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VIJAY: Force Multiplier in the Journey to Viksit Bharat

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"Security and prosperity are mutually reinforcing objectives of the State."

—Acharya Chanakya

Abstract

India is at a defining moment in its journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047. The transformation envisioned for the country is not limited to economic growth, technological advancement or improved infrastructure. It demands a secure, resilient and technologically empowered nation, capable of protecting its sovereignty and national interests in an increasingly complex strategic environment. The Indian Armed Forces stand at the centre of this transformation.

The path crafted through "VIJAY" is not merely a military, but a national transformation. It connects the courage of the Yodha, the creativity of the innovator, the strength of indigenous industry and the power of jointness into one coherent national endeavour.

Keywords: JAI, VIJAY, Viksit Bharat@2047, Atmanirbhar Bharat, WONA

Introduction

India is at a defining moment in its journey towards becoming a developed nation or moving closer to its aim of **Viksit Bharat@2047**. The transformation envisioned for the country is not limited to economic growth, technological advancement or improved infrastructure. It also demands a secure, resilient and technologically empowered nation, capable of protecting its sovereignty and national interests in an increasingly complex strategic environment. Viksit Bharat must be confident in its capabilities, secure in its sovereignty and innovative in its approach. In this transformative journey, the nation needs not only resources and aspirations, but also the ability to synergise its strengths into decisive outcomes.

The Indian Armed Forces stand at the centre of this transformation. The character of warfare is changing rapidly—artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, cyber warfare, space-based capabilities, unmanned platforms, robotics, precision long range weapons, information warfare and non-kinetic domains are being dovetailed in the modern battlefield. Future conflicts will be faster, more integrated, technology intensive and unpredictable. Consequently,

effectiveness of the armed forces will depend on the ability to anticipate threats, integrate capabilities, innovate continuously and infuse a modern soldier at the centre of every operational endeavour.

Demystifying the Concept

The concept of "JAI" viz. Jointness, Atmanirbharta and Innovation introduced by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, provides a powerful framework to transform the Indian Armed Forces into a future ready force. It was further translated into "VIJAY" viz. Vigilance, Innovation & Transformation, Jointness & Integration, Atmanirbharta and Yodha First— an operational outcome by the Indian Army as the guiding philosophy to achieve JAI. The framework also serves as an amplification of the military's ongoing 'Decade of Transformation: 2023–2032'.

The term 'JAI' is an expression of victory, while 'VIJAY' represents the objective of achieving strategic success through capability, preparedness and self-reliance. The core pillars of VIJAY are elucidated as under:-

- ***Vigilance.*** Constant vigilance and readiness is a prerequisite for national security. India's geographical environment, strategic neighbourhood and evolving security challenges necessitate our preparation for both conventional and unconventional conflicts. Multi-domain vigilance: land, sea, air, space, cyberspace and information necessitate multi-dimensional readiness.
- ***Innovation and Transformation.*** The future battlefield will reward the force that adapts faster than its adversary. Updating military doctrines, integrating emerging technologies and adapting operational strategies to ensure innovation becomes an integral part of our mindset; operational methodology and capability development will facilitate development of an innovative defence ecosystem. Connecting rich pool of scientific, engineering and entrepreneurial talent existing in the country with military requirements will create an ecosystem in which operational problems become opportunities for technological solutions.
- ***Jointness and Integration.*** Modern warfare necessitates jointness amongst the three services: common operational philosophies, interoperable communication, shared intelligence, joint training, integrated logistics and coordinated procurement. Integration goes a step further by creating structures through which capabilities of different services can be employed as a coherent whole with an ultimate objective of

'unified operational effect'. Jointness needs to extend beyond the Armed Forces with close coordination among the intelligence agencies, scientific institutions, industry and civil administration. Therefore, a 'whole-of-nation's approach' will promote coordination, shared responsibility, efficient use of resources and collective problem solving.

- ***Atmanirbharta.*** Atmanirbharta or self-reliance means possessing sufficient domestic capability to safeguard national interests even during crises or disruptions in global supply chains which are vulnerable to geopolitical changes. Recent global conflicts have demonstrated the importance of assured access to ammunition, spare parts, drones, electronic components and other critical technologies. Atmanirbharta must therefore cover the complete defence ecosystem: research & development, design, manufacturing, testing, maintenance and lifecycle support ensuring that we 'win our wars with indigenous solutions'.
- ***Yodha First.*** Most sophisticated weapon system is ineffective without a trained, motivated and empowered person operating it. The Indian soldier has always demonstrated courage, discipline and sacrifice. Future warfare will add new demands: technological literacy, cyber awareness, adaptability, data interpretation, psychological resilience and ability to operate autonomous networked systems. However, technology will never diminish the importance of leadership, courage, judgement and decision making. The domain of a warrior extends from Agniveer to the senior most veteran. Improving training standards, raising technological skills, ensuring soldiers remain at the heart of decision-making and their welfare are of paramount importance.

Converting Capability into National Strength

JAI creates the institutional and technological foundation and VIJAY translates that foundation into a comprehensive philosophy of military effectiveness which are enumerated as under:

- **Vigilance** ensures multi-dimensional operational preparedness.
- **Innovation** enables adaptation and technology led modernisation.
- **Jointness** creates synergy steering individual capabilities into unified combat prowess.
- **Atmanirbharta** provides strategic resilience.

- **Yodha First** ensures soldier at the centre of transformations and operational effectiveness.

VIJAY represents a modern expression of timeless Chanakyan principles: be vigilant, adapt intelligently, integrate capabilities, build self-reliance and place the warrior at the centre. The core pillars of VIJAY will produce a self-reinforcing model: operational challenges generate innovation; innovation encourages indigenous development; indigenous development strengthens self-reliance; self-reliance enables faster adaptation; jointness integrates capabilities and an empowered warrior converts these capabilities into operational success. Thus, '**JAI'** provides the '**foundation'** and '**VIJAY'** provides the '**momentum'** to accelerate India's march towards Viksit Bharat.

Strategic Vulnerabilities: Import of Critical Technologies

India's reliance on imports for defence equipment has significant implications for its national security, strategic autonomy and economic resilience. Although imports have helped the armed forces acquire advanced capabilities, excessive dependence on foreign suppliers create vulnerabilities, particularly during prolonged conflicts or geopolitical crises. Dependence on foreign suppliers for critical components and maintenance impinges the operational efficacy of weapon systems, if supplies are disrupted. Export restrictions, sanctions, wars or diplomatic disagreements may further complicate procurement and sustainment.

Import dependence also affects strategic autonomy. A country cannot exercise complete freedom of action, if essential military capabilities depend on another nation. It creates long-term dependence through costly maintenance, upgrades and technology support. Domestically designed platforms have continued to rely on imported components such as engines and radars. Importing components for various platforms and assembling in India, leave hidden vulnerabilities even when the final system is assembled domestically. Large technology gap exists in aero-engine technology, semiconductors, RF electronics, radars, electronic warfare systems, electro-optical/ infrared sensors and missile seekers. India must master production of complete critical technologies such as propulsion, semiconductors, radar, electronic warfare, seekers, robotics and advanced materials.

Atmanirbhar Bharat: Transformation from Buyer to Builder

One of the most important transformations required for Atmanirbhar Bharat is the transition 'from being predominantly a buyer of technology to becoming a creator and exporter

of technology'. India possesses considerable scientific and engineering talent. Institutions such as the public-sector defence enterprises, academic institutions, private companies and a growing start-up ecosystem together provide the foundation for this transition. The emergence of private industry in defence manufacturing is particularly significant. A competitive ecosystem involving established companies, MSMEs, start-ups and research institutions can accelerate innovation and reduce development cycles. Government initiatives aimed at encouraging domestic procurement, promoting indigenous design and development, and creating opportunities for private participation can further strengthen this ecosystem.

India, in the past decade, has transformed itself from Largest Defence Importer to Sizeable Defence Exporter with India's defence exports increasing from just ₹1,522 crore in 2016 - 17 to ₹21,083 crore in 2023 - 24, nearly 14 times in seven years and reached about US$4.5 billion in 2025 - 26. Indigenous defence production is not merely an economic objective, but a strategic necessity. A strong domestic defence - industrial base will enhance national security, technological capability and economic resilience, thereby making Atmanirbharta a practical reality.

National Security: Prerequisite for Viksit Bharat

India faces a wide range of security challenges including terrorism, border disputes, maritime challenges, cyber threats and grey zone warfare. A nation cannot achieve sustained progress unless its national security is robust. Thus, Comprehensive National Security and Progress reinforces each other. The contribution of a strong and modern defence ecosystem to Viksit Bharat extends beyond national security. Indigenous defence manufacturing strengthens industrial capacity as also research and development, advanced manufacturing and skilled employment. Moreover, a capable defence industry will contribute to India's emergence as a technology and manufacturing hub rather than just being an assembly hub. Successful indigenous systems would create export opportunities, thus widen and strengthen India's strategic partnerships.

A country capable of designing, developing and manufacturing critical technologies develops confidence in its own capabilities. Atmanirbharta, therefore becomes not merely an economic objective, but a statement of national confidence and strategic autonomy. Viksit Bharat will require a nation that is prosperous, secure, innovative, resilient and globally influential. A modernised armed force and a vibrant defence - industrial ecosystem are essential

components of that vision. Such an ecosystem creates a powerful multiplier effect: Self-reliant defence strengthens industry; industry strengthens technology; technology strengthens economy; stronger economy strengthens national security and strong national security provides congenial environment for overall progression of the country.

Way Ahead

Armed forces which are joint, technologically empowered, self-reliant and innovation - driven does much more than to only deter adversaries. It strengthens India's strategic autonomy, stimulates its technology ecosystem, supports industrial growth and contributes directly to national confidence. To make "VIJAY" into enduring reality, several priorities that deserve sustained attention are elucidated as under:-

- ***Establishment of a Defence Innovation Ecosystem.*** A renewed impetus be accorded to strengthen the ecosystem by connecting military users with DRDO, universities, startups, MSMEs and private defence companies to accelerate innovation and production as per requirement. Recent efforts to transfer DRDO missile technologies to domestic industry shows the value of stronger public-private partnerships. Endeavour should be to move beyond assembling imported components towards complete indigenous production and testing capabilities.
- ***Investment in Research and Development.*** India should increase long-term R&D funding to steer the ecosystem for developing newer technologies required to mitigate dependence on foreign suppliers. India should develop critical technologies domestically and use international partnerships for knowledge and technology transfer. An environment should be created in which constructive failure during experimentation is viewed as a learning opportunity.
- ***Investment in Indigenous Critical Technologies.*** Investment in critical technologies to include advanced materials, propulsion systems, secure integrated communication, precise navigation, underwater sensors/ sonars, space-based military systems, artificial intelligence, robotics and directed energy weapons will ensure sustained investment, reduce strategic vulnerabilities and foreign dependence. India must invest in indigenous development of all components of critical modern equipment and graduate its focus from manufacturing to overall production.
- ***Capability to Contest the Neighbourhood.*** China's military is taken as a force to reckon at the global level due to their reforms, modernisation and technological developments.

China has not only developed advanced weapon systems, but shared their military equipments with Pakistan. This enables both the adversaries capable of fighting with technologically advanced weapons, thus, increasing challenges for India. Investments by India in domestic development of artificial intelligence, cyber including offensive capability, space technologies, drone production, advanced sensors, semiconductors, propulsion, next-generation communication systems and robotics becomes a necessity. A faster, innovation-driven defence ecosystem will not only bridge technological gap with China, but also mitigate multiple front operational challenges.

- ***Development of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence.*** The World Humanoid Robot Games in August 2026 conducted at Beijing showcased rapid advances in artificial intelligence and robotic coordination. Humanoids achieving record breaking athletic feats indicate growing future battlefield potential. China has already invested in robots supporting logistics in forward areas. Investment in AI powered Robotic Soldier for high-risk missions, reconnaissance and swarm application in hostile terrain and inclement weather will not only reduce human risk for China, but will also enhance battle fatigue for its adversary. The situation will be further complicate, if the equipment is shared with the Western Adversary. India needs to be ahead in the curve for development of technology, large scale production and its application by the armed forces.
- ***Capability to Strike at Long Distances.*** Modern conflict with adversaries will spread across the entire spectrum. India should consider developing three - dimensional manoeuvre capability with missiles striking up to Pearl River Delta Harbour duly undetected during flight. The Indian Ocean Region being a major global sea trading route for China, Indian Ocean and the Indo - Pacific Region, will turn into contested zone. The time therefore is right to consider investing in expeditionary forces for India and provide sharper teeth to the armed forces. Large scale investments should be carried out in capability development for space based and offensive cyber operations.
- ***Policy Reforms.*** Archaic policies and procurement procedures need to be reformed with an aim to explore technology for procurement rather than time delays in audits at each stage. The bureaucratic hurdles need to be removed to ensure procurement and testing processes should become more responsive to rapidly evolving technologies while retaining appropriate standards of reliability and security.

- ***Civil-Military Fusion.*** India's journey towards Viksit Bharat demands that Civil-Military Fusion becomes a doctrinal and institutional reality. The fusion of governance, technology, academia, industry and the armed forces will transform India from continental to comprehensive global security provider. Cross pollination amongst various departments will facilitate understanding each other's capabilities and challenges which will facilitate bridging the gaps, ensuring formulation of common policies and collective participation towards a common goal.
- ***Whole of Nation's Approach.*** India should promote a whole-of-nation's approach in which government, armed forces, industry, academia, various ministries and citizens contribute to national resilience and security to ensure collective participation towards the strategic objective.
- ***Joint Training.*** Culture of joint training and education with not only sister services, but also all pillars of national security should begin early in the careers of military personnel so that jointness becomes a culture.
- ***Human Resource Development.*** Human Resource must receive the same attention as hardware and software. Future warriors require technical knowledge, leadership skills and the ability to operate in complex and technology-driven environments. Educating the man behind the machine should be a continuous process.

Conclusion

India's journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047 requires the confidence that comes from strategic strength, technological capability and national resilience. The Indian Armed Forces must be prepared for today's wars, while evolve continuously to prepare for future conflicts. The conceptual framework of 'JAI' provides a powerful foundation for this transformation and when expressed through 'VIJAY', it becomes a comprehensive approach to building a future ready force.

The path crafted through 'VIJAY', therefore, is not merely a military, but a national transformation. It connects the courage of the Yodha, the creativity of the innovator, the strength of indigenous industry and the power of jointness into one coherent national endeavour. If these principles are pursued with determination, the Indian Armed Forces will emerge as more agile, integrated, future-ready force and become a powerful force multiplier in India's journey towards a 'secure, self-reliant, innovative — 'Viksit Bharat'.

About the Author

Colonel Vivek Singh was commissioned in the Rajputana Rifles Regiment in June 2002. He commanded his unit in Eastern Sector and Western borders. He has served in various staff appointments in Brigade, Corps and Command Headquarters as also Directing Staff at Army War College, Mhow. He is a graduate of Higher Air Command Course from College of Air Warfare, Secunderabad and presently posted at Training Establishment 'Category B' as Head of Training Team.

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