



IJMRRS

**International Journal for Multidisciplinary
Research, Review and Studies**

ISSN: 3049-124X

Volume 1 - Issue 2

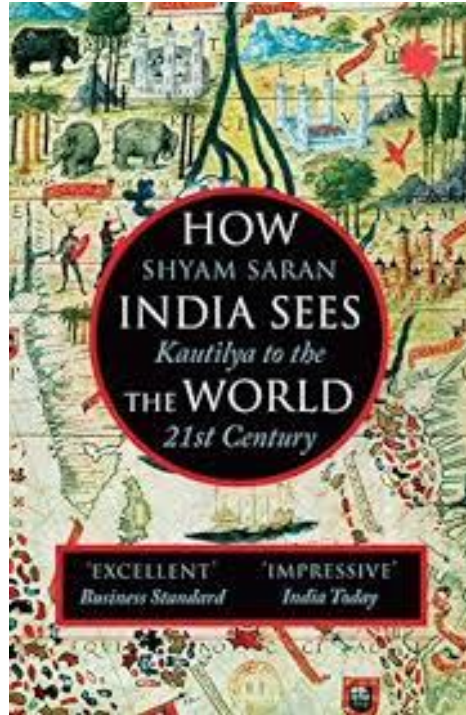
2024

© 2024 International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Review and Studies

How India Sees the World: Kautilya to the 21st Century

Book review

By Kajaa Lakshmi K



Book: *How India Sees the World: Kautilya to the 21st Century*

Author: Shyam Saran

Publisher: Juggernaut Books

ISBN: 9789386228857

Publication: 2017

Pages: 312

Rs: 499

Shyam Saran became a part of the Indian Foreign Service in 1970, he has worked in various capital cities around the world such as Beijing, Tokyo, and Geneva. He served as India's Ambassador to Myanmar, Indonesia, and Nepal and as High Commissioner to Mauritius. Shyam Saran led the various

divisions at the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. In 1991/92, he served as a Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, providing counsel to the Prime Minister on matters of foreign policy, nuclear issues, and defence.

Following Saran became India's Foreign Secretary in 2004 and served in that till September 2006. After retiring, he was selected as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Indo-US civil nuclear matters and later as the Special Envoy and Chief Negotiator for Climate Change. He has finished his role in Government and gone back to being a regular citizen after that he begin his writer journey and penned two books one of them is this review about.

Part One: Tradition and History

In beginning of this chapter, the author gives historical base for India's power projection from Mahabharata, Ramayana, Arthashastra, Nitisara etc.

Later he defines -

“Foreign policy is the strategy a state adopts to advance its national interests as articulated by its political leadership but within a contested geopolitical space characterized by complex interstate relations”. (pg26)

“Diplomacy concerns the implementation of foreign policy objectives using a range of instruments, such as interstate dialogue; negotiation of treaties, rules or norms; and the influencing of external political and public opinion”. (pg27)

He notably mentions that non-alignment assured the country its autonomy in the realm of international relations. The result of non-aligned India being seen as a credible and trusted international actor, able to work as a bridge between the Cold War rivals.

In the last part of this chapter author mentions the post-cold war dynamics and growth of India in adopting liberalization under Rao's supremacy. Growth of India as benign and had acceptance of globe.

Part Two: Neighbours

In this chapter the author discusses the relations of Potential India with South Asia countries. He says India will need to ensure a stable, peaceful and secure periphery by its neighbourhood first policy as important because the crises in neighbouring countries, engage the energies of the Indian state so that other objectives may have to take a back seat. (pg66) It's needed to see our borders as 'connectors', as

transmission belts on which developmental impulses can travel without barriers. Insists connectivity of border regions with rest of the nation by being operational (tourism, trade, services etc).

He characterizes India-Pakistan relations during his term as dialogue-disruption-dialogue. (pg80). The Sino-Pakistan axis targeting India has been a nagging security challenge for us for the past few decades and is likely to remain so. (pg82) After notable examples of Indo Pakistan peace efforts, author says India has not been able to craft an effective strategy to deal with Pakistan's use of cross-border terrorism as an instrument of state policy. (pg97).

The author compares cultures and says Chinese culture is a predominantly visual one whereas India's is predominantly an aural culture, with the spoken word, the chanted mantra and vocal music. (pg118) China's deception tactics and use of force are seen as their way of pursuing National Interest where India seen to resort use of force when the diplomacy fails. After serious of diplomatic talk to resolve Border dispute with China, Nehru's optimism did not expect any major conflict with China eventually end up to totally unprepared to handle the Chinese assault in 1962. Author gives different accounts regarding the steps involved in solving Indo-China border dispute and the eventualities that lead to solving the dispute earliest. It is seen that two countries regard the border dispute will be influenced by their perceptions of the regional and global equations at play. (pg114) One of the main factors in resolving their conflict is that China and India, two significant developing nations, agreed to their respective roles in establishing a new global political and economic order. (pg146)

Author says that Nepal and India are associated with the historical, cultural, religious, ethnic and kinship ties like the Indian epic Ramayana. (pg150). It is seen through this book Nepal is India open not India-Locked. (pg170) Author says Nepal has all the ingredients to be one of most successful and affluent economies and India has better chances in influencing developments there.

Part Three: The Wider World

Author says climate change and energy security are two sides of the same coin. First, climate change is a stock and not a flow problem, Second, even if emissions were to become zero, climate change would continue because the stock of Green House Gases in the planetary atmosphere will decline only gradually over many years. Third, climate change is a global threat that cannot be tackled by national or even regional solutions (pg. 178). Author says there was no energy security policy that India holds at the times of his tenure and he believes to evolve its posture later.

Author recalls his assignment tenure in negotiating Indo-US Nuclear deal in this chapter. He says that Condoleezza Rice played as a major driver in India-US relations. Further says Indo-US relations is

vital because of their shared interests in tackling terrorism and upholding Liberal International Order. (pg202) Author lists some the hurdles in completing the deal are First, number of reactors placed under the civilian category Second, safeguards regarding the Fast breeder reactor (FBR) Third, staffs working in civilian facilities will not work in military facilities. (pg211) Following hard obstacles, the author honours George W. Bush and Manmohan Singh for creating record by signing the nuclear agreement that significantly affects India's energy security in today's globe. Following the Indo-US nuclear pact, India has signed agreements with Russia and France. Additionally, India joins the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and the Australia Group.

The section ends with the chapter 'Shaping the Emerging World Order and India's Role'. The author points out the US is still in dominant power position but competed closely by China not Russia. The author gives out various scenarios of China activism ranging from South China Sea to Asia. (pg. 266) He further says India to work with credible awareness to contain such activist policies and stop making China- centric Asia. The epilogue, 'India and the New Global Landscape', ends the book by three domains in which India can make its way, those are Maritime, space, cyber. India's capability in these domains will showcase it in the Global arena. Author also says India's way to tackle adversaries should be on the basis of age-old principles of *Sama, dana, Danda, bheda*.

Finally, it is an excellent book by Shyam Saran his simple language and way he carries the readers through interesting and challenging instances of his diplomatic tenure attracts me and looking forward to read his another book on "How China sees the World".