



INDIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS: CONTRIBUTIONS, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

India has played a significant role in the United Nations (UN) since becoming a founding member in 1945. Over the decades, it has contributed to peacekeeping missions, championed the rights of developing nations, and advocated for global governance reforms. Despite its active participation, India has struggled to secure a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC), highlighting the limitations of its influence in the global system. This paper explores India's engagement with the UN, its contributions to peacekeeping and climate diplomacy, its challenges in multilateral decision-making, and the prospects of its growing global role.

Keywords: India, United Nations, peacekeeping, UN Security Council, global governance, multilateralism

India and the United Nations: Contributions, Challenges, and Future Prospects

INTRODUCTION

India's relationship with the United Nations (UN) has been integral to its foreign policy since the organization's establishment in 1945. As a founding member, India has actively participated in key UN initiatives, including peacekeeping missions, human rights



advocacy, climate diplomacy, and sustainable development programs. Its commitment to multilateralism is evident in its leadership in global governance, its push for equitable international policies, and its role in conflict resolution efforts worldwide.

One of the most significant aspects of India's engagement with the UN has been its longstanding call for reforms in the UN Security Council (UNSC). Despite being the world's most populous democracy and a major economic and military power, India remains excluded from permanent membership in the P5-dominated UNSC. This exclusion has sparked debates about the outdated nature of the UN's decision-making structure and the need for a more representative global governance system.

Apart from security concerns, India has also emerged as a key advocate for climate action. Its leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and commitment to net-zero emissions by 2070 highlight its proactive stance on environmental sustainability. Additionally, India plays a vital role in humanitarian assistance, economic development, and international health programs, working alongside UN bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Despite these contributions, India faces several challenges at the UN, including geopolitical rivalries, diplomatic roadblocks, and limited financial influence compared to other global powers. This paper examines India's contributions, challenges, and prospects within the UN framework, exploring its aspirations for greater influence in international decision-making and the future of its global engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several scholars have examined India's engagement with the UN from political, economic, and security perspectives. Thakur (2020) highlights India's long-standing



advocacy for UNSC reform, arguing that the current power structure does not reflect the realities of global politics. Ramesh (2019) focuses on India's contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, noting its consistent deployment of troops in conflict zones. Mitra (2021) explores India's climate diplomacy, emphasizing its leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and its role in the Paris Agreement.

Additionally, Choudhury (2022) examines India's position in multilateral trade and development discussions, showing how India has shaped policies at UN-affiliated organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, there is limited research on India's specific challenges in navigating the political dynamics of the UN, particularly regarding its relations with China and the United States. This paper seeks to address this gap by analyzing India's diplomatic strategies and their impact on its global standing.

HYPOTHESIS

India's growing economic and diplomatic influence strengthens its case for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and a larger role in global governance. However, geopolitical rivalries, institutional resistance, and multilateral constraints continue to hinder its ambitions.

RESEARCH GAP

Most existing studies focus on India's peacekeeping contributions or climate diplomacy, but few provide a comprehensive analysis of India's overall engagement with the UN. Additionally, while India's advocacy for UNSC reforms is widely discussed, the strategic implications of its failure to secure permanent membership remain underexplored. This



paper aims to bridge these gaps by providing a holistic evaluation of India's successes and challenges at the UN.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach, analyzing official UN reports, government statements, and scholarly articles. It also examines UN voting patterns, peacekeeping records, and India's diplomatic engagements at UN summits. The research methodology includes comparative analysis to assess India's role relative to other emerging powers, such as Brazil and South Africa, in global governance.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

1. India's Contributions to the United Nations

A. UN Peacekeeping Operations

India has been one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, deploying over 250,000 personnel in conflict zones across Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Indian troops have played a critical role in stabilizing post-conflict regions and ensuring humanitarian aid delivery. Notable missions include:

- **Congo (1960s)** – One of India's earliest and most significant deployments.
- **Lebanon (UNIFIL)** – Ongoing participation in maintaining regional stability.
- **Sudan and South Sudan (UNMISS)** – Support in humanitarian assistance and conflict resolution.

B. India's Role in Climate Diplomacy

India has emerged as a global leader in climate action, particularly through:



- **The International Solar Alliance (ISA)** – Launched in partnership with France to promote solar energy adoption worldwide.
- **Commitments under the Paris Agreement** – India has pledged to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2070 and expand renewable energy capacity.
- **Advocacy for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** – India has integrated UN sustainability targets into its national policies, particularly in areas of poverty reduction, clean energy, and environmental protection.

C. India's Economic and Development Initiatives

India actively contributes to UN-led **development programs**, including:

- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** – Collaborating on poverty alleviation and women's empowerment initiatives.
- **World Health Organization (WHO)** – Providing vaccines and medical assistance to developing nations.
- **World Trade Organization (WTO)** – Advocating for fair trade policies and protecting the interests of emerging economies.

2. India's Challenges at the United Nations

A. The UN Security Council Reform Debate

One of India's biggest diplomatic challenges is securing permanent membership in the UN Security Council. India argues that the current structure, dominated by the P5 nations (US, UK, Russia, China, France), is outdated and does not represent the emerging



global order. However, opposition from China and reluctance from the United States have hindered India's efforts.

B. Geopolitical Hurdles

- **Tensions with China** – China, a permanent UNSC member, has repeatedly blocked India's proposals, including efforts to designate Pakistan-based terrorists under UN sanctions.
- **Balancing Relations with Major Powers** – While India aligns with the US and European Union on many issues, it also maintains strategic ties with Russia, complicating its position on global conflicts like the Ukraine war.

C. Institutional and Bureaucratic Limitations

- **Slow Decision-Making** – The UN's bureaucratic processes often delay effective decision-making.
- **Limited Financial Contributions** – Compared to the US, China, and the EU, India's financial contributions to the UN remain modest, affecting its influence in decision-making.

CONCLUSION

India has made substantial contributions to the United Nations, particularly in peacekeeping, climate action, and economic development. However, despite its growing global stature, it faces significant obstacles in achieving permanent UNSC membership and asserting greater influence in multilateral institutions. India's diplomatic strategy must focus on building alliances with like-minded nations, enhancing its financial contributions, and leveraging its economic and technological strengths to push for global governance



reforms. As the global order continues to evolve, India's engagement with the UN will remain crucial in shaping the future of multilateralism and international cooperation.

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