also detonated a nuclear bomb named Smiling Buddha on 18 May 1974 at Pokhran, Rajasthan. As a result, India gained a new reputation in the military field in Southeast Asia and in the entire world. In the past, the United States, Soviet Russia, Britain and France have emerged as nuclear powers. So the Indian government and Indian researchers realizes that expansion of military power is desirable in order to gain influence in world politics and foreign policy. But India has never attacked others by itself. Because India wants to solve bilateral problems through peaceful settlement. But when India was attacked, India did not hesitate to counterattack. In 1998, India tested a nuclear bomb for the second time, and in 1999, Pakistan identified itself as its arch-enemy over Kashmir. So it can be said that India's strategy is more like John Mearsheimer's defensive realism. Today in the age of globalization India has huge powers like USA, Russia, Britain, China and France. India will strengthen the place of global governance in the upcoming days.

Keywords- Military, Evolution, Modernisation, Strategic Relation, Transformation

Introduction-

India is the fourth most powerful military country in the world. Along with USA, Russia, China, India has made great progress in military. Since 1947, India has been in the list of backward countries of the third world, but in 21st century it has become a unique power. Today, Indian Navy, Air Force, and Land Forces, continues to use state-of-the-art equipment in all areas .76 years after independence, India's impressive military progress is truly commendable. Because it is surprising that a country with massive poverty, unemployment, and financial crisis can make military progress like this. India currently has the most advanced and powerful weapons, as in the Air Force -Modern fighter Jets, Rafael, A Su-30Mki, Netra AEW&C, AC-130J Hercules, LCA Tejas, Hawk . Ground forces include Arjun, T-90S Bhishma, T-72 Ajeya, BMP2 , Sarath, NAMICA, TATA Kestral etc. All the equipment that are available in Navy are Nuclear power Ballistic Missile Submarines, Landing Craft Utility, Fleet Tankers, various auxiliary Vessels, Aircraft carriers, Amphibious Transport Dock many more weapons like etc.

However, India's military development did not happen overnight. Since 1974, India has emerged as a nuclear-powered nation and in 1998, Vajpayee's prime ministership tested a nuclear bomb for the second time. The UPA government was formed in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections. Economist and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during this time laid great emphasis on the economy. Continued interviews with different countries of the world and it can be said that India's economy has improved a lot. In 2009, when Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister for the second time, he increased the allocation of the money to the military sector. In the budgets of 2009, 2010 and 2011, military spending was 38.72 billion, 46.09 billion, and 49.63 billion US dollars respectively. The 2014 16th Lok Sabha elections witnessed the fall of the UPA government and the formation of the Government of India. Narendra Modi assumed the post of Prime Minister, he travelled to different countries of the world to establish good relations. Even as Narendra Modi tried to grow the Indian economy, he continued to allocate large sums of money to the military sector. India started buying powerful fighter jets and weapons like Rafael, Tejas from abroad. Various modern systems have started to be used to improve the ground forces, air forces and naval forces. In today's world, India has become a new powerful negotiating country. One day India will reach at the highest point in terms of military power.

EVOLUTION –

Every state in the modern world wants to dominate international politics and in order to dominate, each state has given importance to its economic development, improvement of social standards, appropriate use of natural resources and above all, military power. Since World War II, the entire world has been divided into two classes. During the Cold War situation, a struggle for military power began between states. Soviet Russia continued to increase its hegemony by promoting socialist ideology, while the United States continued to expand its power by promoting capitalism. In this situation, both sides want to bring different countries of the world under their control. The powerful countries of the world began to participate in these two different ideological camps. There were different motives behind their participation. Relations between friendly nations also deteriorate when they join camps with different ideologies. At that very moment India did not accept any socialist or capitalist ideology. Rather, it has tried to build its own relations in the international field by being neutral. In the first 2 decades of independence, India made incredible progress under the Five Year Plan. But at that time Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not give much importance to the military. Because at that time he wanted to solve the internal as well as external problems peacefully. However, after Nehru's death in 1964, subsequent leaders began to focus on the country's military power. As a result of Pakistan's aggression on one side and China's threat on the other side, India will initially increase its capacity to keep its territory intact.

India's foreign policy was weak till the 90s. Ever since Manmohan Singh became the finance minister, efforts have been made to strengthen India's economic base. Because it became clear that the foreign policy cannot be implemented if the country's economy is weak. And the relationship of the one country with another is established on the basis of several interests. Strengthening the economy is one of the goals of every country. Malone and Mukherjee in their book Polity security and foreign policy in contemporary India state that since the early 1990s, India has tended to trade globally. And India uses the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal for this trade. Countries in South Asia such as India, China, Pakistan, Somalia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, etc. use the 28,3500 square mile Indian Ocean as a major hub for the import and export of commercial oil and other commodities. As a result, all these countries have intervened strategically in the Indian Ocean at different times. As a result, India's security assurance in the Indian Ocean has naturally been challenged. Neighbour country China continues to increase its power. India also continues to develop capabilities. China never wants India to maintain its hegemony in Southeast Asia. Similarly, India never wants China to dominate South East Asia. As a result, a silent power struggle has started between the two countries. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came into power in the second decade of the 21st century, India's territorial disputes with China have escalated. However, the Indian Army never retreated despite the dispute over the India-China border.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY –

Power politics is going on in today's world. As a result every country in the world is trying to expand its in own way, so that it can influence international politics. India is no exception. In the 21st century, India has strengthened its military for various purpose-

- I. To analyse the historical background of India and neighbours country
- II. To find out how India is becoming militarily powerful, despite being a third world country
- III. To examine the Indian defence budget
- IV. How India can become a superpower country
- V. To study the power politics between the powerful country
- VI. A study of India's relation with powerful countries in 21st century

METHODOLOGY -

The present study has been descriptive and analytical research method. This study was carried out using the qualitative strategy. This article aims to explore how India becoming a military power in the 21st century. Only secondary data sources have been used in the study. The secondary data have been collected from the related books, journals, article, newspapers and web resources. This included official statements, policy documents, agreements and report from governmental and non-governmental organisation.

MODERNISATION; STOCK UP ON POWERFUL WEAPONS –

India's fourth position in military terms is due to several reasons. Although India lags behind in terms of economy, education, culture, etc., it can easily fight with any country in the military field. Currently, aggressive states are trying to seize power from other states by using various tactics or sometimes by war. But India is a peaceful country. India has never overshadowed others to serve its own interests. But India will not think twice to counter attack if it is attack. There are many such examples in the history of India. However, when Pakistan attacked Pulwama on February 14, 2019, India counterattacked. India has been allocating a huge amount of money to the military sector in the annual budget every year. The defence budget in 2022 was 5.25 lakh crore. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget on 2nd February, 2023. 5.94 lakh crore has been allocated in the defence sector in budget 2023. Which is the highest in the history of India. The list of money allocated to the Defence sector for several years is shown below-

Indian Year Wise Defense Budget

Year	Budget (USD, Billion)	Increase(%)
2021	\$76.60B	5.2% from 2020
2020	\$72.94B	2.05% from 2019
2019	\$71.47B	7.86% from 2018
2018	\$66.26B	2.63% from 2017
2017	\$64.56B	13.98% from 2015
2016	\$56.64B	10..41% from 2015
2015	\$51.30B	0.77% from 2014
2014	\$50.91B	7.41% from 2013
2013	\$47.40B	0.38% From 2012

India's total budget in 2023 is 45,03,097 crores, of which 5,93,537.64 crores is allocated to defence. That is, 13.18 percent of the total budget is allocated to the defence sector only. It can be said that the year 2023 has been earmarked for the Ministry of Defence. So it appears that India is spending a huge amount of money on the military sector. With this allocated money, India is going to acquire modern weapons from powerful countries. The five super power countries of the world like United States of America, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China etc. are advancing in terms of India and military respectively. During the Cold War, the world was divided into two ideologies, and after 1991, after the fall of United states of Soviet Russia, America established global dominance. However, in the 21st century, powerful countries have also started power politics among themselves.

After the fall of Soviet Russia in 1991, Ukraine became known as an independent country. It is up to each independent country to establish relations with other countries. However, in the second decade of the 21st century, the United States offered Ukraine various options for NATO membership. Ukraine wants to join NATO, but Russia has blocked Ukraine from such a decision. As a result, the current Russia-Ukraine war has shown the entire world that Russia will not accept US hegemony. In other words, the US-Russia power politics has started again. When the 2022 USA-Ukraine war breaks out, some of the world's most powerful countries supported Russia, while others took side of USA. But India has maintained neutrality here. India does not want to be influenced by any power. India never wants war to happen. India wants bilateral issues to be resolved on the basis of peaceful settlement. But only Russia stood by India after independence.

Factors to Increase Capacity –

Since the birth of civilization, one side has wanted to be stronger than the other. So India needs to become strong to sustain its existence. Because Pakistan and China can strategically choke India. The wars of 1962, 1965, 1999 have made India understand that to sustain its existence, the increase in power is absolutely necessary. India also wants to maintain its domination in South Asia, and also India has to face the challenges of this supremacy from China. Today, China is a country that exports all kinds of small and large daily necessities to South East Asia and the whole world and earns huge profits. As a result, China is naturally developing a friendly relationship with different countries of the world. Although India does not export modern machinery like China, it exports a large number of agricultural products and earns foreign exchange. So it appears that a kind of competition has started between India and China for the purpose of expanding their dominance in South East Asia. India's competition to establish dominance over China's hegemony can change world politics a lot. Because the end of the Cold War in 1991 led to the collapse of Soviet Russia. The monopoly of the United States was established in the entire world politics. However, in the 21st century, the way China continues to increase its own power has greatly challenged the hegemony of the United States. In this situation, the United States has extended a helping hand to India in various ways to curb China's power. As a result, China's progress is accompanied by India's normal progress.

In international politics, almost every country in the world is using balance of power as one of the arms. If you look at the map of the world, you will see that the location of each country is different. Some countries are located along the sea and some countries are located in the middle of the continent. As a result, the position of all countries in terms of security is not the same. Some countries gained independence a long time ago and managed to expand their power, while some countries gained independence in the middle of the 20th century and entered into a power struggle to maintain their existence. As a result, there has been a power differential between different countries. But every country wants to present itself in world politics and international market. As a result, various countries have become allied with other countries. After World War II, powerful countries formed alliances among themselves. Such alliances as NATO, SEATO, SENTO, WARSAW etc. Each was created in terms of several interests, such as NATO was created to limit socialist ideology. As a result, they want to destroy the dominance of Russia and China in the politics of Asia and the world. On the other hand, the then Soviet Russia made the Warsaw Pact with the communist countries against the Western alliance. That is, there are the allied states' own interests. After the Second World War, America gave financial aid to the affected countries of Europe and tried to bring them under its control. But strong countries become stronger with America's help. As a result, the countries with different ideologies located next to the countries that receive American aid face a security crisis. They also joined the alliance to overcome this security crisis. That is, a balance of power is created. Although India initially remained neutral, it started joining various organizations after the 1960's. India became a member of SAARC in 1985. India plays the role of Big Brother to the eight countries that are currently members of SAARC. SAARC was created to promote mutual cooperation, trust, and non-aggression in Southeast Asia. China has not yet gained membership of the SAARC. India's hegemony in South-East Asia, China's membership of SAARC will pose many challenges to India. SAARC countries in Southeast Asia have created organizations such as SEATO (South East Asian Treaty Organisation) to promote regional cooperation. This has resulted in a significant increase in commercial exchanges. Although India is not a full member of ASEAN, India has good relations with the countries of this organization. Some names of organizations to which India is a member- Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation(BIMSTEC), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO), Asian African Legal Consultative Organisation(AALCO), Australia Group(AG), International Atomic Energy Agency(IAEA), International Chamber of Commerce(ICC), International Development Association(IDA), International Fund for Agricultural Development(IFAD), Multi sectoral Investment Guarantee Agency(MIGA), Missile Technology Control Regime(MTCR) etc. And India is also member of WHO, UNO, WMO, WTO, NAM, IPEEC, IMO, IDA, ICRM and many so on. So it is seen that India maintains relations with various organizations of the world.

Transformation; Emergence as a strong country-

Indian Army, Indian Air Force, Indian Navy have all increased India's capabilities to a large extent. In the 20th century, India did not spend much on the military. As a result, it was not very strong militarily. Since 1991, when the New Economic Policy was launched by Manmohan Singh, the standard of Indian economy improved. Since 2000, the UPA and NDA governments have given more importance to India's military security. From 2004 to 2013, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh continued to improve the Indian economy through bilateral negotiations with various countries. Foreign relations are also getting better. It can be said that Manmohan Singh's contribution to the current economy is huge. In 2014, Narendra Modi stepped on the soil of different countries when he became the Prime Minister. Although India has been somewhat in tune with Russian socialist thought for a long time, India has now turned towards capitalism. India has developed good relations with the powerful capitalist countries of the world. India has received financial assistance and signed agreements from various countries, including the United States, to improve its internal infrastructure. For example, Modi government has taken 300 million Yen (Indian 18750 crore) loan from Japan, which is known as Bullet Train Project. Earlier, India signed an economic agreement with Japan in 2011 known as CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement). India has good relations with Russia since long. Whenever India faced problems, Russia came and helped in all economic and educational fields. Treaty of peace and friendship was signed between India and Russia in 1971. Also India-Russia Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2000, Special and Privileged Partnership in 2010, Strategic Vision Document in 2014 etc. were signed. India has initiated the International North-South Transport Corridor: A Multilateral Connectivity Project in collaboration with Russia and Iran. Also India and Russia have joined together in defence projects such as Brahmos Missile, INS Vikramaditya, Akula Class Submarines, S-400 Missile Defence System etc. India developed the Kudankulam Nuclear Plan in Tamil Nadu with the help of Russia. Russia is the only country trying to get India a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a speech spoke about the good relations between India and Russia in this way " Russia has been the Pillar of India's Development and security. Every child in India that Russia is our friend. Russia stood with us in tough times without Expecting anything in return".

US relations with India have improved a lot in the 21st century. The relationship we have today was not there in the early stages. From the beginning, the United States has supported Pakistan's activities. Even America has supported Pakistan in the Kashmir issue. However, relations with India improved from the 1990s onwards. In the 21st century, the United States signed several agreements with India. Indo-USA Nuclear Deal signed with India in 2006 and Enhanced Strategic Dialogue on Energy in 2018. However, India has signed several agreements with the US to ensure its own security, like- Malabar Naval Exercise, General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA,2002), Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA,2016), Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA,2018), etc. Also, India, USA, Japan, Australia have jointly developed QUAD. So it appears that India has strengthened its military side by maintaining overall relations with various countries. France's discussion is very relevant in the context of increasing India's military capabilities. 36 Rafael fighter jets are said to be brought from France to strengthen the Indian Air Force. Currently, India has brought several Rafael jets to its own country. India has also signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement with France to strengthen bilateral security. France never wants China to expand its influence in the Indo-Pacific region. Mutual cooperation between India and France has been developed to

reduce China's hegemony in this region. That is, it can be said that India has developed itself as a unique powerful country in the world through various agreements and cooperation with powerful countries.

Conclusion-

Despite the expansion of India's military, there has not been much development in the economy, education, etc. In the first decade of the 21st century, India's economy was doing well. But in the second decade, it declines a bit. The Prime Minister of India wants to take India militarily to a place where India can have a good impact on world politics. However, it is necessary to keep an eye on other aspects of the country as well as the military side. Because after 1945 the arms race started between Russia and USA. The US spends huge amounts of money to strengthen its military capabilities. Soviet Russia, on the other hand, began to use all of the country's economy for military purposes. As a result, the economies of the two superpower alliances and their member countries began to decline. Thus the arms race between nations continues. Later, Soviet Russia realized that military expansion would not be justified by spending the economy in this way. As a result, Soviet Russia collapsed in 1992. Similarly, if India focuses only on promoting military power without looking at other aspects, then the economy of India may also decline. In 2023, India's first ever military allocation is 13% of the country's total annual budget. But one thing is clear that India is buying modern weaponry in large quantities and the country's security posture is getting stronger. As a result, it can be said that India will emerge as a major decision-making country in world politics in the coming days. America has dominated world politics since 1992. But now Russia is rising again against American hegemony. But with the change of time, the power of different countries changes. India was very weak militarily after independence. Today that weak India is known as a big powerful country. For decades after independence, India was marginal in international politics. India has transformed itself to such an extent that it now has good relations with various countries of the world. In coming days India will emerge as a big powerful country.

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