International Relations · GS - II

India's growing economic, military and diplomatic capabilities have strengthened its influence in Asia. However, translating its potential into comprehensive national power remains a challenge. Analyse.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Comprehensive national power, economic growth, military modernisation, diplomatic influence, demographic dividend, strategic autonomy, regional partnerships, structural constraints

Model Answer

Introduction

The Asia Power Index, published by the Lowy Institute, evaluates the relative power and influence of countries in the region. India's reported 2026 score of 40.5 highlights its expanding regional role, while also drawing attention to the challenges of converting its potential into comprehensive national power.

Factors Strengthening India's Power

1. **Economic capabilities:** A large domestic market, expanding manufacturing, infrastructure development and growing trade contribute to India's economic influence.
2. **Military modernisation:** Indigenous defence production, missile capabilities, naval expansion and maritime surveillance strengthen India's strategic position.

3. **Diplomatic influence:** India's participation in the G20, BRICS, SCO and Quad enhances its engagement with major global and regional powers.
4. **Demographic potential:** A young workforce, skilled professionals and expanding technological capabilities provide long-term strategic advantages.
5. **Strategic partnerships:** Defence cooperation, energy agreements and connectivity initiatives strengthen India's regional relationships.

Major Constraints

1. **Economic disparities:** The gap in economic scale and technological investment with leading regional powers limits India's influence.
2. **Defence dependence:** Reliance on imported military platforms and critical technologies creates strategic vulnerabilities.
3. **Regional instability:** Border tensions, geopolitical competition and instability in neighbouring countries complicate India's strategic environment.
4. **Human development challenges:** Unequal access to quality education, healthcare and employment affects the conversion of demographic potential into productive strength.

Way Forward

1. Accelerate manufacturing, research and development and technological innovation.
2. Strengthen indigenous defence capabilities and maritime partnerships.
3. Deepen neighbourhood diplomacy and regional connectivity.
4. Improve human capital through education, healthcare and skill development.

Conclusion

India's comprehensive national power will depend on its ability to convert economic growth, military capabilities and diplomatic influence into sustainable strategic outcomes. A balanced approach combining domestic development with effective regional engagement is essential.

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