NEXT IAS

DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

NEED OF INDIAN IDEAS FOR INDIA'S VISHWAGURU VISION

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Context

- India's aspiration to become a **Vishwaguru (a global teacher)** requires the generation of original Indian ideas and adaptation that shape global discourse.

India's Aspiration of Vishwaguru (Global Teacher)

- India's aspiration to become a *Vishwaguru* is deeply rooted in its **civilizational ethos, philosophical heritage, and emerging global role**.

- Historically, India was a land of spirituality and scholarship and a beacon of universal knowledge systems through centers like **Nalanda**, **Takshashila**, and **Vikramshila**.

- In the modern context, the **term** Vishwaguru signifies **India's ambition to guide global thought** in areas such as **peace, sustainability, and moral governance** while **integrating ancient wisdom with modern innovation**.

Historical Context and Cultural Foundation

- According to the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**, the **Indic civilization** profoundly **influenced Asia's intellectual and spiritual traditions**, from **Persia to Southeast Asia**.

- **India's contributions** to mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy laid the foundation for global knowledge systems.

- Ancient scriptures like the Upanishads **and** Bhagavad Gita emphasize universal values like Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) which today form the **moral core of India's** Vishwaguru **vision.**

- **Other Intellectual Heritage:**

    - **Aryabhata** and **Bhaskara** revolutionized mathematics and astronomy.
    - **Chanakya's Arthashastra** codified statecraft and economic governance.
    - **JC Bose**, **CV Raman**, and **SN Bose** reshaped global science.

Modern Vision: From Knowledge Economy to Knowledge Civilization

- **India's global ambitions** are seen as transitioning from being a 'knowledge economy' to a 'knowledge civilization'.

    - It underscores the integration of **ethical education, science, and spiritual balance**.

- **India's** Vishwaguru **model** promotes dialogue where leadership is exercised through **moral authority and cultural exchange** rather than economic coercion.

    - It draws on **India's civilizational heritage** like **Vedanta, yoga, and pluralism** as **soft power tools.**

- The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** envisions transforming India into a global educational hub by **internationalizing its universities,** attracting global students, and reviving indigenous learning systems such as Y**oga, Ayurveda, and Sanskrit studies.**

    - It aligns with the *Vishwaguru* mission by combining intellectual modernization with cultural rootedness.

Major Concerns and Structural Challenges

- **Educational and Research Deficit:** India's **R&D investment is below 1% of GDP** (UNESCO Science Report, 2024), far less than global leaders like the US or China.

    - Global university rankings reveal limited representation of Indian universities in the top 200.
    - The **brain drain** remains significant, with **top STEM talent migrating abroad**.

- **Global Image and Democratic Backsliding:** Concerns over **press freedom, religious polarization**, and **judicial independence** could weaken India's credibility as a moral 'teacher'.

- ◆ Reports by Freedom House **and** V-Dem Institute label India as an 'electoral autocracy', undermining its soft-power narrative.
- **Socio-Economic Disparities:** Persistent **inequality and rural underdevelopment** challenge India's claim to global leadership.
  - ◆ The *Economic Survey 2024* notes uneven access to education, healthcare, and digital resources, affecting national capability building.
- **Technology and Innovation Gaps:** Despite progress in space and digital policy, India faces **AI ethics, cybersecurity, and data localization** challenges.
  - ◆ Lack of sustained innovation ecosystems limits India's technological authority in global fora.
- **Foreign Policy and Strategic Balance:** Maintaining **non-alignment** while engaging with the US-led and BRICS blocs poses dilemmas.
  - ◆ India's cautious stance on Ukraine, Israel-Gaza, and China may dilute its moral authority.
- **Cultural Soft Power vs. Political Messaging:** Over **commodification of culture** and politicization of spirituality**,** while yoga diplomacy and Ayurveda promotion expand influence.
  - ◆ The line between cultural teaching and ideological export is increasingly blurred.

Related Efforts & Steps

- **Internationalization of Education: National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** lays the foundation for transforming India into a *Vishwaguru* through globalized higher education. NEP emphasizes 'Indian knowledge systems' like yoga, Ayurveda, and Sanskrit as cultural soft power tools. It encourages:
  - ◆ Foreign universities to establish campuses in India.
  - ◆ Indian universities to expand abroad.
  - ◆ International student exchange and research collaborations.
- **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Division of Ministry of Education**: It promotes integration of traditional Indian disciplines like philosophy, sciences, and art into modern curricula. Efforts include:
  - ◆ Setting up *"Bharatiya Gyan Parampara"* research centers.
  - ◆ Global conferences on yoga and Ayurveda.
  - ◆ Partnerships with UNESCO on heritage knowledge.
- **G20 Presidency & Global South Leadership:** India positioned itself as a *moral and intellectual leader* advocating for equity, sustainability, and inclusive growth during its G20 presidency.
  - ◆ The *'Vishwaguru narrative'* was embedded in India's global diplomacy, highlighting ancient principles like *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam ('the world is one family').*
- **Cultural Diplomacy & Global Yoga Day**: I**nternational Day of Yoga** (celebrated in 190+ countries) and **Vaccine Maitri** are key soft power instruments of India's Vishwaguru aspiration.
  - ◆ It showcases India's contribution to global health and mindfulness through traditional knowledge.
- **Study in India Programme***:* It aims to attract 200,000 international students, and offers scholarships and promotes Indian universities as affordable, high-quality options.
  - ◆ Strategic partnerships with African and Southeast Asian nations align with India's *Vishwaguru diplomacy.*
- **Digital University & Global Open Access**: The **National Digital University project** enables global learners to access Indian education online.
  - ◆ Focus on multilingual courses rooted in Indian philosophy, ethics, and sciences.
- **Cultural Revival & Civilizational Diplomacy**: Initiatives like *'Dekho Apna Desh'* promote civilizational continuity.
  - ◆ Collaboration between ICCR and MEA to export Indian performing arts, literature, and crafts globally.

- **Science, Technology & Innovation as Knowledge Export:** Mission Innovation 2.0, ISRO's educational outreach, and collaborations on AI and digital governance signal India's transformation from a *knowledge receiver* to a *knowledge creator*.

True Measure of Global Leadership

- Nations that define the language of global discourse shape the boundaries of imagination.
    - Britain's dominance rested on **exporting the** liberal political economy along with naval power.
    - United States led by **advancing** realism **and** liberal institutionalism.
    - China articulates its own intellectual constructs like Tianxia **and** Digital Sovereignty to challenge Western universals.

Way Forward

- **Educational Renaissance:** Invest ≥3% of GDP in R&D; reform NEP 2020 implementation with global collaboration.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Prioritize rural digital literacy, women's participation, and youth entrepreneurship.
- **Value-Based Diplomacy:** Anchor foreign policy in Gandhian ethics and multilateral cooperation.
- **Civilizational Modernity:** Present India's ancient wisdom as compatible with modern science and sustainability.
- **Institutional Credibility:** Strengthen democratic institutions to enhance legitimacy of India's 'Vishwaguru' vision.

Source: IE

Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] Examine the role of indigenous Indian ideas in realizing India's aspiration to become a Vishwaguru. How can India move from being a consumer of global thought to a producer of globally influential knowledge?

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