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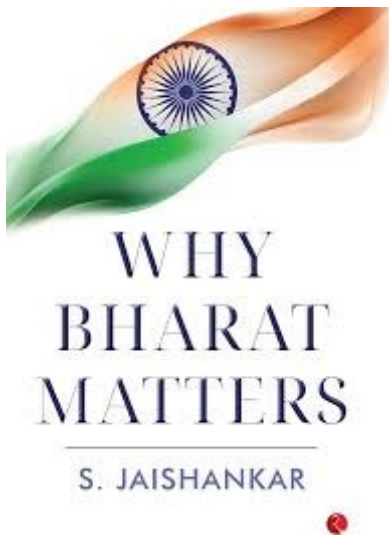
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Book Review: Why Bharat Matters by S. Jaishankar

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ABSTRACT

'Why Bharat Matters' by S. Jaishankar provides incisive perspectives on how India has repositioned herself in the global arena as an upcoming socio-economic and cultural superpower since the ascendance of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister of the country in 2014. Jaishankar has also looked at current challenges and prospects for the country in a fast-changing global scenario. The book connects the wisdom from ancient epics with emerging international relations vis-à-vis India in a compelling manner. He builds his narrative on the rich cultural heritage of India, drawing heavily from Ramayana and Mahabharata. The book provides a convincing paradigm for India's strategic role in geo-politics for the betterment of communities across the globe.



KEYWORDS: Geo-politics, Cultural Heritage, Bharat, India

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Book: Why Bharat Matters

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'Why Bharat Matters' by S. Jaishankar provides incisive perspectives on how India has repositioned herself in the global arena as an upcoming socio-economic and cultural superpower since the ascendance of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister of the country in 2014. Jaishankar has also looked at current challenges and prospects for the country in a fast-changing global scenario. The book connects the wisdom from ancient epics with emerging international relations vis-à-vis India in a compelling manner. He builds his narrative on the rich cultural heritage of India, drawing heavily from Ramayana and Mahabharata. The book provides a convincing paradigm for India's strategic role in geo-politics for the betterment of communities across the globe. According to Parashar (2024), 'Why Bharat Matters' is meticulously researched, insightfully analysed, and has an engaging narrative. The book is a testament to India's enduring relevance and potential to shape a more prosperous and peaceful world.'

The book promotes the idea of India as '*Vishwa Mitra*' (friend of the world) rather than '*Vishwa Guru*' (high priest of the world). In the book, 'the narrative of Ram exemplifies a rising power, which harmonises its interests with a commitment to global good; it provides valuable lessons in strategic creativity, moral decision-making and the complexities of international relations' (Bhowmick, 2024). While India is poised to be one of the top five economies of the world, the concept of India as a friend of the world can enhance acceptance of the country as economic and cultural superpower by both the powerful nations as well as vulnerable ones. Underdeveloped and developing nations can look up to India without being intimidated. Top economies of the world can look at the country without being threatened. The book tries to establish an inspirational role of India at the global canvas (Anupam, 2024).

The book is divided into eleven chapters. Chapter 1: Presenting a World View talks about how India is traversing the tempestuous world as a "rising power". Chapter 2: Foreign Policy and You provides a critique of the intricate relationship between Indian foreign policy and the lives

of its citizens. Chapter 3: The State of the World critically examines contemporary global affairs and their impact on India. Chapter 4: Back to the Future gives a holistic analysis of the current worldwide situation and explores various themes like the tapering dominance of the USA, the rise of China, the emergence of “others”, and the evolving disposition of geopolitics.

Chapter 5: A Transformational Decade objectively looks at the growth of the Indian foreign policy under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. Chapter 6: Making Friends, Influencing People gives an overview of India’s foreign policy in the 21st century, focusing on its relationships with major powers like the UK, Russia, France, and the West. Chapter 7: Quad: A Grouping Foretold reflects on the development of the Quad and its significance in the Indo-Pacific. Chapter 8: Dealing with China analyses India’s contrasting approaches towards China. The world is complex; miscalculations happen, and complacency is dangerous. Chapter 9: Re-imagining Security and Chapter 10: The Roads Not Taken provide insights on the changing nature of security as traditional notions of security based on policing and military are insufficient today. Chapter 11: Why Bharat Matters explores India’s trajectory from independence to a self-confident and influential country. Its democratic values, development goals, and innovative solutions offer inspiration and practical examples for other countries.

The book is likely to serve as ready reckoner on India’s current stature on the world map for the diplomats and public policy experts while providing enough inputs for researchers in international relations, diplomacy and geopolitics.

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