

Decoding India's Quest for United Nations Security Council Reform: Multilateral Institution in the Age of Globalisation

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Abstract:

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has emerged as the predominant body within the UN, and the inclusion of veto power has further enhanced its appeal to member states. For a long time, there is a growing chorus of nations advocating for reforms within the UNSC, aiming to expand the number of permanent seats. Numerous countries, possessing significant global influence, remain unrepresented in the UNSC. In this context, India presents a compelling case for attaining permanent membership, alongside the other G4 countries. Even prior to gaining independence, India actively participated in the UN and made substantial contributions, surpassing many other nations. As the world's largest democracy, India has played a proactive role in promoting global peace and security. During the era of the Cold War, while much of the world was engulfed in conflict, India pursued a policy of non-alignment with certain nations in order to avoid war. Notably, a considerable number of influential countries have expressed their support for India's permanent seat. India was elected as a non-permanent member for the eighth time and India just completed its last term in December 2022. Over the past decade, India has undergone remarkable transformations across various aspects, positioning itself prominently on the global stage. Even India is hosting its G20 presidency for the year 2023. The G-20 presidency has positioned India favorably, particularly at a time when the international community seeks an alternative to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) due to its inaction caused by the veto power.

Against this backdrop, this study majorly examines India's argument for permanent membership as a strong contender from Asia with the other G4 nations, its likelihood of being admitted after objections from a few other powerful nations, and the benefits of India being admitted permanently to the Security Council. Further, it also highlights the implications for international security of extending the UN Security Council. Lastly, it also looks into the arguments if India can use G20 as the substitute for UNSC.

Keywords: United Nations Security Council, India, Permanent Seat, G20

Introduction

The evolving worldwide geopolitical landscape necessitates a transformation in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to enhance its effectiveness, impartiality, and credibility. After the second world war, the United Nations appeared as a greater and more functioning global actor in the international scenario. The United Nations Organization (UNO) was established on October 24, 1945, with the aim of promoting global peace and stability. It was created with six main organs, envisioning cooperation, and

unity among nations to prevent future conflicts. In 1945, representatives from 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to draft the United Nations Charter. These countries, as UN members, pledged to uphold their responsibilities in maintaining peace and security. Over time, additional countries joined, becoming original member states, and today the UN boasts a membership of 193 countries. Since its existence, it has administered different peacekeeping operations to sustain international peace and security. Its performance as a peace-keeping organization has expanded in multifarious ways all over the world. The end of the cold war and consecutive enhancement in the East-West descendants has constructed an environment in which adopting resolutions by the United Nations Security Council became convenient and effective. In the globalisation era, the world has witnessed different crises, conflicts, civil wars, and violations within or among the nations which increased the expectation towards the UN to play an even more powerful role not only in peace-keeping exercises but also in encouraging peaceful co-existence and assistance for well-rounded progress and growth within the nation-states (Murthy, 2020).

After seventy-seven years of successful existence, the world underwent significant global changes. The UN has experienced both successes and failures, but its universal nature and ability to foster collaboration between developing and developed nations have made it the most influential organisation worldwide. However, as time has passed, countries around the world have called for reforms within the United Nations to enhance its effectiveness and enable it to address current challenges more effectively.

The UN performed a major function in achieving the redemption of Kuwait, and the reconstruction of peacefulness in Cyprus, Lawanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, Angola, and many other places. It was also involved in procuring an end to the Serbian expulsion of Muslims as well as in promoting to maintain international peace. Nevertheless, United Nations also have to maintain as an independent and liberal organization as many times the US effort by keeping more influences on the United Nations in its favor. The ongoing requisition for enlargement and democracy-building of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as well as the reformation of the UN charter to create the UN more proficient to unite the world community (Gardiner, 2007). It is now essential the fact that international organisations must demonstrate the new brass tacks in the international arena. Presently, the UNSC has 15 members where five members are permanent and ten members are non-permanent members (Lynch, 2019). For long years different member countries are demanding for expansion of the permanent membership of the UNSC. Repeated attempts for expansion of the UNSC have failed due to rejection by the P5 i.e. permanent five members (USA, China, France, UK, and Russia). Among the Asian countries, only China is represented as a permanent member whereas African and Latin American states still have to get single membership in the UNSC. Different groupings were formed with different names by demanding permanent membership, equal representation, and reforms in the UNO. Member countries of different groupings are supporting each other to get membership such as G 4 (India, Brazil, Japan, and Germany); African Union (AU); United for Consensus Group known as UFC (Italy, Mexico, Pakistan, Canada, Argentina, and South Korea); S-5 (Singapore, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, and Lichtenstein) (Khan, 2015). The member states of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), have different opinions regarding the reforms. The UN is often criticised by the international society for not initiating the reforms that include five core opinions- membership categories, the question of veto held by the five permanent members that many times misused by the P5 members, regional representation, the size of an enlarged council and council working methods.

India known as the largest democratic country in the world, has long desired to attain the status of a major power and has been substantiating this aspiration by presenting various factors and indicators at international forums. Through diplomatic means, India has been engaging with key actors in the global

state system to establish its eligibility. A significant diplomatic endeavor undertaken by India was its participation in the G-4 group, intending to secure a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. While India emphasized the acquisition of veto power, the other members did not prioritize this aspect (Jabeen, 2010).

In recent years, the Group of 20 or G20 has garnered greater attention than any other international organization in the globe, despite being operational for the past 20 years but lacking any legal authority. Over the years, the G20, which received praise for its strong commitment to stabilizing the global economic landscape and mitigating the effects of economic downturns, has expanded and strengthened its agenda (Dash, Shaw, & Khandelwal, 2019). The G-20 has gained increasing acceptance over time as a global platform for addressing global issues, including world peace. It has achieved success in resolving various emerging problems. On the other hand, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been criticized for its inefficiency in maintaining peace due to vested interests and the veto power held by certain nations. These nations have been misusing their veto power to promote their arbitrary agendas. India's Presidency is recognised as a remarkable and unique chance that offers vast possibilities and potential. Under the motto 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', India has commenced its year-long tenure as the leader of the G20 (The Economic Times, 2023). The question of whether India can use the G20 as an alternative to the UNSC is currently an ongoing subject of discussion. However, it is crucial to recognize India's potential and its current worth in order to assess its suitability for a permanent seat on the UNSC. It is worth understanding how India's significant geopolitical and geostrategic influence affects other states. Additionally, it brings attention to the potential consequences for global security that arise from the expansion of the United Nations Security Council. Lastly, it examines the arguments surrounding whether India could utilize the G20 as an alternative to the UNSC.

The Need for Expansion of the UNSC

There is no question that the UNSC is a significant UN organ and that it has always contributed significantly to maintaining global peace and security. However, as time elapses, every organization or institution must undergo reform or adapt to the changing circumstances. An illustrative instance of reform occurred in 1965 when the UNSC's non-permanent members increased from six to ten. This change became necessary due to the more than doubled membership of the UN at that time. Since then, no further reforms have taken place within the UNSC. Nevertheless, the debate surrounding the need for UNSC reform has persisted since the council's inception. Following the conclusion of the Cold War, when the UNSC actively engaged in international matters and peacekeeping operations, the demand for reform escalated. The current size of the council does not adequately represent the increasing membership of the UN. Consequently, numerous countries are advocating for the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership within the UNSC. Currently, two permanent members of the council hail from European countries, whereas Africa, the second most populous continent, and Latin America do not possess any permanent membership (Ayoade & Folarin, 2018).

The P5 (Permanent Five) nations in the UNSC generally oppose the expansion of permanent membership, as they fear that their own influence and power might diminish with the inclusion of more countries as permanent members. However, despite this general stance, there have been instances where individual P5 countries have expressed support for certain countries' bids for permanent membership. For example- Except China; the United States, France, the UK, and Russia have given their backing to India's aspirations

for permanent membership (The Times of India, 2023), and U.S. and France have supported Africa's bid for a permanent seat (Kumah-Abiwu, 2023).

Among the countries aspiring for permanent membership, the G4 countries (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan) are considered the most serious candidates (The Times of India, 2023). They have actively sought permanent seats on the UNSC. However, their efforts have faced opposition from some other countries who are concerned about the potential implications of expanding the permanent membership and altering the current balance of power within the Council. As a result, the issue of UNSC reform and the inclusion of new permanent members remains a complex and contentious topic in international diplomacy.

Other nations also presented proposals for the reform. During the 1990s, the coffee club opposed the addition of permanent membership and instead recommended the inclusion of members based on regional representation, aiming to have a broader range of parties involved. Italy, in the mid-2000s, actively pursued regional-based reforms under the banner of the Uniting for Consensus Group (UFC). The UFC argued against the discriminatory and unjust nature of permanent membership, advocating against its expansion. They emphasized the importance of equality among all states. Another group, known as the Small 5 (S-5), comprised of Singapore, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, and Lichtenstein, also proposed reforms. The S-5 countries emphasized the need for increased transparency and coordination among the General Assembly, Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. This group also included certain veto power usage criteria in the plan. Additionally, the African Union (AU) has presented its plan for expanding the Security Council, advocating for permanent membership for both Africa and Latin America as well as increasing regional representation. The AU emphasizes that new permanent members should be granted the same veto power as existing members (Hussain, 2015).

In 2004, the Secretary-General at that time, Kofi Annan, put forward a proposal to expand the Security Council as part of the "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All" report created by the High-Level Panel. Within the report's concluding section, focused on "Strengthening the United Nations," he strongly urged Member States to make the Security Council more inclusive and representative of the entire international community, considering the current geopolitical dynamics. In 2005, Kofi Annan presented two plans, referred to as Plan A and Plan B, with the aim of achieving this goal, but unfortunately, not all member states accepted these plans (United Nations, 2005).

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been a subject of debate for many years regarding its expansion and reform. As of 2016, the General Assembly saw significant discussions about the need for reforms in light of the changing global environment. Various member states voiced their opinions and concerns on five core reform issues: membership categories, the question of the veto held by the five permanent members, regional representation, the size of an enlarged council, and council working methods. More than 50 speakers participated in the General Assembly's debate, each expressing their unique opinions and concerns about the proposed reforms. Different member states may have divergent interests and priorities, which contribute to the complexity of finding a consensus on the reforms (United Nations, 2016). A reform of the veto power was urgently required in the last seventy-seven session when several representatives of the member states questioned its failure to ensure peace and security (United Nations, 2022).

The global community considers the democratization of the United Nations as a significant concern. India, a firm advocate of democracy, asserts the necessity for democratizing international organizations in the 21st century. One pertinent point is that, despite the UN's membership expanding to 190 countries in 2013, the UNSC retained only 15 members. However, when comparing the current situation to the year

1945, the progress in democratization is minimal, amounting to less than 8 percent. Those supporting the democratization of permanent seats in the UNSC argue that Asia, despite being the most populous continent, only has China as a member, while Europe, with just 5 percent of the world's population, controls 33 percent of the seats. Considering factors such as size, population, historical legacy, and democratic governance, India's claim for a permanent seat in the UNSC is justifiable and reasonable (Bibi & Bukhari, 2021).

India's Case for the Permanent Membership

India which is known as a pluralistic, multilingual, and multi-ethnic country- located in South Asia, is surrounded by the Indian Ocean to the south, the Arabian Sea to the southwest, and the Bay of Bengal to the southeast. It shares land borders with Pakistan to the west, and with China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the northeast, while having Burma and Bangladesh to the east. Additionally, India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands have maritime boundaries with Thailand and Indonesia (Krishnan, 2017). Throughout its extensive history, the Indian subcontinent has been recognized for its prosperity in trade and culture. India boasts a rich and diverse culture, being the birthplace of four major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. From the early 18th century until the majority of the 19th century, the British East India Company governed India. However, through a struggle for independence marked by non-violent resistance led by Mahatma Gandhi, India achieved its independence in 1947. The island nations of Sri Lanka and the Maldives are situated close to India.

India, a nation that became a member of the United Nations two years before gaining independence, faced a significant decision during the Cold War era (Ministry of External Affairs, 2020). It has achieved several significant milestones within the United Nations since becoming a signatory to the UN charter on 26 June 1945, alongside 49 other member states (Mukerji, 2021). Till now, India has secured non-permanent membership for eight terms. In December 2022 India completed its last "Two Years" term in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). India was among the 48 nations that voted in favor of adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, delivered his inaugural address at the United Nations General Assembly. Additionally, a notable achievement for India was the election of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, who became the first woman to hold the position of President of the UN General Assembly. In 2022, Ruchira Kamboj became the first Indian woman to be appointed as the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, following 21 Indian representatives (The Quint, 2022).

For the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), there was a proposal for granting permanent membership to Asian countries. India and the People's Republic of China emerged as strong contenders for this position. However, the United States preferred India over China, as they were unwilling to have a communist country as a permanent member of the UNSC (Ganguly, 2020). At that time, though, there were more pressing issues for India to address, surpassing the urgency of the UNSC membership. Prime Minister Nehru chose to support China's bid for the UNSC seat, confident that China would reciprocate in the future and endorse India's pursuit of the sixth membership. Nehru believed that if India were to replace China in the UNSC, it could lead to both countries becoming permanent adversaries. Nehru held considerable trust in China while simultaneously seeking to strengthen ties with Russia. However, times have changed, and China now opposes India's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC. It is worth noting that during Nehru's era, India was not as militarily and economically powerful as it is today (Krishnan, 2017).

India, like many other countries, has had an aspiration to increase its global influence and be recognized as a significant player on the world stage. Since its independence in 1947, India has pursued various strategies to enhance its position in international affairs. It is not uncommon for nations to seek greater influence and representation in global organizations, including aiming for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

India's pursuit of a permanent seat on the UNSC is driven by its desire for a greater say in important global decisions, especially those related to international peace and security. As one of the world's most populous and diverse countries with a growing economy, India believes that it should have a more prominent role in shaping global policies. To achieve its goals, India has engaged in diplomatic efforts, forging alliances and partnerships with other nations. It has sought support from existing permanent members of the UNSC, including the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. Such efforts involve discussions and negotiations, which can include military agreements, economic cooperation, and other bilateral arrangements that can strengthen ties between India and these major powers. India's ambitions in international affairs have evolved over the years, and its strategies and priorities can vary depending on the prevailing geopolitical dynamics and leadership (Ganguly, 2020). It's also worth mentioning that India has been an active participant in various international forums and organizations, promoting peace, development, and cooperation, beyond its quest for a permanent seat on the UNSC.

Why Does India Deserve to be a Permanent Member?

Numerous debates are underway concerning the permanent membership of the UNSC. However, a considerable number of countries have already acknowledged that India deserves a seat in the UNSC for several compelling reasons. India's candidacy for permanent membership is supported not only due to its substantial population but also because of its significant contributions to the United Nations and its position as one of the world's fastest-growing economies (Dabhade, 2017).

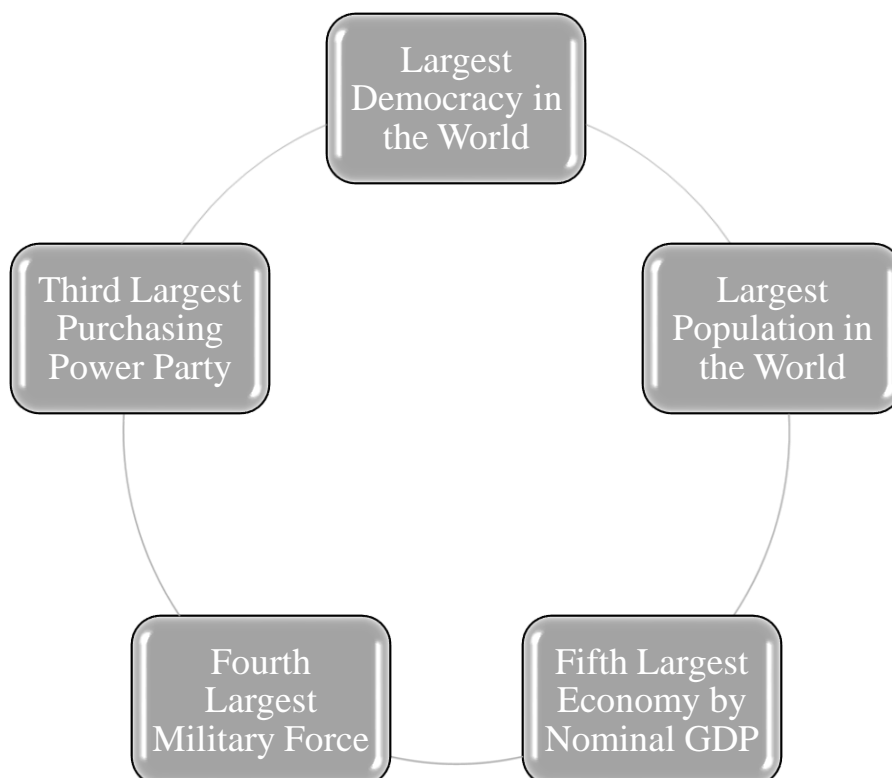
Being the largest democratic country is not only merit for India (Shukla, 2019). India's significant population, accounting for around 17.76 percent of the world's total, indeed makes it one of the most populous countries on the planet. With over 1.3 billion people, India's demographic size gives it considerable weight in global affairs. The decisions and policies of international organizations like the United Nations can have substantial implications for India due to its sheer size and influence (The Hindu, 2022). As a major power in South Asia, India plays a crucial role in shaping regional dynamics and stability. Its geopolitical significance in the region is driven by its economic, military, and diplomatic capabilities. Being the largest country in South Asia, India's actions and policies can have far-reaching effects on its neighboring countries and the broader region. Given its population size and strategic importance, India is often impacted by various decisions taken by the United Nations, especially those concerning issues like international trade, climate change, human rights, peacekeeping operations, and regional conflicts. Decisions made at the UN can influence India's economic growth, security, and foreign relations. India's leadership has recognized the importance of active engagement with international organizations, including the United Nations, to advance its national interests and contribute to global governance. India has participated in numerous UN peacekeeping missions, provided humanitarian aid to other countries, and taken initiatives on issues like sustainable development and climate change (Estrada & Moussavi, 2022). However, India's rise as a major power also comes with its own challenges and responsibilities. The country faces internal development issues, such as poverty, infrastructure

development, and social inequalities, which need to be addressed while seeking a greater role on the global stage.

Overall, India's significant population and its status as a major power in South Asia make it an influential player in international affairs, and decisions made at the United Nations can indeed have a considerable impact on the country and its people. Active participation in global forums allows India to advocate for its interests and contribute to shaping a more inclusive and equitable world order (Dabhade, 2017). India has also historically played a significant role in promoting peace and security, and its involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an example of this. India was one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 and has been an active participant ever since. As a prominent member of the NAM, India has consistently emphasized the importance of diplomacy, dialogue, and peaceful resolution of conflicts to maintain global peace and security. The fact is that among the 112 NAM countries, none have a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. As a result, while the NAM countries, including India, have expressed support for reforming the UNSC to make it more inclusive and representative, progress in this direction has been slow and complex (Deo, 2023). Nonetheless, India continues to be actively engaged in advocating for reforms in various international forums and remains committed to upholding the principles of peace, security, and non-interference in global affairs.

India's economy is ranked as the fifth-largest in the world on the World GDP Ranking 2023 list (Cleartax, 2023). India has emerged as one of the rapidly growing major economies and is acknowledged as a newly industrialized nation. Nevertheless, it grapples with persistent challenges such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, poor infrastructures, and also inefficient agriculture (Pettinger, 2022). In 2023, India's defence budget of INR 5.94 trillion (USD 73.8 billion) ranks as the third largest globally, following the United States and China (Dewey, McGerty, & Solanki, 2023). The figure shows India's position in the entire globe.

Figure 1: India's Position in the Globe



Source: World Bank in India, 2023

India continues to maintain its strong performance in the elections for several UN agencies. India has achieved notable successes in winning several major elections in various UN bodies in recent years. These include elections to the Human Rights Council (HRC), Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) (Ministry of External Affairs, 2022). These victories demonstrate India's growing influence and recognition in the international community.

Table 1: India's Representation in Different UN Bodies at Present Time

Name of the UN Body	Term
United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)	2016-2022
International Seabed Authority (ISA) Council	2017-2020
Legal and Technical Commission of the ISA	2017-2021
Finance Committee of ISA	2017-2021
International Law Commission (ILC) - Dr. Aniruddha Rajput	2017-2021
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)	2018-2020
International Court of Justice (ICJ) - Judge Dalveer Bhandar	2018-2026
Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) - Amb. P. Gopinathan	2018-2022
Commission on Population and Development (CPD)	2018-2021
Commission for Social Development (CSocD)	2018-2021
Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)	2018-2021
Human Rights Council (HRC)	2019-2021
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) - Ambassador Preeti Saran	2019-2022
Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (CNGO)	2019-2022
Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS	2019-2021

Executive Board of UN-Women	2019-2021
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)	2019-2021
Programme Coordination Committee of UN AIDS Executive Board	2020-2022
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) - Ms. Jagjit Pavadia	2020-2025
Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC)	2021-2023
Commission on the Status of Women	2021-2025
Commission on Population and Development	2021-2025
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions – Ms. Vidisha Maitra	2021-2023

Source: Ministry of External Affairs (2022)

Another important argument in favor of India’s permanent membership in the UNSC is the country’s significant financial and troop contributions to UN peacekeeping missions. India indeed has a proud and extensive legacy of contributing to United Nations Peacekeeping operations. As one of the largest troop-contributing countries, India has played a significant role in supporting global efforts to maintain peace and security. India has an extensive and illustrious track record of involvement in UN peacekeeping missions, surpassing all other nations in terms of the number of personnel contributed which shows India’s active involvement with the UN. The next section will discuss India’s contribution to the UN over the years.

India’s Contribution to the Peace-Keeping Operations

Over its 77-year history, the United Nations has received significant attention for its peacekeeping operations, garnering maximum global focus. The initial peacekeeping mission was initiated in 1948 to oversee a ceasefire in Palestine. More than 750,000 military and non-military individuals have participated in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. These operations are established by the Security Council, which holds the duty of upholding global peace and security (Ekanayake, 2021). The approval of the host government is necessary for the operations to proceed. Following the Cold War era, United Nations Peacekeeping evolved from conventional missions focused solely on military duties to intricate multidimensional endeavours striving to establish the pillars of sustainable peace.

The members of peacekeeping operations are known as Blue- Helmets (United Nations, 2023). In UN peacekeeping operations, Indian troops fully participated and rendered excellent, unqualified service. Over the years, India's spontaneous and unreserved engagement in UN peacekeeping operations has been a glaring example of the nation's dedication to the goals outlined in the UN Charter. Its great planning and execution made it noteworthy. The international community, many Secretaries General, and the United Nations Secretariat have all commended this dedication.

India's commitment to UN Peacekeeping underscores its dedication to global stability and its willingness to contribute substantial resources and personnel to address complex security challenges in different parts of the world. India has achieved the notable status of being one of the longest-standing and most significant contributors of troops to United Nations Peacekeeping efforts (Yadav, 2014). The contributions of Indian peacekeepers continue to be vital in advancing the objectives of the United Nations and fostering peace and security worldwide.

Over the years, India has contributed approximately 2,75,000 troops to various UN Peacekeeping missions, demonstrating its strong commitment to international peacekeeping efforts (Government of India, 2023). Currently, India has around 5,900 troops deployed in 12 UN Missions, which highlights its continued active involvement in peacekeeping activities worldwide (Government of India, 2023). It is essential to acknowledge the sacrifices made by Indian peacekeepers in their pursuit of defending UN mandates and promoting peace across the globe. In their noble mission, 159 Indian Army soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice, laying down their lives to uphold the principles of the United Nations and ensure peace in conflict-affected regions (Government of India, 2023).

India sent 60 Para troops to Korea under the United Nations Command. This deployment marked India's inaugural participation in a peacekeeping mission after the 1953 armistice agreement between North and South Korea (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2023). The group carried out life-saving medical procedures and cared for 400 injured individuals. Following the conclusion of the Korean War, a significant count of detainees was captured, a considerable portion of whom were denied repatriation. Lt. General K.S. Thimayya from India, who served as the head of the Neutral National Repatriation Commission (NNRC), along with Maj. General S.P.P Throat, acting as the Custodian Force Commander, skillfully managed the matter of detainees. The Indian officials navigated this sensitive circumstance with empathy, endurance, equity, and impartiality, resulting in international recognition (Yadav, 2014).

In 1998, India provided a unit of 619 personnel to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which was formed in 1978 following Israel's occupation of Southern Lebanon. India later added 172 more troops to this mission. The Indian armed forces played a significant role in preventing occasional clashes between the Israel Defense Forces and the Hezbollah faction in the region. India's military also played a significant part in Kosovo. Out of a group of 300 civilian police officers, India provided 30 individuals who actively contributed to the supervision of civil governance in Kosovo. The Indian contingent was widely respected for its exemplary discipline during these operations (Gidh, 2022).

India played a significant role in various United Nations peacekeeping missions. For instance, in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), established to ensure equitable elections in Namibia (previously known as South West Africa), India contributed a contingent led by Lt. General Dewan Prem Chand. This contingent consisted of 15 military observers, police monitors, and electoral supervisors. Beyond this, India's contributions extended to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM). In the case of UNAVEM, India contributed troops to monitor the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola, a process that was successfully completed by May 1991.

In 1961, the Indian army participated in a peacekeeping mission in Congo. On December 31, 1961, the Brigade Group successfully reestablished complete authority over Katanga, overcoming strong opposition from the Katangese Gendarmerie. By the conclusion of 1962, the Indian brigade had successfully secured the important town of Kolwezi. The persistent efforts of the Indian brigade led to the Katangese

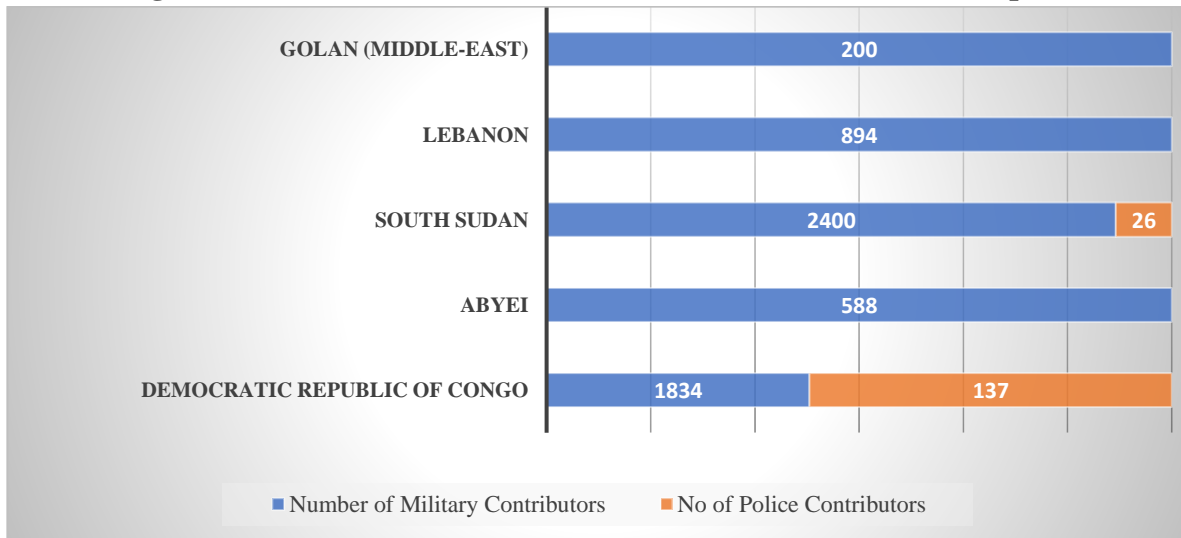
Gendarmerie surrendering their weapons, ultimately contributing to the reunification of Congo (Mukherjee, 2015).

In 1956, India provided military support to facilitate the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sinai Peninsula and oversaw the cessation of hostilities between Egypt and Israel along the Armistice Demarcation line. The Indian peacekeeping contingent effectively ensured peace in the Gaza Strip until May 1967 (Mukherjee, 2015). Presently, India continues to play a crucial role in preserving peace in Southern Lebanon as an integral part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) mission. India also created history by sending the first group made up entirely of women on a peacekeeping mission to Liberia. Nine rotations of all-female police units from India were dispatched to Liberia between 2007 and 2016. Their primary responsibilities were maintaining public order, guard duty around-the-clock, night patrols in and around Monrovia (the capital), and aiding in the growth of regional security institutions in order to strengthen their capabilities (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2023).

India has made substantial contributions to various challenging peacekeeping operations as part of its commitment to promoting global peace. Notable instances include India's involvement in the Korea MNF/NNRC/CFI mission from 1950 to 1954, Cambodia UNAMIC (1991-92), UNTAC (1992-93), and Timor Leste UNMIT (2006). These efforts were driven by India's keen interest in fostering political stability in East and Southeast Asia. India's participation in UN missions in the Gaza Strip and Sinai, such as UNEF 1 (1956-57), as well as its engagement in regions like West Asia, where it has significant non-renewable energy interests, a substantial Indian Diaspora, and historical connections, underscore its commitment to global peace (Gidh, 2022). India's involvement extends to missions in Iran/Iraq (UNIIMOG, 1988-91), Iraq/Kuwait (UNIKOM, 1991-2003), Lebanon (UNOGIL, 1958), UNIFIL (1998), Yemen (UNYOM, 1964), and the Golan Heights (UNDOF, 2006 onwards). These contributions highlight India's dedication to supporting and maintaining peace worldwide.

India's strategic interests regarding the stability and well-being of the newly established African states have been evident through its active involvement and contributions to various missions across the continent. For instance, India participated in operations such as the Congo ONUC (1960-63), Namibia UNTAG (1989-90), Mozambique ONUMOZ (1992-94), Angola with UNAVEM I, II, III (1988-97), and MONUA (1997-99), Somalia UNSOM II (1993-94), Liberia UNOMIL (93-97) and UNMIL (2007-), Rwanda UNAMIR (1993-96), Sierra Leone UNOMSIL (1998-99) and UNAMSIL (1999-2005), as well as Ethiopia/Eritrea UNMEE (2000-2008), Ivory Coast UNOCI (2004-), Burundi ONUB (2004-2006), and Sudan UNMIS (2006-11) and UNMISS (2011-). Additionally, India also contributed military observers to peacekeeping efforts in Central America for ONUCA (89-92) and El Salvador (1991-95) (Yadav, 2014). As of July 2023, there are 12 United Nations peacekeeping missions that remain active in various nations, including Kosovo, Jammu and Kashmir (shared by India and Pakistan), Western Sahara, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Abyei, the Republic of South Sudan, Cyprus, Lebanon, Golan, and the West Bank. A combined total of 174,221 personnel, including those officially authorized, from different nations, are engaged in these operations (United Nation, 2023). India is actively playing a significant role as a primary contributor to the ongoing peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Abyei, South Sudan, Lebanon, and Golan (Middle East) (United Nation, 2023). The figure shows the number of military and police personnel involved from India in the present peacekeeping operations.

Figure 2: The Number of Contributors from India (Within the top 10)

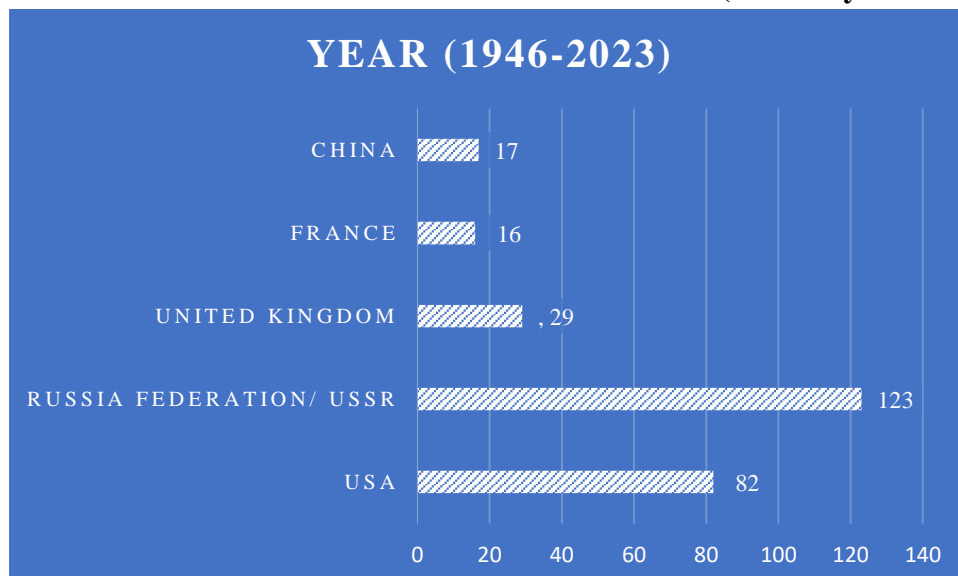


Source: United Nations (2023)

Criticism of the United Nations Security Council

Over the years, the United Nations (UN) and its organ, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), have encountered various forms of criticism. The primary and foremost critique revolves around constrained membership. Only the nations that formed alliances during the Second World War hold permanent seats on the Security Council (USA, Russia, United Kingdom, China, and France), leaving no room for other countries to attain permanent membership despite various nations actively pursuing it. Permanent members wield the authority of veto power, which on occasion may be employed to further their individual political agendas (Iyase, 2017).

Figure 3: Use of the Veto Powers for Their National Interest (February 1946- July 2023)



Source: UN Veto Dataset (2023)

Despite being actively involved in the different peace-keeping and peace-making processes since its for-

mation including the peace-keeping operations. Many times, The UN has failed the world to solve the issues due to the division of the interest of the great powers such as Israeli- Palestinian issue (Since 1948-Now), Syrian Civil war (2011-Now), Kashmir issue (1948-now), Somali civil war (1991-Now), Darfur conflict in Sudan (2003-Now), Civil war in South Sudan (2013-Now), Yemen Civil war (2014- now) etc. (TRT World, 2018). Thousands and thousands of people lost their lives, displaced inside or outside the countries which also indicates the genuine efforts made by the major powers willingness to deal with the issues and make peace and stability by ending the threat for the common people. Recently, Afghanistan Crisis in 2021 and the Israeli and Palestinian conflict in 2020 pointed out the major failure of the UNO in ending the violation, threats, and aggressions among or within the nations. However, the UN also succeeded in its peace-keeping operations in countries like- Korea (1950), Congo (1960), Egypt (1956), and different Middle Eastern and Asian countries. But many times, the permanent members of the UNSC also used its veto power for their national interest. For example- In the case of India and Pakistan, the veto is blamed for the non-resolution of the Kashmir issue (The Economic Times , 2016). That is why certain critics argue that the current composition of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) does not accurately represent the contemporary political landscape of the world. They contend that the existing structure does not align with the current global political realities. Other criticism highlights the lack of substantial representation from certain regions such as Africa, South America, and Oceania. Despite comprising 18.2 percent of the global population, Africa remains underrepresented (Statista , 2023). Some critics have called for the elimination of permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and an expansion of the number of temporary seats, albeit for a limited duration. This proposed change aims to prevent specific countries from holding disproportionate influence and privileges, thereby promoting greater equality among nations.

Overall, the Security Council must prioritize global safety and security over its individual political agendas. Members should concentrate on the well-being of the world rather than national interests. Political considerations should be set aside when a country commits to working for the international community, placing the welfare of people at the forefront. By harnessing their collective strength, members can contribute to improving the state of the world. Moreover, permanent members must refrain from abusing their veto power. It is crucial to adapt to the evolving times and pursue reforms within the UNSC.

India and G-20: An Ongoing Debates on India's Potential Use of the G20 as Substitute of the UNSC

The G20 was established at the highest tiers in reaction to the financial crisis in 2008, to enhance coordination and economic collaboration among significant economies. However, as time has passed, its responsibilities have grown to encompass conversations about foreign policy and matters of worldwide importance, effectively blending the realms of geo-economics and geopolitics (Dutta & Kugiel, 2023). The G-20 focuses on significant matters concerning the worldwide economy, like maintaining stability in international finance, addressing the challenges of climate change, and promoting sustainable development. As a result, it is perceived as a more efficient platform for intergovernmental exchanges.

The G20 includes not only all permanent members of the United Nations Security Council but also countries competing for positions on the expanded council. It balances the representation of both developed and developing nations. With its composition, the G20 emerges as the most relevant global forum for tackling contemporary worldwide issues, given that it represents more than 75 percent of global

trade, 85 per cent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and nearly two-thirds of the global population (Government of India, 2023).

India can use the G-20 as an alternate forum to discuss global concerns and shape international policy, particularly when it comes to subjects that could be thwarted by the UNSC's veto power. The G-20 offers a forum for major economies, including India, to engage in debates, coordinate policies, and exercise collective influence on crucial global issues, while it lacks the formal authority of the UNSC. With this strategy, India might be able to advance its goals and promote changes to the global order (Nagial, 2023). The current debate also revolves around the possibility that India could use its participation in the G20 to forego seeking membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). There are many issues and points of view raised by this subject. The UNSC, which is largely in charge of upholding international peace and security, has more formal authority and responsibility than the G20, which provides a forum for major economies like India to participate in international debates and collaboration (Ariba, 2022).

India may use its influence within the G20 to address global challenges, advance its interests, and work with other important nations, according to proponents of utilising the G20 as an alternative. They might highlight how the G20 is more inclusive than the UNSC, whose permanent members have veto power and can occasionally cause deadlock. On the other hand, critics can argue that the G20 lacks the UNSC's legally binding decision-making and enforcement tools because it focuses largely on economic and financial issues (Kumar, 2022). They might stress the significance of the UNSC's function in maintaining international peace and resolving conflicts. The effectiveness of India's use of the G20 as a substitute for UNSC membership ultimately depends on a number of variables, including India's diplomatic strategy, its interactions with other G20 members, and the particular objectives it seeks to realise on the international scene. It will depend on the complexity of international relations and the range of options available to countries to further their objectives and strengthen global governance.

Conclusion:

The new epoch of international relations with deliverance from the havoc of the cold war and coalition politics has resulted in robust assurance of the UN. To continue with the trust and belief of the member countries as a strong international platform to get justice and peace, there is a high need to reform the UN by democratising its structure and decentralizing its function. At the same time, it must be understood that it is not the UN responsible for the failure to maintain the fair decision many times.

At present time, the entire international community is seeking an alternative influential entity to take the place of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) due to its stagnation caused by the veto power. The credibility of the UNSC suffered a severe blow following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The G-20 is regarded as a potential future option, as it lacks the veto power that could be exploited. It is evolving with a sense of optimism and anticipation. India, along with other G20 members, has the potential to collaborate and strengthen the G20 as a formidable organisation. Additionally, they could utilize the G20 as an alternative platform to exert pressure on the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for comprehensive reforms.

India's dual roles as a contributor of development aid to neighboring nations and an active participant in UN peacekeeping missions bestow upon it the ability to lead comprehensive UN reform efforts. This could materialize through a collective commitment within the G20 to provide both political and financial backing for UN reform, thereby accelerating the progress of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda. Collaboratively, India with other G20 members can collaborate on crafting an all-

encompassing definition of multilateralism and a working proposal that visualizes the structure of a reformed UN (United Nations, 2017). The G20 platform serves as an opportunity to initiate discussions concerning the pathways toward reshaping the UN.

The countries of superpowers and other big powers are to be blamed for the failure of the UN. The Hegemonic approach of the great powers which led the UN to decide in their favour by keeping aside the developing country's interest should be blamed for the unfair distribution of veto power and inadequate success to maintain permanent peace in different conflict-prone countries. The limitations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) create another major topic for discussion and debate over the role of the great powers within the UNO, which is directed towards failure to achieve within the time frame. Therefore, all nations must have to be united together and join hands together to work passionately for conserving, safeguarding, ameliorating, and invigorating the UNO. It is essential to note that India's pursuit of a permanent seat on the UNSC is a matter of ongoing debate and negotiation at the international level. The issue of UNSC reform, including the expansion of permanent seats, is complex and subject to the approval of the existing permanent members, which can be a significant obstacle to any changes in the structure of the council.

Although the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is regarded as the ultimate objective of UN reform, it is also acknowledged as the most challenging endeavor (Dutta & Kugiel, 2023). It's crucial for India to engage within the G20 to rally support for the prompt execution of the UN reform agenda set in motion by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. India, however, should not disregard the other components of the ongoing reform process.

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