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INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY

Concept Note

The Group of 20, or the G20, is a multilateral forum comprising 19 developed and developing countries plus the European Union (EU) is viewed as the most representative forum of the world today. Having its origin in 1999 following the global financial crisis of 1997-98, it was initially an informal forum for the finance ministers and central bank chiefs of prominent industrialised and developing countries to discuss global economic and financial issues. Subsequently, they met annually, and its chair rotates annually among the members but the forum operates without a permanent secretariat or staff.



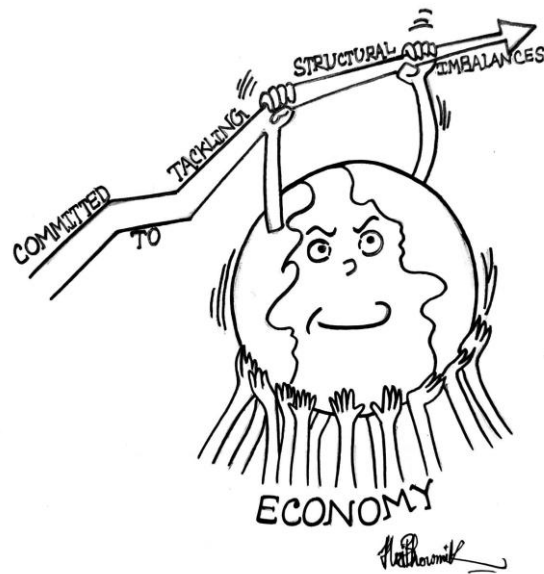
The G20 comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, EU, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, UK and USA. The member countries together represent around 90% of global GDP, 80% of global trade, and two-thirds of the world's population. As a premier global forum, it deliberates on and plans for international cooperation to achieve global economic stability and growth by promoting financial regulations and architecture to prevent future financial crises.

The G20 chair is part of a rotating three-member management group of past, present and future chairs referred to as the Troika. India, as a major developing economy, has a vital stake in the stability of the global economic and financial system. It has been actively involved in the G20.

preparatory process since its inception and for the first time, New Delhi assumed the presidency on December 1, 2022, for one year during which it is showcasing its capability to lead an intergovernmental organisation. With its diverse economy, technological prowess, and commitment to sustainable development, India is poised to bring unique perspectives to the table. Currently, the grouping under India's presidency is striving hard to engage multiple stakeholders for a smooth transition adhering to the mantra of

Vasudheiva
Kutumbakam—‘One

Earth, One Family, One Future’. Under the strong leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and India's skilled diplomatic establishment led by Amitabh Kant and Harsh Vardhan Shringla, India will showcase its resolve and ability to spearhead multilateral forum and undertake global responsibilities.



The current issue of the *Liberal Studies* journal invited expert articles on various aspects of the G20 negotiations under India's presidency. The papers range from the historical perspective of the grouping and attitude of member-states to climate change, renewable resources, water security, India-China standoff, inclusion of AU, etc. The authors comprise senior academicians, policymakers and young scholars who have examined many exotic issues involving the objectives of the G20 forum as well as India's contribution to the process.

Articles

The G20 and India's Leadership During Global Economic and Environment Crises

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S.N. Misra*

Abstract

The emergence of G20 as a global multilateral forum has its roots in the efforts to manoeuvre through the global financial crisis. The USA was more serious about the financial crisis and made all efforts to enhance the G20 to the Summit level and host the first three (two during 2009). From 2016 onwards, Asia got the opportunity to voice its concerns by hosting the G-20 summits at Hangzhou (2016), Osaka (2019), Riyadh (2020), and Bali (2022). Since then, the G20 has transformed itself into a socio-economic platform to draw the attention of the global community. India's G20 leadership is awaited by the Global South and also the developed world, as Delhi now represents the most populous country in the world and also it is the largest functioning democracy. The G-20 New Delhi Summit will be a grand location for 75 years closing hours of India's independence where top leaders of the world will be attending and giving their valuable suggestions on burning global issues.

Keywords: G20, Global Financial Crisis, India's G20 leadership, Global South

During the Twentieth century, two World Wars were fought and, on both occasions,



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the narrative proclaimed by the winning group was to ‘make the Earth safe for democracy’ and more so at the time of World War II in full swing, the big four (United States of America, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, and China) promised “four freedoms” (Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear). To stand in their commitment, the United Nations (UN) and economic organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and trade regulators like General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and later four freedoms became the Third Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One of the major outcomes of the war was coming to the surface of the East-West conflict, which was between a Command Economy vs. a Free Economy. The war also accelerated the process of decolonisation which had an ugly face during the heyday of the ‘Industrial Revolution’ which prompted the arrogant British Premier to say that ‘Sun was not setting on the British Empire.’ The situation created the emergence of the colonised South and coloniser North, which after 20 years took shape into ‘Rising Group of 77’ (G77) and assertive action by petroleum producing world Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The East-West conflict, with the entry of the nuclear arms race, turned into the Cold War, which experienced bitter competition in the formation of military alliances, fighting proxy wars, investment and success in producing lethal weapons, and on top of it a competition in space.

By 1970, the situation was volatile and the oil crisis provoked both France and Germany to initiate dialogue among developed six (USA, UK, France, Germany, Japan, and Italy) in 1975, to take stock of the situation and the trays and means to meet the challenges both inside and outside the UN. In 1976, Canada joined the group to make it Group of 7 (G7). The Soviet action in Afghanistan and the US program for ‘Star Wars’ complicated the whole matter and changes in the USA were visible when Gorbachev was at the helm. Meanwhile, at the Belgrade Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Conference in 1989, the developing world formed a Group of 15 (G15) to assess the world’s economic and environmental issues.

The last decade of the 20th century was full of events. The collapse of the Soviet architecture maintained since the Stalin era crumbled and the USSR was delimited leaving her companion units achieving independence. The Cold War, thus it is a logical end. Saddam Hussein’s annexation of Kuwait caused a UN-approved 28-nation war against Iraq bringing an end to Saddam’s arrogant and aggressive expansion design. The USSR

preferred neutrality, as a matter of fact, the collapse of the USSR, the end of the Cold War, and the US-led victory over Iraq invited the process of a US-led unipolar world. Many collective dialogues appeared and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) could get an opportunity to plan its program with collective participation. In 1994, in a changed security environment, positive UN-led dialogue on environment protection and the demise of the Cold War helped Russia (former USSR's largest component) to get guest status in G7 Summits. In 1998, Russia became a full-fledged member of the group which was converted into Group of (G8). However, Russia was suspended from G-8 in 2014 due to its belligerent action over Ukraine and its occupation of Crimea.

Financial Crisis After (World War I)

The First World War had an extended theatre and it experienced multi-nation involvement in Europe, which shattered both agriculture and other industrial developments. In 1929, the 'Great Economic Depression' was a post-war effect. It was an economic shock that impacted most countries across the world. It saw the crashing of the Wall Street stock market. The depression continued for 10 long years and the World War II began in September 1939. The global GDP declined by 26.7 per cent involving large-scale unemployment. The collapse of world trade and money supply were major features. This depression was the longest and deepest downturn in the modern industrial economy. However, with prudent action under US leadership, economic recovery followed by growth as well as cultural stability was observed. The next major challenge came from OPEC countries which led to the oil crisis. The developed world by forming G7 analysed the situation. Again in 1982 debt crisis and stock market crash occurred in 1987. For about a decade, the crisis continued in different phases. But in 1994, the sudden devaluation of the Mexican Peso triggered the Tequila crisis. There was a massive interest rate crisis and it resulted in a bond route. It was analysed as a cause of economic policy reversal by Mexico. The US came to rescue Mexico to get out of the crisis.

Then appeared the Asian Financial Crisis (1997-1998) which occurred, 15 years after the Latin American Debt Crisis of 1982. It started in July 1997 when Thailand's currency Baht crashed. The crisis spread across the region with South Korea, Indonesia, Laos, Hong Kong and Malaysia. One financial analyst had warned the Asian nations earlier, but it remained unheard. The general opinion among the following economies of Asia was that they had Asian values and saving culture and they cannot be

equated with Latin American countries. However, Western analysts identified over-lending to the consumer area and in real estate as primary factors for the financial crisis. It was a surprise for the policymakers who thought that their economic policies were on the right track. The IMF provided US\$ 40 billion to assist the dying economy. In Russia, a nearly similar situation arose in 1998. The West in general and the US in particular were watchful of the developments which had international dimensions.

The Emergence of G20 and its Structure and Policies

The new economic crisis in Asian countries in the previous financial issues leading to the crash of economies in the Western world, particularly among the Latin American countries impacted the electoral process in the USA. The Clinton Administration was aware of the developments but the new Republican President, George Bush Jr. invited the G-8 and some emerging economies in Washington DC in 2000 to take stock of the situation for possible future collaboration and cooperation. This meeting gave birth to the concept of Group of 20 (G20) which included 19 economies and the European Union. It was told that they had 80 per cent of the world's economy and 75 per cent of the world trade under their belt besides more than two-third of the population. Initially, the heads of the Central banks and Finance Ministers were required to attend the annual meetings who handle the financial crisis threats to the global economy and climate change issues were discussed. The developing countries besides G-8 were Australia, China, Brazil, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Argentina, India, Mexico, South Africa and the European Union. In 2008, the G20 meeting was upgraded to the summit level where the Heads of State or Governments were required to attend and share the experiences of other economies to work out plans for the mitigation of trade and financial issues. It will not be out of the way to provide Summit details in tabular form.

G20 Summits Since 2008

Host Country	Year & Venue	Host Leader	Issues Discussed
USA	2008, Washington	George Bush	Structural factors affected by the economy
UK	2009, London	Gordon Brown	Financial Crisis
USA	2009, Pillsbury	Barack Obama	Avoiding risks by banks
Canada	2010, Toronto	Stephen Harper	Recovery and New beginning
South Africa	2010, Seoul	Lee Myung-bak	Shared growth beyond crisis
France	2011, Cannes	Nicholas Sarkozy	Growth and Jobs
Mexico	2012, Los Carlos	Felipe Calderón	Unemployment
Russia	2013, St. Pietersburg	Vladimir Putin	Boosting growth and job creation
Australia	2014, Brisbane	Tony Abbott	Promoting resilience
Turkey	2015, Serik	R.T Erdogan	Migration and Refugee Movement
China	2016, Hangzhou	Xi Jinping	Energy exchange and climate change
Germany	2017, Hamburg	Angela Merkel	Interconnected world
Argentina	2018, Buenos Aires	Mauricio Macri	Sustainable development and food security
Japan	2019, Saka	Shinzo Abe	Ensuring global sustainability
Saudi Arabia	2020, Riyadh	King Salman	Fighting the Pandemic and after effects
Italy	2021, Rome	Mario Draghi	People, Planet, and Prosperity
Indonesia	2022, Bali	Joko Widodo	Green development and Climate Finance
India	2023, New Delhi	Narendra Modi	Civil Society perspectives on issues

Source: Collected from Summit Declarations

From the above information, it is visible that the USA was more serious about the financial crisis. The very attempt to enhance the G20 to the Summit level and hosting the first three (two during 2009) summits bear testimony to this. The issues discussed in the first three summits also provided the concern and consciousness of the organisers.

China, which was not a part of G8 but included in G20, was the first Asian country to host the summit in 2016 which was attended by Prime Minister Modi. This summit discussed energy, efficiency and climate change-related issues and search for possible solutions. Japan hosted in 2019 Osaka Summit where Shinzo Abe harped upon ensuring global sustainability. Saudi Arabia hosted the pandemic period summit which prioritised the pandemic and its aftereffects predominantly in the discussions. On the whole, Asia since 2016 got the opportunity to voice its concern by hosting the G20 summit at Hangzhou (2016), Osaka (2019), Riyadh (2020), and Bali (2022). The issues discussed in the Asian venues for common cause matters. The G20 transformed itself into a socio-economic platform, and from structural issues and lending principles, it entered into the arena of many humanitarian issues to draw the attention of the global community represented by their leaders. The 2022 Bali Summit was held amidst the post-pandemic period with the new challenge of Russia's Ukrainian war, which by that time had caused worldwide eyebrow-raising concerns and the economic and military challenges it presented with the scenario of proxy war and intention of genocide. The Bali Summit looked into green development and climate finance as major challenges for the 20 identified nations for the whole world. The 2023 Summit (September 9-10) is scheduled to be held in New Delhi and a more elaborate discussion on the prelude to it is provided in the following section.

2023 Delhi G20 Summit: India's Moments

India played a significant role during the pandemic period and by creating a climate of trust in both the developed and developing world, India has emerged as a natural leader of the Global South. It reminds us the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in March 1947, which accelerated the process of decolonization and also a small beginning of the world that did not subscribe to military alliance diplomacy then.

As a founding member of the UN, India has always played a constructive role during in socio-economic crises and military confrontations. The Indian proposal for the creation of the UN Emergency Force was a seminal contribution. By the establishment of NAM, India could inform the superpowers that war was not the only means for the achievement of peace and stability in the world. These activities have helped in creating a positive image for India in the Afro-Asian group of nations and during the 21st century in the first two decades, India has become the chief spokesperson of the Global South. Besides the UN, India is a member of the Bay Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), and Bay of Bengal (BOB) Community as well. But the membership of G20 and the invitation by G7 to India to share views at the summit has heightened India's image in the global peace initiatives. In the post-pandemic era, India has accorded priorities to the health sector, climate, change, energy security, peaceful international trade, etc.

India's presidency of G20 commenced on 1st December 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the presidency gavel from the Indonesian President Joko Widodo when the Bali Summit was over. India's G20 leadership is awaited by the Global South and also the developed world as Delhi represents now the most populous country in the world and also it is the largest functioning democracy.

The theme for the G20 (2023) Summit as presented by India is '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*', which means 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. The concept is derived from *Maha Upanishad* which means the world is one family. Essentially the theme affirms the values of all life – human, animal, plant and microorganisms – and their interconnectedness on the planet Earth and in the wider universe.

India has placed six items on the agenda for discussion and it will be G20 Dialogue for 2023. The six agenda priorities are:

1. Green Development, Climate Change and LiFE,
2. Accelerated, Inclusive and Resilient Growth,
3. Accelerating Progress on SDGs,
4. Technological Transformations and Digital Public Infrastructure,
5. Multilateral Institutions for the 21st Century, and
6. Women-led Development.

It is to be remembered that India was asked to host the 2021 Summit of G20, and Italy was to host in 2022. But by local arrangement, India chose 2022 for hosting the summit as it coincided with the platinum jubilee of India's independence and Italy agreed to host the 2021 Summit. Later Indonesia which was supposed to chair the ASEAN Conference in 2023, requested India to host the 2023 G20 summit and Indonesia hosted the 2022 G20 summit. Thus, India's policy of accommodation and respect for other countries' needs are hailed worldwide.

The G-20 New Delhi summit will be a grand location for 75 years closing hours of India's independence where top leaders of the world will be attending and giving their valuable suggestions on burning global issues.

The G-20 Leaders' Summit of September 2023 in New Delhi will be a congregation of heads of state and of the governments of G20 countries which is the culmination part of the ministerial meetings, working groups and engagement groups. The Indian presidency will also spotlight Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) with an emphasis on environmentally sustainable and responsible choices at both the individual lifestyle and the national development level to achieve a cleaner, greener and bluer future. The Working Group focuses on agriculture, anti-corruption, culture, digital economy, disaster risk reduction, development, education, employment, environment and climate sustainability, energy transitions, health, trade and investment, and tourism.

During the closing ceremony, the Leaders' Declaration which states leaders' commitment towards the priorities discussed and agreed upon during the ministerial and working group meetings will be released.

Conclusion

The 2023 G20 Summit in India has time-tuned India's commitment towards universal healthcare and enhancing healthcare infrastructure, focusing on women-led development, digital infrastructure, and refuelling growth among other important aspects for the theme "one earth, one family, one future".

During the Bali Summit, India through the most articulate Prime Minister Modi harped upon the possible agenda for the New Delhi Summit – interconnectedness between geopolitics and global economy. Current

being undeniable and the global impact of climate change as irrefutable, he rightly pointed out at Bali the linkages between inclusive development, gender equality, peace and security and the full use of technological innovations for universal benefit. The Think20 engagement group identifies seven tasks and groups to coordinate them as pointed out earlier – macroeconomics, trade and livelihood, digital future, LiFE, refuelling growth, global financial order and accelerating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), etc.

Keeping in view world peace and the absence of war, the discussions held in India at several places, the task force on multilateralism is expected to seek to create a roadmap for MULTILATERALISM 2.0, which includes a reform agenda for key multilateral institutions like the UN, World Health Organization (WHO), World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Labour Organization (ILO), the world community wants for the DELHI DECLARATION.

India's G20 Presidency and Chinese Reactions

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Gunjan Singh*

Abstract

The Indian Presidency of the G20 summit has been marred with several challenges. Though New Delhi has been keen to use the platform to push for a unified global south narrative, its bilateral ties with Beijing could derail the outcomes. With this backdrop, the paper attempts to provide an overview and timetable of the developments in India-China relations which have adversely dampened the Indian Presidency of G20.

Keywords: G20, Indian Presidency of G20, India–China Relations, Indian Foreign Policy, Chinese Foreign Policy, G20 Summit 2023.

Introduction

The Group of 20 or the G20 was founded in 1999, after the Asian Financial Crisis. It was formed as a platform where the bank heads and finance ministers could discuss the existing and upcoming economic and financial issues. In the year 2008, it was to become an organization where the heads of state could discuss financial and economic issues after the global financial crisis of 2007. The G20 summit is held annually.¹

The 2022 Presidency of G20 was held by Indonesia and the theme of the summit was 'Recover Together, Recover Stronger'. The theme was directly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the major focus was to identify the path to international recovery.² The leader's declaration of the summit in Indonesia concluded, "Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy - constraining

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growth, increasing inflation, disrupting supply chains, heightening energy and food insecurity, and elevating financial stability risks”.³ Thus underscoring the argument that the major focus of 2022 G20 summit was the pandemic while the Ukraine crisis also took centre. Another major achievement of the last summit was that the grouping could adopt a concluding stand towards the ongoing war on Ukraine. Things have not been that smooth during the Indian Presidency of the G20.

Indian Presidency of the G20

On December 1, 2022, India assumed the G20 presidency for a year. While formulating his plan for the upcoming role the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi had said that the idea is to achieve “a sense of universal oneness” with the theme being, One Earth, One Family, One Future.”⁴ This is inspired by the Sanskrit phrase, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbaka*, which comes from the *Maha Upanishad*. It asserts the importance of all kinds of life forms (human, plant, animal and microorganism). It also underscores the importance of a sustainable environment. In addition, it acknowledges the need for the right choices as it has effects on both national as well as international levels and has an impact on attaining a clean, green and blue environment.⁵ This thus also underscores the centrality of interconnectedness and inter-dependence in the global system which has become a major focus since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Indian Prime Minister further added that the G20 will be “inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive” and “Our priorities will focus on healing our ‘One Earth’, creating harmony within our ‘One Family’ and giving hope for our ‘One Future.’”⁶ He had further asserted that India will look at formulating issues in consultation with, “our fellow-travellers in the global South, whose voice often goes unheard”.⁷ This highlights the importance that India extends to the global South and hopes to be able to provide them with a unified and stronger position in the international decision-making process. G20 has the potential to be an important platform for the concerns and aspirations of the global south.

Under the India’s G20 Presidency, around 200 meetings have been scheduled and successfully concluded, and India has focussed on discussing and debating multiple issues of global significance. As a group, the G20 countries represent two-third of the world population, 75 per cent of world trade and 80 percent of the global GDP.⁸ The fact that India is hosting the Presidency has established New Delhi as an important player in the regional and global political scenario. In the words of the Indian External Affairs

Minister S. Jaishankar, the primary “motto of hosting G20 is getting the world ready for India and India ready for the world”.⁹ An indication of what New Delhi hopes to achieve from a successful conclusion of the G20 proceedings and agenda. There is also a perception that this opportunity will be used by New Delhi to promote itself as the “Voice of the Global South” and as a ‘problem solver for major global issues’ while showcasing to the world the achievements made under the leadership of PM Modi.

It is also expected that under India's G20 presidency it will also share its own experience with the fellow members. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), “this year presents an exceptional opportunity for the country to spearhead a collective approach to tackle multiple, complex, and interconnected challenges while placing, front and centre, the aspirations and needs of the developing world”.¹⁰ On the other hand, the Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, Anita Bhatia said that the “development stories and pragmatic interventions that have already worked, with others. Because everybody is hungry for solutions that are efficient, particularly in a post-pandemic world”.¹¹ Such statements at the beginning of the presidency also highlight the optimism that was inherent in the member grouping as well as the concerned international bodies towards the Indian Presidency of the G20.

Even though India has worked towards highlighting major issues that affect the G20 countries, international developments have proved to be a major hurdle. One major challenge during this year has been the ongoing war on Ukraine. In addition to this, India-China relations have played a major hurdle for New Delhi.

India and China are two of the most populous countries that are members of the G20. They can also be regarded as countries that can influence decision-making and provide new directions to policy-making which can impact the global south. Both are developing economies that have suffered adversely during the Covid 19 pandemic and thus the G20 could have been an opportune platform for them to share their experiences. However, what has been witnessed is that Beijing has in several instances given primacy to the bilateral disputes between China and India. Because of this, a number of G20 meetings and negotiations have been negatively affected. China's closer stance with Russia has also impacted the process of reaching any unified G20 consensus on the ongoing war on Ukraine.

Such developments call for an analysis of what and how India-China relations have affected the G20 Presidency of New Delhi. The paper attempts to discuss some of the major challenges faced by India and the role

played by Beijing. It will also discuss some of the incidents that could further derail the India-China relations and also the G20 summit.

India-China Relations and India's Presidency of G20

To set the backdrop a short analysis of the India-China relations is necessary. The disputed boundary, the 1962 war and the urge to become an important factor in the Asian and global region have been one of the driving factors in India-China relations. The border issues and the violent incident in April-May 2020 which resulted in the Galwan crisis, have further complicated the bilateral relations. China is an important global economic powerhouse, with a GDP five times that of India. It is today the second-largest economy in the world. This economic growth has also helped Beijing to modernize its military with consistent technological, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cyber, and space programmes. However, it has also been an important catalyst in the new aggressive stance adopted by Beijing in the last decade under the leadership of Xi Jinping.

The India-China relationship has been very strained after the Galwan clashes where India lost 20 soldiers because of violence and Chinese incursions. This led to the breakdown of the mechanism of border negotiations and diplomatic coordination and the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) which had been in place since the 1990s. The Galwan clash has also set a new direction in the relationship and has exposed a very assertive and confident China under the leadership of Xi Jinping. On the other hand, the Indian reactions and positioning have brought to the fore a new and nuanced approach adopted by New Delhi. In the words of S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, "India's relationship with China is not normal."¹² The Galwan clashes have put India-China relations on a whole new path.

When India was awarded the presidency of G20 it was expected that the current animosity and coldness in the India-China relations and border issues would have an impact on the ongoing G20 summit preparations. They were also going to affect the upcoming meetings as well as the agenda of the G20 and this prediction has proved to be true. Especially because Beijing has not hesitated from refusing to attend some of the meetings while also adopting measures that can be perceived as attempts to derail the Indian momentum and focus.

The G20 as an important platform for discussion could have been the right opportunity for the Indo-China relationship and pick up the pieces

of the broken relationship. China has suffered greatly due to the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, and it has adversely affected the global supply chains as well as the expected international economic growth rates. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in 2020 the global economy “shrunk by 4.4 percent”.¹³ How China handles its economic crisis will have a major impact on global economic growth as well as recovery. The Chinese economic growth has been very slow, and its revival is proving to be a major challenge for the Xi Jinping government.

It is not only China but the whole of the South Asian region which is also suffering economically. The countries in the Indian neighbourhood, especially Sri Lanka and Pakistan, have been facing an uphill task in trying to achieve economic recovery.¹⁴ Sri Lanka and Pakistan both have had major financial challenges and had to turn to the IMF for a bailout. This has also adversely affected the domestic political situation of Colombo and Islamabad and has put a question mark on the legitimacy of the respective governments.

There is the expectation that the G20 can and should provide a neutral platform for the countries to restart conversations. It was a positive move that after almost year of challenges, the announcement of Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang's visit to India to attend the G20 meeting could have been a much-required drive towards a normalization of relations.¹⁵ During his meeting, Qin said, “Global development and prosperity cannot be achieved without a peaceful and stable international environment.”¹⁶ This statement highlighted that both sides needed a peaceful border and a thaw in the relations to boost the economic recovery after the Covid 19 pandemic and violent border clashes. Though, not much was achieved even after this meeting.

However, the situation is not as simple as one would expect and the bilateral problems did become central to a lot of meetings held under the G20 banner. The first and most controversial was the meeting which was organized in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian government had organized a meeting at Itanagar, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh under the title G20 ‘Research Innovation Initiative Gathering’ (RIIG) which was not attended by China.¹⁷ Arunachal Pradesh has been one of the disputed territories. To further complicate the relationship, after the meeting Beijing decided to unilaterally change the names of 11 places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims to be South Tibet. However, the Indian government has rejected such manoeuvres. This is the third time

China has attempted to do this, first in 2017 and then again in 2021.¹⁸ The fact that Beijing chose the year with the Indian presidency of G20 to again change the names in the Indian state highlights that it was an attempt to undermine the Indian position and standing in the regional order. This can also be regarded as a step by China to highlight that the situation on the ground is still unresolved and Beijing can decide to flare it up whenever it feels like. Thus, putting the bilateral issues over the multilateral agenda of the G20 summit.

Another similar stance was witnessed in the case of Srinagar. The meeting of the working group on tourism which was concluded in Srinagar during May 22–24, 2023, became the second important meeting in which China refused to participate. This meeting was vehemently opposed by Pakistan in addition to China decided not to attend. Beijing had expressed its disapproval last year of the location of the meeting. This will be the first major international event and gathering in Srinagar after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.¹⁹ As per a source, “preparations started for the meeting last year. G20 meetings are taking place in all 28 states and 8 Union territories. Both Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir are integral parts of India.”²⁰ However, the meeting was boycotted by China, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin had said, “China firmly opposes holding G20 meetings in any form in 'disputed' areas and will not attend such meetings.”²¹

The gathering can be deemed a success as 60 delegates from the G20 member nations attended the meetings. India was firm on holding this in Srinagar arguing that it was a good opportunity to showcase the tourism potential and developments in the region.²² Thus, again underscoring the argument that the bilateral issues did take precedence over the agenda of the G20. Even Ladakh became a contentious issue during this year’s G20 summit. This was obvious as there have been multiple reports that claim that Beijing had attempted to derail the Youth Summit which was organized in Ladakh on 26 April, 2023. Beijing argued that India should not organize events in disputed territories.²³

One of the successes was the meeting of the Indian and Chinese Finance Ministers during the G20 Summit held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 17 and 18 July 2023. This was during the third Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG). Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman met Liu Kun. According to a tweet by the Finance Ministry the Chinese Finance Minister, “appreciated India’s leadership in G20 and stated

that a lot of results have been achieved so far. Key discussion items included deliverables under the G20 India Presidency, including strengthening MDBs, Global Debt vulnerabilities and GPFIs.²⁴ However, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war overshadowed this meeting as well. India was unable to come to a final communique as Russia and China opposed the Indian proposals. The Indian finance minister issued a chair summary stating that “because we still don’t have a common language on the Russia- Ukraine war”.²⁵ During this meeting, United States Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen asserted that the United States looks at India as an “indispensable partner for friend shoring”.²⁶ She further added that she is keen to visit India again to identify ways to strengthen this relationship.

Though, the division among states over the Ukraine war has constantly dominated the G20 proceedings. However, New Delhi has attempted to bring the focus back to the challenges faced by the G20 countries it has somewhat failed to achieve common consensus of the countries. Many nations have focused on their bilateral agendas rather than giving importance to the G20 goals. According to S Jaishankar, “We tried, but the gap between the countries was too much.”²⁷ A major challenge faced by New Delhi has been to build a consensus over the ongoing Ukraine War primarily about the explanation/discussion for the final G20 summit document. Thus, highlighting the point that global narratives and challenges can derail the G20 proceedings.

However, in yet another development the Chinese side has expressed its ‘uneasiness’ over the use of the word *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. As per reports, the Chinese side has asserted that the official G20 reports should not be using this word. The argument to support this is that Sanskrit is not one of the officially recognized languages of the United Nations. While some of the other countries supported India arguing that the theme choice is the privilege of the nation presiding over the G20.²⁸ To provide the Indian perspective and stand over the issue, Arindam Bagchi, the external affairs ministry spokesperson said, “As you are aware the theme of our G20 Presidency in English – ‘One World, One Family, One Future’. This is based on our civilizational ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* which has received widespread support and permeates many of the initiatives that India has brought to the G20 agenda.”²⁹ It appears that constant side-stepping and pushing to create challenges for the Indian presidency by Beijing has been China’s major goal.

The constant refusal of China to attend meetings and question India’s sovereignty has not helped in pushing the relationship in a positive

direction. The G20 could have been a neutral platform for India and China to discuss issues and work towards a unified approach towards the development of the region, however, this has just been just a hope and bilateral issues have taken precedence over the G20 and regional agenda.

Climate Change

One of the major challenges faced by the countries of the global South is Climate Change. G20 nations have consistently worked towards achieving a consensus and roadmap that will help them in mitigating these specific challenges. Climate Change affects economic development, human development, and human security. Due to the transnational nature of this challenge, it is increasingly difficult to manage along with that it necessarily needs a multilateral approach to find a feasible and acceptable solution.

India and China both have faced adverse effects from Climate Change. Increasing air and water pollution has been affecting the living standards of their respective populations. G20 provided a good platform for them to discuss this issue with the aim to achieve a roadmap for future action which will help them in achieving a cleaner environment. India and China are two of the largest consumers of coal in the world.

Under India's presidency, as stated by three top Indian officials, New Delhi in collaboration with Beijing has been keen to achieve "a consensus within the G20 group to let countries choose a roadmap to cut carbon emissions instead of setting a deadline to end the use of fossil fuels."³⁰ This will be helpful for countries that are dependent on fossil fuels which are being supported by India, China and South Africa.³¹

However, there have been some reports that Beijing has been responsible for attempting to derail the Climate Change negotiations at the G20. The conclusions at the G20 will provide a framework for the upcoming UN COP28 summit which is scheduled for later in 2023.³² As per an article in the *Financial Times*, "Those present said China argued the G20 was an economic forum and should not be the venue for climate change policy. Beijing also pushed back on proposed trade restrictions to deal with climate change, such as tariffs on imported carbon-intensive goods."³³ Such reports further strengthen the argument that though the proposals formulated by India will also be helping Beijing, it has been very difficult for New Delhi to gain China's support. It is believed that China has been giving more importance to its negotiations concerning Climate Change with

the United States rather than the negotiations held under G20.³⁴ Thus, further underscoring the idea that the bilateral relations of countries have somehow been more important than working together under the G20 banner.

Financial Cooperation

The economy and finance are primary aspects of the G20's agenda. The Debt Services Suspension Initiative (DSSI) was started in 2020 under the Presidency of Saudi Arabia.³⁵ Under India's presidency, New Delhi had called out to lender nations and China to adopt major restricting to the loans and take cuts as a large number of smaller nations have been suffering because of the pandemic.³⁶ China has consistently worked with the DSSI. Beijing has signed DSSI with 19 African countries.³⁷ The G20 has consistently worked towards DSSI and debts of some of the poorer nations have been suspended for some time.³⁸ This also underscores that debt is one of the primary and fundamental challenges faced by the G20 nations and one of the crucial issues that needs to be addressed.

African Union

One area where India and China have had a unified voice on the G20 platform has been the incorporation of the African Union (AU) as a full member of the upcoming September summit. According to the Indian Prime Minister "written to G20 counterparts to propose that the African Union be given full membership at the upcoming Delhi Summit of G20, as requested by them."³⁹ Most of the issues discussed by the G20 are pressing concerns for the AU, like climate change, debt, domestic security, etc. It is being argued that if the AU becomes a member, then the G20 can boost it by looking at the concerns of 80 per cent of the world population instead of just 65 per cent, thus making it more inclusive.⁴⁰ As per a senior official, "It will be difficult for anyone to oppose this proposal."⁴¹ This proposal was officially included in the leader's draft declaration at the 3rd G20 Sherpa meeting which was concluded in July 2023 at Hampi, Karnataka.⁴² There are also discussions about whether G20 will be called G21 after the inclusion of AU, however, these are just predictions.⁴³ This has been one of the few agendas where India and China have voiced their cooperation.

Anti-Corruption Working Group

India held three Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) during its presidency of the G20. The first one was held from March 1-3, 2023, in Gurugram. The second meeting was held from May 25 -27, 2023 in Rishikesh and the third one was concluded from August 9-11, 2023, in Kolkata. This group was established in 2010. The success of the meetings underscores the importance of challenges faced by corruption in developing economies.⁴⁴ According to a statement by the personnel ministry “The deliberations at the level of ministers will impart a further political impetus in combatting corruption as ACWG plays a crucial role in leading international efforts to combat corruption,” said the statement issued by the personnel ministry.⁴⁵ Under India’s presidency, there has been a renewed focus on the “return of assets and action against fugitive economic offenders.”⁴⁶

During the third meeting of ACWG concluded in Kolkata around 154 delegates representing the G20 countries, invitees from 10 countries and several international organizations, attended the meeting.⁴⁷ The Indian Prime Minister during the virtual meeting asserted that India has zero tolerance and “corruption affects the allocation of resources, distorts markets.”⁴⁸ Corruption is one of the major challenges which affects the growth of the countries from the Global South. India-China both are developing economies and thus corruption is a hurdle which they need to overcome.

Journalists Visa Row

Between April and June 2023, India and China were engaged in a major row over the renewal of visas of their respective journalists. In April 2023 Beijing refused to extend the visas of the last two Indian journalists (Ananth Krishnan from Hindu and Anshuman Mishra from Prasar Bharti). China argued that New Delhi has been consistently treating the Chinese journalists adversely since 2017 and Beijing is just reacting. However, in May 2023, India decided to freeze the visas of the last two Chinese journalists posted in India. New Delhi argued that it is just following the Chinese steps. Arindam Bagchi the spokesperson of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said, “The Indian side supports and facilitates foreign journalists in India. At the same time, there should be no deviations from normal journalistic behaviour and activities, or from the provisions governing Journalist visas.”⁴⁹ But what is problematic here is that the two neighbours have cut ground access to the journalists. This visa freeze did take a lot of media attention while India is hosting the G20 presidency.

However, India has reiterated that journalists from all G20 countries are welcome to cover the summit.⁵⁰ Such actions underscore that Beijing will continue to be creating new and nuanced challenges for India in the upcoming months.

Chinese Media

The Chinese media has also given a lot of attention to the India's G20 and the statement made by former deputy national security advisor Pankaj Saran. Saran stated that one of the challenges for India's G20 Presidency will be dealing with China. As a response to this, an article in *Global Times* argued, "Indian politicians should be aware that the G20 is not an appropriate platform to discuss China-India border disputes. If India sees itself as a big power, it should get accustomed to the many divergences it has with China and should try to properly manage these divergences."⁵¹ Such statements from both sides also assert that India's relations with China were one of the key issues in the minds of the Indian policymakers.

Neighbourhood Discourse and Centrality

One cannot over-emphasize the idea that the Indian Presidency of the G20 provides New Delhi with an opportune platform to build the discourse around the need for a cooperative and developed neighbourhood. This is a good chance for India to show its desire and commitment to work towards the all-round growth of the countries in South Asia. It can centralize the challenges that affect the countries of South Asia while looking for ways to cooperate and benefit from each other strengths. In the words of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the celebration of the 77th Independence Day, "India's G20 presidency has made the world aware of the potential of India's common citizen. Today, India has got the opportunity to host the G-20 Summit in the country. And for the last one year, the way many such G-20 events have been organized in every corner of India, it has made the world aware of the potential of the common man of the country."⁵² While in the words of the Indian President, Draupadi Murmu, "India is playing a crucial role in promoting developmental and humanitarian goals around the world. It has also assumed leadership of international forums, especially the presidency of the G20."⁵³

Post COVID-19 pandemic there is a need for a renewed push for better healthcare and medicine. The Indian Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has stated, "Our Prime Minister has said that our G20 priorities will be

shaped in consultation with not just our G20 partners, but also our fellow travellers in the global South.”⁵⁴ This will also help New Delhi in exporting its expertise to the neighbourhood and also help them boost their capacities. In addition, New Delhi has also been pushing for the incorporation of the AU into the G20 an agenda which has been well received.

The presidency of India has also managed to gain support for issues related to “sharing of digital tools and health track: creating a research and manufacturing network for vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.”⁵⁵ There has been a lot of praise for how the Indian presidency of G20 has unfolded. In the words of Vikram Doraiswami, the Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, “The Group of 20 is the premier forum for the world to create inclusive growth and India's presidency this year has helped give voice to the Global South and create a truly unusual G20.”⁵⁶ He made the statement during an interview to mark the 77th Indian Independence Day.

However, the challenges faced by India in coming to an understanding and position regarding the ongoing war in Ukraine have hampered its position. China and Russia both have been trying to have consistently refused to include any reference to the Ukraine war and have also been attempting to distance themselves from the language that was accepted in Bali.⁵⁷ Such efforts have undermined Indian efforts to reach a common consensus.

Conclusion

India's presidency has been strewn with multiple challenges, especially, from China. The problems in this bilateral relationship have continuously left its shadow in the negotiations and workings of the G20 meetings.

As discussed in several instances Beijing has declined to participate in meetings and acknowledge India's approach towards issues. This has been most obvious concerning the border issue. The disputed border made the bilateral issue into a multilateral agenda when China decided not to attend meetings scheduled in Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. This also at a level directly challenges India's sovereignty as well. In a recent report, it is argued that there has been a rise in the number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir. The number of tourists visiting the state in the first five years was 18000. This has been the largest number of tourists in the last 30 years.⁵⁸

The credit is being given to the recently concluded G20 meeting on tourism. In addition, China has also attempted to derail the negotiations on Climate Change knowing very well that a conclusive agenda can only be set with Beijing on board. India and China are two of the largest economies in the grouping and they both must stay on the same side. It can be argued that China is trying to make the best for itself (by talking to the United States) and not giving importance to what is good for the G20 and for the future of the global South.

However, the question that has overshadowed the upcoming summit in New Delhi is not what will be on the final agenda and statement of the G20 summit. The question that is on everyone's mind is whether Xi Jinping will decide to attend the meeting or not. The upcoming meeting could provide an important platform for the leaders of India and China to re-engage with each other and look for a common platform to discuss the major challenges in the relationship. The ongoing talks and discussions between the military commanders of both countries have not managed to reach any solid conclusion or direction.⁵⁹ The leaders have met on a few occasions on the sidelines of other meetings, but not much has come of it. But the Chinese President has not made any major commitment guaranteeing his presence at the G20 summit which will be held under the Indian Presidency.

Indian leadership has been very positive about the role adopted by India during the G20 presidency and what it means for India's global aspirations. New Delhi is aiming to be the third-largest economy in the next five years. Such goals can only be fulfilled if it can achieve peace and respect from its neighbours first and also from the global community. The Presidency of G20 is definitely and fitting platform to achieve this as it puts India in an agenda-setting seat.

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The G20 Sphere and India-Australia Partnership

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Abstract

With the G20 leaders' summit to be held on 9-10 September 2023 in New Delhi, India is positioned at a strategic juncture in international relations. In this backdrop, as the post-Covid twenty-first century unfolds, this paper seeks to posit that people's interest ought to be the defining factor in any bilateral or multilateral relationship between state actors. This paper further attempts to examine the expanding ties of India and Australia within the multilateral sphere of G20, as well as without. The changing balance of power in the Asia-Pacific and particularly China's attempted hegemony in the region are major factors for both India and Australia to come closer.

Keywords: India, Australia, G20, China, Asia-Pacific,

Before a 2005 speech delivered by Professor Varun Sahni at the Defence and Security Luncheon of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) is discussed, it would perhaps not be out of context to mention Shraddha (name changed for privacy issues) who very recently in August 2023 has bagged a job of an insurance underwriter in Melbourne, Australia. In the process, she resigned from her permanent post in a leading Indian Public Sector Enterprise. The reasons for her decision could be multifarious, yet the Australian connection is visible.

Rafiq (name changed) had an interesting story to narrate. He drove us from Sydney domestic airport to the JW Marriott Hotel on the 19th of January 2023. A bearded burly individual, who had travelled to Australia almost a decade ago from Pakistan, told us that several students from South Asia who arrive 'Land Down Under' with study visas must ensure a certain percentage of attendance in college or

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university. Else, their visas are liable to be scrapped. He further added that many South-Asian students go for jobs in the hospitality industry or act as cab drivers to buttress their economic condition. “We are an important component in Australia”, Rafiq muttered. “We act as their support system”, was his rather emphatic statement. I however thought he went a bit overboard.

However, there is perhaps no gainsaying the fact that the Indian community is rising rapidly in Australia. They could be seen in Australian cities, and engaged in various professions. Ujjwal (original name) was particularly helpful to us. Our Australian SIM card which we had procured from Kolkata Airport did not get activated on time. And if one is without a data connection in Melbourne, she would be unable to even book taxis. As we were frantically searching for some help, out of nowhere Ujjwal – engaged in the delivery of food items – came up as the “most good Samaritan”. He offered his Wi-Fi connection and thereafter when our application software was not working properly, he booked a cab for us. He was not even bothered to be repaid and waited till he saw us board the vehicle. Ujjwal was one of the brightest stars of close to one million strong Indians living in Australia.

In the 2021 Australian Census, the number of people reporting Indian heritage was 976,000. Out of them, there were 673,000 Indian-born Australians, representing 2.6 percent of the Australian population, the second largest overseas-born group. Punjabi is their fastest-growing language and Hindi continues to be one of the top ten languages used in Australia. A new Centre for Australia-India Relations envisions furthering Australia’s understanding of contemporary India.¹

Returning to Professor Sahni’s 2005 lecture: he attempted to predict India-Australia relations in 2020, which he clarified was “not for obscure ocular or numerological reasons, but rather because India by that year, at current growth rates, would be at a very different place and player”.² Moreover, Professor Sahni was quite correct in his assessment that “the Holy Grail for Indian security policy is its quest for strategic autonomy”.³ In this context, it is however interesting to quote what Dr Shashi Tharoor writes: “Strategic autonomy is all very well, but it cannot be the be-all and end-all of India’s attitude to the world”.⁴ Not emphasizing in entirety what Professor Sahni talked about regarding India’s position as well as posture within the global security paradigm, but acknowledging that India “is just too big to be accommodated in any security community as a junior partner”⁵ would be very apt. Sahni’s submission regarding “unregulated population movements, state-

sponsored terrorism, gun running or the smuggling of counterfeit currency' and 'more organized cross-border threats', as principal security issues to affect India by 2020 could be well taken.⁶

The G20 Sphere

It is indubitably true that the September 11, 2001 attacks influenced the trajectory of the India-US relationship in a fundamental manner. Post 9/11, India and the United States found a common cause in combating terrorism. Thereafter, the two countries embarked on an era of bonhomie.⁷ Be it strategic autonomy or any other parameter of global politics, India believes and puts in considerable efforts to sustain multilateral relations and multi-alignments in the comity of nations, while encouraging conflict resolution through dialogues and negotiations. Within this realm, the formation of the Group of 20 or G20 is significant.

It is needless to mention that the formation of the G20 has a long history.⁸ The "role of G-summitry has been discussed among policy-makers and scholars ever since the first informal meeting among major powers foreshadowed its present-day incarnation", writes Juha Jokela.⁹ The significance of G20 is beyond question as one goes through the gargantuan numbers: the G20 countries together comprise 60 per cent of the world's population, with 80 per cent of global GDP and 75 percent of its trade.¹⁰ Of late, India issued the summary of a G20 meeting by emphasizing the need for "strengthening capacities of individual states and all stakeholders to better respond to traditional, non-traditional and emerging challenges, including terrorism and its financing, money laundering, misinformation and disinformation."¹¹

As the after-shocks of the Covid pandemic gradually mellowed down and the year 2022 picked up vigor and momentum in various domains of international relations (IR), Indians were rather elated to know that their country was poised to be the next host of the G20. At present, as a visitor drops by any Indian airport, the advertisements of India hosting the G20 shine brightly. Strictly speaking though, this would not be the first time that India would be hosting a G20. It had happened over two decades ago in 2002 – an important year for resetting global relationships – as the USA, then recuperating from the difficult situation post-9/11, started viewing India as a potential ally in the Asia-Pacific. The G20, at its inception in 1999, was far from being a *mélange* of the major global powers that it appears to be today. It was set up in the wake of financial crises that had perturbed East and South East Asia.¹²

Nevertheless, G20 in 2023 is supposedly a household affair in India, with information being disseminated rapidly in the age of the smartphone and social media. However, the issue in question is in the emerging twenty-first century, the voice of the people is most important and any bilateral or multilateral relationship between state actors is to be viewed through the prism of the people.

The India-Australia Partnership

The changing balance of power in the Asia-Pacific and particularly the emergence of China are major factors for both India and Australia to come closer and engage more on geopolitical, geo-economic and related issues. Both countries have forged an expanding defence relationship. In 2006, the two countries signed a Memorandum on Defence cooperation. In 2009, they inked the Joint Declaration on Security Co-operation. The 2014 agreement of a Bilateral Framework for Security cooperation further enlarged the scope of the defence relationship. Strategic dialogues, exchange of information, joint military exercises, and training are some critical aspects that align the security interests of both countries.

Australian Prime Minister (PM) Anthony Albanese was on an official visit to India during 8-11 March 2023. In 2020 itself, the India-Australia bilateral relationship was upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The relationship has grown well and truly from 2014 onwards. In 2022, noteworthy economic developments between the two countries included the Economic Co-operation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), and negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Co-operation Agreement, among others, reports Financial Express (FE).¹³ The Joint Statement from the summit meeting reflected on several major issues, the contour of which included matters about the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The FE report further stresses that “the drive to engage deeper came about through India’s increasing need for coal, critical minerals, and interest of Indian citizens in Australia”. Bilateral trade in 2022 stood at approximately USD 31 billion.¹⁴ Interestingly, India imports raw materials and exports finished goods to Australia. India is the seventh-largest trading partner of Australia.¹⁵

The website of the High Commission of India (HCI) in Canberra tells us that the historical ties between the two countries started immediately following European settlement in Australia from 1788 onwards. The HCI further elucidates that the English East India

Company (through Kolkata as the node) controlled the trade from New South Wales. India Trade Office was set up in Sydney way back in 1941. In March 1944, Lieutenant-General Iven Mackay was appointed Australia's first High Commissioner to India, whereas India's first High Commissioner to Australia was posted the very next year. Undoubtedly, one of the hallmarks of the latest visit by Australian Prime Minister Albanese was his trip to board INS Vikrant. Furthermore, several Australian CEOs accompanied PM Albanese. Also, the Australia-India education partnership is shaping up collaboration between the two countries. In this context, the Australia-India Education Council (AIEC) provides a platform for ministerial engagement on policy and operational issues across education. The AIEC is co-chaired by education ministers from both countries and includes representatives from government, academia and industry.

The India-Australia bilateral relationship has reflected “different ideological orientations and strategic perspectives” since India’s independence in 1947.¹⁶ It is noteworthy to mention that much greater enthusiasm is being exhibited of late for building a substantive security and defence partnership with Australia.¹⁷ Though in 2009, India and Australia had declared that they were “strategic partners”, civil nuclear cooperation was carried out in September 2014 during the visit of the then-Australian PM to India. The agreement came into force on 13 November 2015. The Australian Parliament passed the “Civil Nuclear Transfer to India Bill 2016” which allows Uranium mining companies in Australia to fulfil contracts to supply Australian uranium to India for civil use. In recent times, the Quad has been the subject of considerable global attention because of a strategic discourse shaping up among India, Australia, Japan, and the USA. Having met several times after 2017, the Quad was elevated to a foreign minister-level engagement.¹⁸

It does not appear impertinent to inform that an Indian firm was negotiating a deal to supply made-in-India drones to the Australian Navy. Reportedly, the Indian Navy has also placed orders for these drones, planned to be deployed on large-size warships, including the new aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. The ‘Varuna’ drone, which can carry a human payload, has a range of 25 km and has around 30 minutes of flight time.¹⁹

Alliance within the G20 Sphere?

With both India as well as Australia being members of G20 and Quad, the bilateral engagements somehow have the probability to get bolstered due to multilateral effects. The interaction between India and Australia within the larger configuration of G20 is interesting to observe – a situation in which national interests are shaped by as well as influence the ‘group interests’. Tom Chodor on the other hand, opines that “seven years after its upgrade to a leaders’ forum, the G20 has somehow been unable to live up to its promise of global economic cooperation.”²⁰ Chodor nonetheless believes that this problem was a manifestation “of larger dynamics in the global economy, with the changing composition of economic power between the West and the South and the unravelling of the neoliberal consensus derailing both the hegemonic incorporation and collectivist co-operation processes within the G20.”²¹ Chodor further argues that this situation could be managed. If a hegemon offers concessions to the emerging powers, the current world order could slowly be transformed.²² In a 2016 backdrop, Chodor states that “the United States has become unwilling and perhaps unable to fulfil such a role” and “China’s leadership of the G20 in 2016 represents an important test of the South’s role in the global governance system.”²³

An India–Australia defence framework agreement — a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Co-operation — was signed in March 2006 during John Howard’s visit to India, including several other agreements related to economics, trade, and technology. Terrorism, defence cooperation, information sharing, and extradition were objects of focus. As a natural fallout, the following couple of years saw a flurry in bilateral activities.²⁴ In July 2007, Australia’s Minister for Defence Brendan Nelson visited India during which he signed an agreement on the protection of classified information.²⁵

The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) Regional Security Outlook posits that there is hardly much denial of the fact that India’s regional security perspective has largely been shaped by its relations with China and the US.²⁶ Thus, while China’s overall assertive posture in India’s neighbourhood has been a cause for alarm, the US has been considered a potential enabling force.²⁷ In 2014, when Narendra Modi was sworn in as India’s Prime Minister, he invited all the heads of government from the neighbouring countries. His ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy was viewed as a ray of hope for

improving India's bilateral ties in the sub-continent as well as for the perceptions, India's relations with Australia, the USA, and Japan are gaining prominence in shaping India's overall security perspective. In that context, India's interactions and assertions within the Quad and in the same vein, G20, would be important to note. "India's support for a free, open, inclusive, and peaceful Indo-Pacific is likely to acquire a cardinal position around which its policy pronouncements."²⁸

Prime Minister Narendra Modi adopted India's Act East Policy (AEP) at the 2014 ASEAN-India Summit held in Myanmar. The policy translated for a better maritime reach for India vis-à-vis its land outreach opines Nalanda Roy.²⁹ Moreover, Roy writes that "the AEP has created ideological precedence for India's greater purpose of countering China's regional dominance" and attempted hegemony. Furthermore, in 2018, PM Narendra Modi called for a "free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific Region," and asked for commitments based on shared values and principles.³⁰

In this context, Darshana Baruah mentions the Indian government's May 2017 statement which highlights China's disregard for territorial integrity,³¹ and in a sense, this statement by India expresses India's legitimate concerns about China's attempted hegemony. India's concern is particularly concerning China's China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which runs through Kashmir.³² This Chinese move is a clear violation of India's sovereignty. Apart from random border skirmishes, China claims Arunachal Pradesh (on India's eastern border) in its entirety and Ladakh in the north. Considering the jittery history between the two states, India is naturally wary of China's efforts to build perceived 'strategic' projects in India's neighbourhood.³³

As India gears up and accelerates its geopolitical activities in the Indo-Pacific, Shreya Upadhyay states that "the term Indo-Pacific is not a new creation."³⁴ She believes that though the term 'has been discussed since the 1920s and 1930s', at the present epoch, the term "is essentially considered to be an American strategy to build a (geostrategic) architecture vis-a-vis China."³⁵ The pertinent debate however remains "whether a role in Indo-Pacific would allow India to act in 'strategic autonomy' to build its own conceptions of the security architecture in the region."³⁶

It appears needless to emphasize that India and Australia are getting closer to each other because of attempted Chinese hegemony in the Asia-Pacific. The fields of cooperation between the two countries are

however wide-ranging, from defence to maritime issues to climate change and to people-to-people interaction. In fact, in this paradigm, a new vista in which both India and Australia take into the equation the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) could be very much envisioned. There is considerable scope for both India and Australia to pursue this direction. Ambika Vishwanath and Aditi Mukund put forth the case of ‘Triangular Cooperation’ in overseas aid and development to bridge the gap between the Global North and South.³⁷

Furthermore, Sitakanta Mishra and Phalak Vyas write that “New Delhi’s strategic foray beyond East Asia and the Indian Ocean, especially into the South Pacific region during the last decade, is viewed as a logical extension of India’s AEP.”³⁸ They further assert that “Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Fiji in November 2014 renewed and expedited India’s engagement with the PICs.”³⁹ Prime Minister Modi’s recent meeting in May 2023 with the leaders of the Island nations “reasserted India’s respect for their priorities and willingness to be their development partner.”⁴⁰

Upadhyay nonetheless stated that “Indo-Pacific is still finding its feet in the practice of world politics,”⁴¹ but that was way back in 2014 and in a fast-changing backdrop of world politics, nine years is a considerable period. Nonetheless, even about the March 2023 visit of the Australian PM to India, Abhijit Singh opines that “the existing framework for India-Australia military collaboration is far from robust.”⁴² Singh continues in his analysis: “While naval interoperability has improved in recent years, cooperation between the Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Navy has yet to cross a critical threshold.”⁴³

The issue is simple and straight. Both India and Australia not only have to forge deeper strategic ties but also implement them on the ground level with accurate precision. As Singh asserts “the Indian and Australian militaries have yet to collaborate in ways that would thwart Chinese expansionism in the regional commons.”⁴⁴

A June 2020 issue brief by the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) states that the “Indo-Pacific as a geo-political concept will remain relevant in a post-COVID world, but not without challenges.”⁴⁵ In this context, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) paper argued that “rather than financing global health security under the mantle of ‘aid for other nations,’ we must treat it as a strategic investment in global public goods that benefit every nation—rich or

poor.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the authors of the document wrote that the G20 had established a high-level independent panel (HLIP) to conduct a full review of the gaps in global public goods. Interestingly, global health expert David P. Fidler, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) does not sound too optimistic on a proposed multilateral pandemic treaty.⁴⁷

Coming back to the Indo-Pacific in particular, Australia has established 'Cable Protection Zones' within its Exclusive Economic Zone utilising the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Cable Protection Zones were established by the Howard government in 2005 for the protection of international submarine cables under Schedule 3A of the Telecommunications Act.⁴⁸ Along the same lines, analyst Pooja Bhatt logically proposes that India can work to adopt similar laws.⁴⁹ In addition to these, Australia and India can very much collaborate to strengthen the rare earth supply chain.⁵⁰

Australia's view on the Indo-Pacific, argues Amruta Karambelkar in the VIF brief, "imagines continued US preponderance, recognises China's growing economic power and the potential to use it for strategic gains".⁵¹ Further, Australia seems to have evaluated that "India is one of the countries that would shape the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific".⁵² In this direction, it is imperative that India as well as Australia to modernise their armed forces and accordingly shape regional balance in their favour.

India and Australia accord importance to Southeast Asia and both of them support ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific, further writes Karambelkar.⁵³ And with both countries being part of the Quad grouping, their alliance is something to watch out for in the post-Covid world order. Lieutenant Colonel BR Nair, (Ex) Military Intelligence of the Indian Army has an interesting observation to offer. He views the first foreign visit of India's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to Sunnylands, California for the Security Dialogue in May 2023, followed by the Indian PM's state visit to the US in June and thereafter the visit of the ex-Chiefs of the tri-services to Taipei which would be followed by the Quad Malabar exercises in Australian waters from 11 to 21 August 2023, as part of greater strategic planning. Lt Colonel Nair believes that such a series of visits would possibly "be viewed in China with malevolence."⁵⁴ He also opines that "the presence of a UK rep at the Sunnylands meet may be seen as an alignment between the Quad and the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS)."⁵⁵ "Does this signal a hardening of our

(India's) stance vis-a-vis China?", asks Lt. Colonel Nair in a poignant tone.

As fundamentally acknowledged, education is the bedrock of connectivity between people and of course nations, India and Australia signed a Framework Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Qualifications which is targeted to aid "the mobility of students and professionals between the two countries."⁵⁶ This agreement was part of the commitment by the Prime Ministers of both countries at the 2nd India-Australia Virtual Summit.⁵⁷ The Indian Institute of Technology (Madras) is collaborating with its Australian counterparts to work towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.⁵⁸

Conclusion

In 2015, in unison with the United Nations (UN), 195 countries pledged that they could change the world for the better. Such a change was envisaged to be accomplished by bringing together the respective governments, businesses, media, institutions of higher education, and non-government organizations to improve the lives of the people in their country by the year 2030. It was popularly known as the '2030 Agenda' which embraces three dimensions of sustainability, viz. economic, social and environmental. The 2030 Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing the international community with a framework for managing challenges confronting humanity. Eliminating poverty, erasing hunger, establishing good health and well-being of the people, providing quality education, enforcing gender equality, and aspiring for clean energy, are some of the goals under SDGs. It is beyond any iota of doubt that both India and Australia can deepen their ties on these issues of global importance, whether be it within the sphere of G20 or through Quad's prism or for that matter via bilateral alignments. With one of the SDGs being 'build partnerships for the goals', there would hardly be a dearth of rationale for Delhi and Canberra to come closer on strategic aspects based on the premise of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

However, such a rationale is true for any pair of countries under the UN framework. What further livens up the bilateral aspect between India and Australia is the China factor and the geopolitical context of Asia-Pacific / Indo-Pacific as discussed in this paper. Nevertheless, China's presence in the G20 does not make the ambience very cordial for both India and Australia within the G20 sphere. In this sense, Quad

is a better platform no doubt where a concerted strategic discourse evolves with a commonality of agendas. G20 on the other hand, could always be used as a paradigm in which both India and Australia can further their collaboration on a much grander, bigger scale and perspective, without getting bogged down by the Chinese presence or being perturbed by the pushes and pulls of interactions with other states in the group.

The G20's 2014 Brisbane Declaration represented a watershed moment though, as the G20 states committed to reduce the gender gap in the labour market participation rate by 25 per cent by the year 2025. Against this backdrop, the question arises of how the stated objective of gender justice could be reached. PM Narendra Modi's government has developed a new strategy to increase women's participation in the labour market that includes attracting textile and other manufacturing industries and promoting self-employment and professional qualifications. The G20 countries are in agreement that gender justice is fundamental to sustainable and socially just economic growth. The increase in women's labour market participation should be seen as one step in the right direction.

David Brewster and Samuel Bashfield opine that Australia's Defence Strategic Review 2023 (DSR2023) "signals the biggest changes in Australia's defence posture in at least 50 years."⁵⁹ The DSR2023 "should be a wake-up call not only for Australia but for its partners throughout the Indo-Pacific", the authors aver.⁶⁰ This further emboldens the cooperation and ties between India and Australia towards defence and strategic aspects. Nonetheless, the fundamental bonding between the two strategic players in global politics is not just to confine their relationship within the confines of *realpolitik* or multi-lateral engagements keeping in mind their respective national interests, but to go beyond these factors and solidify the 'bilateral construct of people-to-people connect' which naturally entails the deeper constructs of human rights, better environment and education. Additionally, if sports and especially cricket becomes a force behind the diplomacy between the two countries, then it is all the more welcome.

The moot point however is that it is after all incumbent on both the vibrant democracies to see to it that Shraddhas and Ujjwals lead their lives in peace and harmony. India and Australia as important strategic state actors in IR have significant roles to play, both within the G20 as well as without. They can use the G20 as an enabling

platform to further their interactions and not allow the presence of China in the group to inhibit the growth of their partnership. Whereas outside the realm of G20; they are free to explore to the extent feasible, furthering their strategic partnership and reaching the zenith of permanent alliance.

Notes:

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Towards Global South Paradiplomacy and U20 Climate Accords

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Abstract

The Global South countries in recent times have resorted to a modern diplomatic approach – Paradiplomacy – to increase their cities' involvement in their foreign policy conduct. Despite their distinctive governance structures and diversified populations, they have shown solidarity in laying down normative frameworks for inclusive growth and development at global forums like G20. This paper delves into the rise of paradiplomacy among the Global South countries that are members of G20. The urban areas and cities of the Global South countries within G20 are among the top emerging economies of 2025. This paper studies the urban growth of Global South cities and its impact on the region. The paper inquires on how the G20 platform is an opportunity for India to foster its paradiplomatic relations in the Global South. The paper also discusses how India, under its G20 presidency, aspires to be the voice of the Global South. The paper identifies the contemporary concerns of emerging economies and brings to the fore the cities' action-oriented climate diplomacy and their inclusive initiatives to mitigate climate change.

Keywords: G20, India's G20 Presidency, Paradiplomacy, Global South

Introduction

The Global South cities, being the leading economies of the future, have influenced the global decision-making process in the wake of emerging paradiplomacy in the region. The Global South broadly refers to the regions of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Israel, Japan and South Korea), Africa, and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). Some countries have engaged in paradiplomacy by increasing their foreign interaction at the subnational level. Meanwhile, urbanization in the Global South is at its peak. The demographic transition from rural to

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urban areas has caused a tremendous rise in cities that inhabit three-fourths of the world's population. The Global South cities' relentless pursuit of sustainable development and economic growth has increased their international presence through forums like G20.

The Group of 20 or the G20 was formed in 1999 in response to the Asian financial crises that arose in several emerging economies of Asia. The forum recognised the Global South Countries that were not adequately represented in global economic discussion and governance.¹ The forum has also facilitated the involvement of cities through the Global Smart Cities Alliance established in 2019 to bring together 36 leading cities from 22 countries in developing a global policy framework.² Paradiplomacy is one such approach that has yielded impressive results in developing economic cooperation and seeking foreign investments among the Global South Countries. For instance, nations like China, India and Brazil have successfully formed paradiplomatic relations through sister-city agreements. Along with economic growth, the Global South cities have become prone to environmental challenges. India under its G20 presidency has voiced the concerns of the developing economies and called for an inclusive G20 agenda that encourages cities' contribution in the global decision-making process. The Urban 20 is one such paradiplomatic initiative where cities have stepped up efforts in building global climate diplomacy. To increase India's regional influence, the G20 presidency can be a gateway for Indian cities and states to strengthen its paradiplomatic engagements in Global South.

The Rise of Global South Cities in G20

The term 'Global South' was reinforced in academic circles near the end of the Cold War to address the developing economies that were formerly recognized as "Third World Countries."³ The onset of globalization underpinned the concept of "Global South" which marked a shift from the focus on development or cultural differences towards an emphasis on geopolitical relations of power.⁴ The Global South countries like China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, UAE and Turkey are the driving economies of the twenty-first century. These countries, despite their distinctive governance structures and diversified population, have shown solidarity in laying down normative frameworks for inclusive growth and development at the global forums like G20.

The G20, a grouping of 19 countries, comprises important economies that hold 85 per cent of the global GDP and 75 percent of the global trade.⁵ The Global South countries have shown active participation

in climate change policy-making, sustainable development, economic partnerships, and regional cooperation. The G20 nations represent two-thirds of the world population of which the Global South countries – China, Brazil, Indonesia, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Argentina account for approximately 60 per cent of the world population.⁶ The high population density especially in regions of Asia and Africa, has resulted in urban agglomeration in the Global South.

The Global South accommodates some of the world's largest megacities. By 2018, around 28 megacities emerged in Global South, especially in Asia where 16 megacities were formed followed by four in Latin America and three in Africa.⁷ The rapid urbanization in cities of Global South countries has set off steep economic growth, making them an important stakeholder in the global economy. The urban areas and cities of the Global South countries within G20 are the top emerging economies of 2025.

According to a 2007, report by PricewaterhouseCoopers Projects global rankings of 151 cities and urban areas based on its urban agglomeration GDP estimates.⁸ Of these 151 cities, 12 are Indian cities – Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Surat, Pune, Kanpur, Jaipur and Lucknow. In China, the cities of Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Wuhan, Chongqing, Shenyang, Chengdu, Xian and Changchun are projected with highest GDP growth rate by 2025. In Brazil, eight of its cities are placed among the global economies which are Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Brasilia, Recife, Fortaleza and Curitiba. The other Global South cities of the G20 countries comprise Buenos Aires (Argentina), Jakarta and Bandung (Indonesia), Johannesburg, Cape Town and East Rand (South Africa), Riyadh and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). Such growing economic trajectory of cities have ensured leaders in laying out a new roadmap for the G20 agenda that puts global south cities and local actors in the spotlight.

Most of these emerging Global South cities have directly engaged in international dialogues and developed subnational diplomacy at the global level. The Global South countries have resorted to a modern diplomatic approach – Paradiplomacy, to increase cities' involvement in its foreign policy conduct. The concept of paradiplomacy that emerged during the 1980s has enabled cities and local actors to initiate city-to-city diplomacy in carrying out economic partnerships and regional integration processes at the local level. For instance, in Argentina, the first Meeting of Studies on Paradiplomacy and Territorial Internationalization took place in Córdoba in 2020 with support from the Forum of Regional Governments

and Global Associations of Regions (ORU Fogar).⁹ The meeting focused on enhancing global linkages of cities, especially in the political economy of the regions, cross-border cooperation and environmental diplomacy at local and regional levels. The meeting led to the establishment of the Network of Experts in Paradiplomacy and Territorial Internationalization where researchers and experts from the academic field and public management would work towards an effectual process of implementing paradiplomatic policies.¹⁰

To strengthen regional cooperation in South America, Argentina and Brazil took the lead in setting up Mercociudades in 1995 to form a regional network of cities by unifying groups of municipalities of countries.¹¹ The organization that focuses on enhancing South-South regional cooperation consists of 359 member cities from Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia.¹² The paradiplomatic approach adopted by Brazil has enabled its major cities like Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre to create international offices at the local level for the smooth conduct of its municipal foreign policy. Since 2011, 29 municipalities in Brazil have developed formal paradiplomatic structures.¹³ Brazil and Argentina, being Latin America's largest economies in the G20, have boosted their global presence by increasing their city representations in international agencies. Some of the Brazilian mayors and other municipal authorities are actively working with various international networks of cities. For instance, the Mayors' Task Force on Climate Change and the Urban Poor was founded by mayors of Dar es Salaam, Jakarta, Mexico City, and São Paulo.¹⁴ The city of São Paulo alone has 54 sister city tie-ups, which brought in foreign investors and entrepreneurs, leading to start-up development at a large scale.¹⁵ Such measures increased Brazil's influence regionally and globally in commerce, finance, arts and entertainment.¹⁶

The diplomatic outreach of cities has complemented Global South countries in conducting economic diplomacy with ease. For instance, in the case of China, since the open-door policy was adopted in 1978, the government ventured into various paradiplomatic activities such as developing areas for foreign investment like "special economic zones, open coastal cities, the economic and technology development zones, the delta open zones, the peninsula open zones, the open border cities, and the high-tech industry development zones. The establishment of these zones attracted huge inflows of foreign investment."¹⁷ Chinese cities have engaged in paradiplomatic activities through sister-city agreements with 2570 cities.¹⁸ Of these, there are 776 sister city tie-ups in Europe, 713 in Asia, 445 in

America, 141 in Oceania and 124 in Africa.¹⁹ Such paradiplomatic endeavours have empowered cities like Shanghai and Beijing to seek foreign investments and assert their presence in the global economy, politics and culture. The local effect of globalization through foreign investments and local internationalization through sister-city agreements were the two phenomena that contributed to New China Diplomacy. The paradiplomatic affairs of Global South cities merely driven by economic growth align pretty well with G20's objective of achieving global economic stability and sustainable growth. The goal of G20 under India's leadership in 2023 is to bring together the Global South economies and be their voice for the rest of the world. The forum has laid down prospects for India to reinforce its paradiplomatic practices in the Global South.

India's Path to Paradiplomacy in Global South

The G20 under India's presidency has given centre stage to Global South economies. The emphasis on increasing the international presence of Global South countries was laid down by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, during the Voice of Global South Summit, which was virtually conducted in 2023. Prime Minister Modi, during his inaugural speech, addressed 120 nations and said that the "Global South will have the largest stakes in the future as it inhabits three-fourths of the world population."²⁰ India's current global diplomacy framework is leaning more towards the Global South due to its geopolitical presence in the region. With the G20 presidency, India aims to amplify its paradiplomatic pursuits in the Global South.

The G20 was formed in response to the Asian financial crisis during the late 1990s that largely affected emerging economies.²¹ The crisis called forth new economic reforms in India and initiated the trade liberalization process. The G20 forum accelerated the diplomatic presence of India in global economic discussion and governance. Besides, the economic partnerships forged with foreign countries contributed to steep economic growth in India. To deepen diplomatic relations between countries at the subnational level, the Indian foreign policymakers sought innovative ways to encourage states' and cities' involvement in international affairs. Later in 2014, India fully adopted paradiplomacy and called for a greater role for states in India's economic diplomacy. Modi in his inaugural address at the Delhi Economics Conclave in 2015, stated that "Making the states think globally is yet another reform with potential to transform".²²

Ever since most of the cities and state governments have engaged in paradiplomatic activities and established sister-city agreements with foreign

countries to seek foreign investments. Consequently, the Ministry of External Affairs created a 'States Division' in 2016 to facilitate Indian states and cities in their foreign engagements.²³ The division eased the coordination process between the state and centre, resulting in the smooth conduct of paradiplomacy. So far, Indian states and cities have established sister-city agreements with developed countries like the United States of America, Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Japan, and South Korea. Such agreements leveraged cities to build economic collaborations, bring in foreign investments and enhance infrastructure development.

Of late, Indian states and cities have been increasing their paradiplomatic conduct with the Global South cities as well. This approach was widely accepted after Narendra Modi remodified the 'Act East Policy' in 2014 to enhance India's diplomatic linkage with Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania.²⁴ With economic integration and regional stability being the central theme of this policy, more emphasis was laid on strengthening diplomatic ties with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The policy initiated various projects ranging from urban renewal, and smart cities to connectivity projects focused at the regional level and directly involved Indian states primarily the North Eastern region in the foreign policy conduct.²⁵ India's regional influence is growing and it will further intensify with paradiplomatic engagements with the entire Global South.

In 2015, the Provincial-State Leaders Forum was launched between India and China.²⁶ The forum concluded the sister state agreement between Karnataka and Sichuan²⁷, followed by Chennai-Chongqing,²⁸ Hyderabad-Qingdao²⁹ and Aurangabad-Dunhuang.³⁰ So far, Indian cities and states have established ten sister-city agreements and four sister-state agreements (including Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Karnataka) with China. Most of these agreements are focused on "cooperation in the fields of trade and investment, agriculture, skill development, smart cities, urban planning, clean energy, education, culture, tourism, people-to-people exchanges."³¹ In 2021, India established a sister-city agreement between Mumbai and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam),³² followed by a sister port-city agreement between Port Blair and Port of Sabang (Indonesia).³³

The G20 presidency allows India to increase its paradiplomatic engagement with Global South cities. As of now, the G20 meetings have hosted 12,300 delegates from over 110 nationalities. India will host around 200 meetings nationwide in more than 60 cities covering 28 states in consultation with the respective State/Union Territories government.³⁴

Meetings are organized across the states of India with abundant support and participation of State Governments and Union Territories.”³⁵ The engagement group Startup20 formed under India’s presidency hosted its meeting in Gangtok (Sikkim) drew the attention of foreign investors and 300 delegates from invitee countries and international organizations.³⁶ The Indian Startup is the third-largest ecosystem globally with phenomenal growth since 2015.³⁷ Most of these startups are situated in metro cities like Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai. The startup culture has opened up new possibilities for Indian cities and states to conduct paradiplomatic interactions and seek foreign investments.

India’s paradiplomatic efforts are limited to economic cooperation and urban development which are the prime focus of the emerging economies in the Global South. Therefore, paradiplomacy is still at a preliminary stage in the Global South. The involvement of subnational governments and cities in the global decision-making process can be an arduous task owing to the complicated diplomatic ties among themselves within the region. Most of the Global South countries in G20 are entangled with regional conflicts, ethnic strife and territorial disputes. For instance, the unresolved territorial disputes between India and China, and the maritime disputes between Indonesia and China. Apart from these, owing to the escalating ethnic conflicts among them, the paradiplomatic interaction among them has slowed down. In Saudi Arabia, the ongoing armed conflict between Houthis and Saudi Arabians and the outstanding border disputes over demarcations of territories between Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, etc. are the major causes of concern for building paradiplomatic relations within this region. Even though, Saudi Arabia is determined to develop Riyadh as one of the top world economies by 2030.³⁸ The recent shift in Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy ought to bring new opportunities for its cities in terms of tourism and economic growth, which would eventually increase its diplomatic outreach.

The concept of paradiplomacy is gradually gaining recognition among the Global South countries within G20. For instance, South Africa’s transition to democracy since 1994 has opened new possibilities for both international and subnational regionalism.³⁹ The paradiplomatic efforts of Western Cape provinces and Gauteng are geared towards seeking foreign investments from Asian countries.⁴⁰ At present, Gauteng and the Province of Mpumalanga are involved in the Maputo Corridor project, which includes massive investment in strengthening southern Mozambique by constructing a transport axis between Johannesburg and Maputo.⁴¹ The rise

of paradiplomacy in Global South cities has eased the economic integration process in the region. The emerging economies are at the forefront of rapid urbanization and sustainable development; which brings to the fore contemporary problems of the Global South.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Voice of Global South Summit pointed out that the global challenges of the twenty-first century were not created by the Global South, yet they are bearing the brunt of it. The Global South countries are yet to completely overcome the impacts of the pandemic, climate change, terrorism, as well as the Ukraine conflict.⁴² Prime Minister Modi rightly raised his concerns about the Ukraine war when he spoke with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin and stated, “Today's era is not an era of war. With food, fertiliser and fuel security among the major concerns of the world; it is democracy, diplomacy and dialogue that would keep the world together.”⁴³ These interactions occurred in September 2022 on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting. The G20 summit has also raised some of the significant issues of the Global South and developing countries. The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri, stated that “ the G20 Presidency would give resonance to the voice of the global south to highlight the common concerns of energy security, energy justice, sustainable energy transition so that all developing countries can gain reliable and clean energy.”⁴⁴ Concerning this, the summit has called for an inclusive, action-oriented and balanced international agenda that would be accommodated with the G20 agenda under India’s presidency. The Urban20 (U20) is one such diplomatic initiative that encourages strong and inclusive participation of cities in global policy-making.

Urban 20 – Cities’ Global Climate Diplomacy in Making

Since the past century, over half of the world's population is already urbanized. Given the projections that 600 million population would be the new metropolitan inhabitants by 2030, cities have predominated the economic growth of the nation.⁴⁵ Cities being the global economic hub have gradually become prone to global contemporary threats; one such being climate change. At present, cities generate 75 per cent of the total global carbon emissions, which is likely to increase shortly.⁴⁶ Besides, cities are adversely affected by air pollution, heat stress, water scarcity, droughts, rise in sea levels and mass migration. Around 70 per cent of cities in the world are privy to disasters and ongoing environmental stress, such as health pandemics and population displacement.⁴⁷ With climate change being a

significant concern, cities have increased their international activism at global forums, which have set the path for them to come together and shape global climate diplomacy at regional and local levels. This was apparent during the One Planet Summit in December 2017 when cities with their vested interest in reducing global carbon emissions joined hands to implement the Paris Agreement at the regional and local levels.⁴⁸

The One Planet summit with its ambition to help cities build resilience to climate change developed one such city diplomacy initiative – U20. The U20 initiative was convened by C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), along with United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and chaired by a host city that rotates annually. The U20 engagement group facilitated collaboration among cities from G20 countries. The inaugural U20 Mayors Summit was held in 2018 in Buenos Aires headed by Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, Mayor of Buenos Aires and Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris and Chair of C40.⁴⁹ The summit saw the G20 and other cities around the globe.⁵⁰ The summit was attended by 26 cities – Barcelona, Beijing, Berlin, City of Buenos Aires, Chicago, Durban, Hamburg, Houston, Jakarta, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Mexico City, Milan, Montreal, Moscow, New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, São Paulo, Seoul, Sydney, Tokyo, and Tshwane.⁵¹

The summit introduced the U20 2018 Communiqué to G20 nations to “highlight the expertise of cities in a range of global development challenges and to raise the profile of urban issues within the G20.”⁵² The communiqué is a joint collaborative approach between countries and their cities to achieve sustainable development. The communiqué brings to the fore the recommendations by U20 cities on “climate change, the future of work, social integration, women’s empowerment and access to finance.” The communiqué aims to fully implement the Paris Agreement and neutralize emissions by 2050. The communiqué that called for G20 nations to shift towards clean and renewable energy was attended by the mayors, representatives and governors of major cities.⁵³ The core principles of U20 are based on collaboration of cities and building inclusive communities, engaging in consensus-building and shaping comprehensive global policies on climate change, sustainable development and socio-economic issues. Around 34 cities that became signatories to the U20 2018 Communiqué were Amman, Amsterdam, Beijing, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Dallas, Durban, Geneva, Hamburg, Helsinki, Houston, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Mexico City, Milan, Montevideo, Montreal, New York, Paris, Portland, Quito, Rio de Janeiro,

Rome, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Tshwane, Sydney and supported by the city of Moscow.⁵⁴

The legacy of the U20 was carried forward by Governor Koike in Tokyo in 2019 when he invited 35 mayors and G20 representatives to emphasize the role of cities in taking forward the global agenda for sustainable economic growth, climate action and social inclusion.⁵⁵ The 2019 U20 Communiqué mainly focused on the substantial reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and plastic waste as well as attaining 100 per cent renewable energy by operating new buildings at net zero carbon by 2050.⁵⁶ The Communiqué was advocated by leaders of 30 cities that together represented 126 million people to convey joint recommendations to the G20 at their Leaders' Summit in Osaka.⁵⁷ The Communiqué was signed by Mayors and Governors of Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Christchurch, Durban, Hamburg, Helsinki, Houston, Jakarta, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Mexico City, Milan, Montreal, New York, Osaka City, Paris, Port Vila, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Rotterdam, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Sydney, Tokyo and Tshwane.⁵⁸

In 2020, amidst the pandemic, the third U20 summit was virtually hosted in Riyadh by the President of the Royal Commission for Riyadh City, Fahd Al-Rasheed.⁵⁹ The summit prioritized on various issues such as the involvement of cities in circular urban economy and developing green infrastructure.⁶⁰ The theme of the U20 Communiqué was centred on developing climate-resilient societies, increasing investments in carbon-neutral projects to generate green jobs and seeking national leaders to provide unbiased access to COVID-19 vaccines for a rapid recovery.⁶¹ The U20 established a Special Working Group on COVID-19 that provided recommendations for cities to efficiently manage the socioeconomic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic with greater agility and flexibility and come together as one voice in front of the G20.⁶² Cities of Abu Dhabi, Amman, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Columbia, Dammam, Dubai, Durban, Hartford, Helsinki, Houston, Istanbul, Izmir, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Lisbon, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Makkah, Mexico City, Miami, Milan, Montreal, Osaka, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Riyadh, Rome, Rotterdam, San Jose, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Strasbourg, Tegucigalpa, Tokyo and Tshwane became signatory to the U20 Communiqué.⁶³

The fourth cycle was virtually hosted in Rome and Milan in 2021, led by Virginia Raggi, Mayor of Rome, and Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan.⁶⁴ The summit was attended by 15 mayors and 17 representatives

from G20 cities to release the 2021 U20 Communiqué which was supported by 41 mayors across the globe.⁶⁵ The summit with its highest participation demonstrated how cities hold great significance in addressing global climate agendas. Later in 2022, the city of Jakarta hosted the fifth urban summit under the leadership of the Governor of Jakarta, Anies Baswedan and the Governor of Jawa Barat, Mochamad Ridwan Kamil.⁶⁶ The summit with its theme “Recover Stronger, Recover Together” emphasized strengthening the partnership between cities and national governments.⁶⁷

The sixth cycle of U20 was chaired in UNESCO’s world heritage city – Ahmedabad, supported by the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) as the nodal ministry under India’s G20 presidency.⁶⁸ The U20 summit built on the theme of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* also known as “One Earth - One Family - One Future” summoned cities to work in a spirit of solidarity and strengthening collaboration among cities to collectively seek solutions at the local level for global issues.⁶⁹ The summit with its goal to move from “Intention to Action” is focused on global agendas - (1) Encouraging environmentally responsible behaviours, (2) Ensuring water security, (3) Accelerating climate finance, (4) Championing local identity, (5) Reinventing frameworks for urban governance and (6) Planning and Catalysing digital urban futures.⁷⁰ The summit emphasized drafting policies with a proper set of guidelines that can be efficiently put into practice at the central level, state level and local level. The summit organized on the 7th and 8th of July, 2023 saw participation from 20 mayors across the world along with 25 mayors from Indian cities.⁷¹ The U20 sessions were focused “on aspects of urban resilience, city readiness for investments, inclusion, circular economy and data-driven governance, showcasing the research and work being undertaken by organizations in various cities across India and the world.”⁷²

The 2023 U20 Communiqué brings to light cities’ proactive role in leading the G20 agenda with recommendations and the highest number of endorsements from 105 cities across the globe to date.⁷³ The Communiqué highlights nine key areas that cities should focus on (1) Strengthen local governance (2) Plan beyond traditional boundaries (3) Push for financially self-reliant cities (4) Foster a culture of innovation (5) Harness the power of data and technology (6) Shift from regulation to facilitation (7) Focus on impacts not outcome (8) Put citizens at the heart of urban policy (9) Leverage local culture and economy.⁷⁴

The present G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant reiterates that “urbanization will be the single biggest agent of growth in the next few decades in

India.”⁷⁵ Of the total world population, India accounts for 11 per cent making it the second-largest urban ecosystem. He further projects that urban growth is likely to contribute to 73 per cent of the total population increase by 2036.⁷⁶ India has already surpassed the urban population of the USA, Germany, Japan and the UK.⁷⁷ The U20 initiatives are lucrative to urban development in Indian cities. This being said, cities should be given financial autonomy and administrative freedom to function efficiently. Through U20, Global South cities have voiced their concerns and have collaboratively shaped an inclusive global climate diplomacy. Although the policies are action-oriented it requires a consistent involvement of cities in building an effective framework. Global South cities have stepped up and have shown significant contributions in global decision-making forums like G20. However, their paradiplomatic engagements within the Global South are minimal. In most of the Global South countries, the territorial and maritime disputes are at stalemate leading to diplomatic tension among the countries. The inherent regional conflicts and ethnic issues in the Global South would remain, but the recent paradiplomatic initiatives of countries like India, China and Brazil have somehow eased cities' efforts in pursuing their economic interests. The G20 forum has brought together these Global South cities to draft policies at the subnational level to tackle climate change. This puts forth that the paradiplomacy of Global South cities is a catalyst for the economic integration process in the region. The rise of Global South cities is inevitable and therefore should no longer be neglected in the global diplomacy framework.

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G20 and African Union: Harnessing Renewable Resources for Sustainable Future

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Abstract

Africa, the storehouse of renewables, is expected to generate many opportunities for the G20 member countries, consisting of both developed and developing economies, in their sustained efforts to mitigate climate change related problems. On the other hand, the G20 forum seeks access and investment in the huge renewable sectors of Africa to fulfil member countries' climate change obligations. This is an opportunity for the Africans to grasp. The resource-rich African states need to grab the technological innovations and capital of G20 countries to meet their energy requirements, energy-mix and energy transition process, as the urge exists among the G20 members. Africa it has much to gain from G20 and can contribute significantly to G20. As the African Union (AU) is lobbying for its permanent membership in the G20 for the last seven years, giving it a rightful position in the forum will reshape the global order for effective utilization of renewables, energy security and climate change mitigation. This paper focuses on G20 commitments and progress in the renewable sector, Africa's renewables potentials and prospects, AU's rightful claim for G20 membership, and prospects of G20-Africa partnership on climate change mitigation.

Keywords: Climate Change, G20, Energy security, African Union, COP21, and Net-zero emissions

G20 Inception: From Economic Crisis to Sustainable Energy

The Group of 20 (G20) forum, formed in 1999 as a consequence of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, functioned to discuss economic and financial problems and set the agenda and roadmap for better collaboration on the concerned issues. Its regular meetings were attended not by the Heads of the States, rather by member countries' Finance Ministers and their Central Bank Governors. However, the deepening economic and financial crisis at the global level in 2007 made the forum

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a premium platform for global economic partnership and cooperation. The first Summit level meeting was held in Washington D.C. in 2008, which was represented by the Heads of the States of the member countries and the trend went on. Initially, the forum focused on macroeconomic issues and subsequently, it expanded its agenda to trade, sustainable development, health, agriculture, energy, environment and climate change¹, as well.

The Group comprises 19 countries – both developed countries like the US and developing countries like India, and the European Union (EU) organisation. The member countries represent about 85 percent of the GDP internationally, about 75 percent of international trade, and around two-thirds of the global population.² Since 2008, it has become a premier platform for global economic cooperation and partnership, which in turn, works as a pivotal force in shaping, guiding and consolidating the institution-making process and global governance on major global economic matters.

In the last two decades, renewables have taken centre stage of G20 on their agenda of economic development, global governance, energy transition and climate change challenges. The tripling of renewables by 2030, as forecast by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in 2021, implied installation of 6000 GW more to the then-existing level of 3026 GW.³ According to IRENA, “there is the need for investment of \$35 trillion by 2030 for a successful energy transition that includes 1000 GW installed capacity every year, starting from 2022.”⁴ However, achieving this ambitious target also requires overcoming some major barriers, such as mobilizing adequate financial resources, creating enabling policy environments, developing infrastructure and skills, ensuring equitable access and distribution, and access to African renewables. Significant to mention that there has been a degree of commitment of the G20 countries to shift to renewables in the energy-mix of 29 per cent in 2021– an increase from 19 per cent in 2010.⁵

G20 and Renewables: An Analogy of Progress

As the G20 forum includes both developed and fast-growing economies, there is a significant variation in their renewable profiles, policies and strategies. No doubt, the renewable energy sector largely depends on diverse but complex factors that include government policies, resource availability, and overall economic conditions. Brazil possesses the highest portions of clean electricity of the G20 countries and India is at the ninth spot. In 2022, “Brazil produced about 89 per cent of its

electricity energy from clean resources; dominated by the hydropower of 63 percent. Important to mention, that fossil fuels in Brazil constituted only 11 percent of electricity generation in 2022.”⁶ Similarly, Canada is a leading country in hydropower generation. From a larger perspective, the contribution of coal power in the Group has declined since the COP21 Agreement in 2015. The fastest decline in coal energy consumption has been scored by the UK, which reduced electricity generation by 93 percent since the United Climate Change Conference (COP21) deal.

Among the “Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)” economies in the G20 forum, coal power generation has declined by 42 percent in absolute terms, i.e., from 2,624 TWh (2015) to 1,855 TWh (2022). But, this shift to clean energy is not enough to combat global warming to 1.5° Celsius.⁷ The thirteen member countries of the Group still have to come out of half of their fossil fuel consumption. “Saudi Arabia relies entirely on oil and gas; South Africa (86 percent), Indonesia (82 percent) and India (77 percent) have mostly relied on fossil fuels (predominantly coal) for electricity generation.”⁸ Although on some counts, there is a high dependency on fossil fuels, the countries are moving for clean energy, along with green energy. The members are now looking for a cleaner electricity generation that needs to be accelerated in future. So, there is a need for the cheapest and fastest moves of the rapid roll-out of efficient technologies, which will be used for wind, solar and all other sectors. By doing so, the G20 countries may have a “silver bullet” for climate change.

The commitment to net-zero emissions by most of the G20 countries once again implies that the mission of the Kyoto Protocol is not dead; rather reflected through the Paris Agreement or COP21 in 2015. As the Kyoto Protocol could not be materialised, the global community under the UN platform decided on a next round of discussion and resolution on climate change. Hence the Paris Agreement (COP21)⁹ of 2015 under the “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” (UNFCCC) turned into a viable and potential regime to combat climate change. The COP21 aims at “addressing climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5° Celsius.”¹⁰ COP21 aims at addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the most specific agenda includes achieving net-zero emissions.

Net-zero implies “the balance between the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere and the amount removed from it”. Here, greenhouse gases typically refer to Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are chemicals that contain chlorine, fluorine and carbon- used in solvents, refrigerants and aerosol sprays. Net-zero can be achieved through various means, such as: first, Emission Reduction; second, carbon removal; and third, Offsetting. Emission reduction implies the measures to reduce the greenhouse gases emitted through renewable energy, energy efficiency and reduction of industrial emissions. Carbon removal indicates utilising technologies and processes that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, such as afforestation, reforestation, carbon capture and its underground storage, and soil carbon storage. Offsetting refers to investment in projects and activities that reduce or remove emissions elsewhere to compensate for emissions that can’t be eliminated otherwise, for instance: carbon credits from renewable energy projects or reforestation. It is an obvious fact that achieving net-zero is to stop or drastically mitigate global warming, limit global average temperatures below 2° Celsius above the pre-industrial level and efforts to cut the temperature increase to the level of 1.5° Celsius. Many responsible states, organisations and business houses have set targets to combat climate change and shift or transition for a better sustainability, and low-carbon future, and the pivotal role played by G20 includes member countries' pledge and commitment to achieving net-zero emissions.

Under the COP21 agenda of the Paris Agreement in 2015, most of the member countries have been enthusiastic about setting their targets for reducing emissions. As per openly available sources, the G20 countries that have taken the pledge to achieve net-zero emissions under COP21 include America, which has been committed to net-zero achievement by 2050, Canada by 2050, the UK by 2050, the EU by 2050, Germany by 2045, France by 2050, Italy by 2050, Japan by 2050, South Korea by 2050, Australia by 2050, Brazil by 2060 and India by 2070. China is not committed to net-zero yet it aims at achieving carbon neutrality¹¹ by 2060 and Peak emission¹² by 2030. Russia had not made a formal commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by a specific target year. But it has indicated its support for the Paris Agreement.

South Africa is a signatory to COP21 and its climate policies and goals may evolve. Argentina, a signatory to COP21, is officially not committed to achieving net-zero emissions yet it has taken steps and expressed commitment to address climate change and reduce greenhouse

gas emissions. Turkey is a signatory to COP21; it has not taken any pledge for net-zero emissions yet like other members, it has been engaged in various discussions, and efforts have been made to deal with and resolve the factors which have led to climate change. As Saudi Arabia is heavily dependent on its fossil fuel, it has not yet made any commitment to Net-zero emissions. However, it is diversifying its economy and investing in renewables and technological innovations thereupon.

Indonesia is not committed officially to achieving net-zero emissions. However, Indonesia is a signatory to COP21 and has been resorting to various measures. Mexico is not formally committed to net-zero, yet it is a signatory to COP21 and engaged itself in combating climate change in its way. More to say, climate commitments in G20 are evolving, and its members are expected to update their agenda, goals and strategies over time.

Contextualising Renewables in Africa

The geopolitical dynamics, economic necessities and climate change challenges that have impacted more to the global south, have made G20 look beyond the member countries. So, the definite focus for the G20 is Africa's renewables and African membership in the G20 to fulfil their common interests. As the African continent which consists of 55 countries is at a crossroads, access to green, clean and affordable energy is the aspiration of the African people. The need for sufficient energy supply is evident in the everyday activities of the Africans – starting from households to farming, health, business and other activities. The Climate change curse is fast evolving: characterised by irregular rainfalls, floods, disproportion rise of temperatures, etc.

Therefore, renewables can best contribute to resolving many challenges, that affect flora, fauna, the environment and living beings. The energy transition in Africa promises substantial gains for a higher GDP rate, employment opportunities, and human welfare, along with tackling climate change challenges. Africa's share of foreign investments in renewables capacity installations is comparatively small¹³ but the vast stretch of territories in Africa is rich with wind, solar, bio, hydro, tidal and geothermal potentials. Decreasing renewable installations and equipment costs have led to the expansion of critical energy infrastructures, such as grid establishment and extension and stand-alone applications, wherever required. Energy transition, as focussed on renewables, along with energy efficiency, is not only feasible but also pivotal for a sustainable future. The energy transition objectives of the African continent are meant to ensure

and facilitate availability, affordability, sustainability, reliability and uninterrupted supply of energy resources, accompanied by financial and technological support from the countries that have made strides in green and clean energy. Moreover, a serious understanding of connections between energy and economy by the African countries is pivotal to understanding the need and necessities of cooperation within and beyond Africa, to share success stories and vibrant collaborations thereupon. However, energy accessibility and green and clean energy availability in Africa are very poor, as explained below, and to which the G20 could contribute and help them out.

Fossil fuels in the African continent constitute about 77 per cent of its electricity generation capacity, although it has a large quantum of unutilised renewable resources. Likewise, the continent has made progress over the last two decades in expanding energy access. However, increasing population growth rate and energy demand have outpaced progress in the renewable sector. More pertinently, in Sub-Saharan Africa, universal access to energy remains a litmus task. In this region, the rate of electricity access has increased from 33 percent in 2010 to 46 percent in 2019.

However, during the same period, about 570 million people were lagging in electricity access – an increase of 20 million over 2010, of which most of them were from rural areas. Although there has been a significant rise in energy availability and affordability, the quality of service many times remains low. Of the entire Africans who lack electricity access 37 percent of people live in three countries only that including the “Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)”, Ethiopia and Nigeria. “In Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a big gap in rural-urban electrification. While in urban areas it is 78 percent, in rural areas it constitutes just 25 percent. More than 30 percent of households in “Sierra Leone, Liberia and Uganda” never utilised electricity despite being integrated into the grid,¹⁴ and around 60 percent of healthcare privileges in 27 Sub-Saharan African countries are unable to access reliable electricity.¹⁵ Owing to reliability challenges, many business houses in Sub-Saharan Africa prefer diesel generators to support their power requirements or smooth electricity supply. Nigeria, although the largest producer of energy in Africa, interestingly is the largest utiliser of “oil-fired” backup generators in Africa.¹⁶

Alongside accessibility issues, there is also the problem of getting clean energy. The clean cooking fuels along with technological supports are more precarious today. Although clean energy access has increased in

Africa by 13 percent between 2010 and 2019, the population growth has outpaced the rise in access. As a consequence, about 196 million people largely rely on inefficient and unsafe stoves and traditional biomass cooking. Further, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) data in 2021, by 2019, about 16 percent of Sub-Saharan Africans had clean cooking access; most of them living in urban areas, thereby, leaving about 900 million people in the region behind.¹⁷

Despite having huge resources and exemplary economic gains, it is paradoxical that the continent is paralysed on many counts. With a projected annual economic growth rate of 3.4 percent during 2020-2025, it has a mammoth market potential. Its 1.3 billion population is poised to double by 2050 which would make one-fifth of the world's population.¹⁸ As Africa holds 60 percent of the world's renewable resources and 30 percent of its crucial mineral resources, there is a need for eco-friendly and low-carbon technologies and equipment to harness the resources. As a fact, Africans are not at fault for the present-day climate change crisis and no way are they the primary givers of global warming. By 2021, they had contributed just less than 4 percent of the global emissions. Yet, it experiences huge impacts caused by climate change. The frequent droughts in Eastern Africa, landslides in South Africa and Tropical storms in Madagascar, Mozambique and Malawi have crippling effects on the respective societies in the form of loss of lives, displacement and food insecurity. As carbon emissions have been increasing very fast, Africans must diversify their energy basket to prevent the continent from falling apart due to the problem. Thanks to the decreasing cost of renewable production and infrastructures, which are comparable to fossil fuels. For example, in 2020, according to IRENA, "solar projects in Zambia, Senegal and Ethiopia were auctioned off for as low as \$25 per megawatt hour".¹⁹

Today, the renewable deployments in the continent have increased and in the last decade, the production capacity increased to 7 percent, where the largest quantum was from the solar sector. Africa's unexploited hydropower potential is about 2000 GW and countries like Angola, DRC, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zambia are the leading countries in this regard. Crucially, hydropower constitutes about 80 percent of the total energy consumption of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia.²⁰ Wind power potential constitutes about 461 GW, with "Algeria, Ethiopia, Namibia and Mauritania" having the greatest potential.²¹ Africa receives annual solar irradiation of 2 119 kWh/m².²² The north, west and southern parts of Africa receive an average of 2 100 kWh/m² annually. South Africa and Egypt, crucially, are the two largest solar energy

generators in Africa, counting about three-quarters of solar capacity by 2020. Kenya is one of the largest geothermal energy harnessing countries in the world, and ranks seventh in the world with a capacity of 823.8 MW.²³ Ethiopia has developed geothermal capacity to 7.3 MW.²⁴ Djibouti, Uganda and Tanzania are the emerging market.²⁵ There are the prospects of utilising biofuels for the transport sector. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA) of America, West Africa possesses about 100 megatons of agriculture residues per year which could be converted to biofuels such as ethanol and biobutanol. In Eastern Africa, most of the co-generation plants “bagasse fired” are located in proximity to sugarcane plantations, so as, to decrease transportation costs from the farms to the plant sites and the reduction of chances of spoilage, as well.²⁶

But all these potentials are not utilised up to the mark and don't constitute a sizeable share in the energy-mix of the continent. Although the solar energy sector has been the fastest-growing in the last decade i.e., CAGR of 54 percent, yet this is not the scenario in other renewable sectors. For example, wind 22.5 percent, geothermal 14.7 percent and hydropower 3.2 percent.²⁷ So far, Africa possesses less than 3 percent of global installed renewable capacity.²⁸ The continent, to date, “gets about 77 percent of its energy requirements which comes from the fossil fuels and about 40 percent of population in sub-Saharan Africa doesn't have electricity access.”²⁹ Significantly, all the African countries have signed COP21 and South Africa and Kenya have taken a pledge for net-zero by 2050. Morocco is committed to reducing greenhouse gases by 42 by 2030 and Nigeria is committed to net-zero by 2060 under its revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that have been submitted to the UN. As announced by COP28 President-Designate Sultan al-Jaber, “Kenya will champion the drive in Africa for tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030.”³⁰

Urge for African Union Membership

Africa is home to one-fifth of the global population (about 1.3 billion) and its young population is expected to double by 2050 which will make Africa's population a quarter of the global population.³¹ However, Africa counts for just 6 percent of global energy requirement and 3 percent of electricity demand.³² Also, there are significant gaps in energy access, particularly in rural areas where about 27 percent of people have access. Likewise, except for raw materials exports, the industrialisation process and agricultural productivity are lagging and Africa's contribution to the global economy is largely not recognised. The continent disproportionately suffers due to food insecurity, reverse ecosystem, natural calamities and disasters, largely caused by climate change. As per the World

Economic Forum's "Global Risk Reports, 2023", "Climate change and environment-related risks continue to dominate, taking up 6 of the top 10 biggest risks perceived to the world over the next decade."³³ No doubt, like other developing countries, the continent has the responsibility of meeting climate commitments amidst developmental challenges like poverty, inequality, illiteracy and unemployment.

All these issues can be better addressed and resolved with great solidarity between capital and technologically rich G20 and resource-rich Africa or the African Union. As there is a growing influence and importance of Africa, which had been neglected in past in various multilateral forums, it is the right time for G20 to strongly extend membership offers to AU to recognise continents potentials and contributions. No doubt, the AU membership will be the right move to correct the existing imbalances in the global order. The Africans who have been lobbying for AU membership in G20 for the last 7 years may channel their support for AU permanent membership in the G20 Delhi Summit meeting 2023. If taken into account region-wise presentation, Europe has 5 members (including Turkey), North America 3, South America 2, Asia 6, Eurasia 1, Africa 1 and Australia, along with the European Union. Although the forum consists of both developing and developed countries and Africa possesses 55 developing countries, unfortunately, only South Africa is a member of G20. South Africa, the only African country, has also been overburdened for advocating for the developing world, especially the African continent, as the country has its own "priorities and interests" to push which are not necessarily commensurate to the realities of other economies or continents as a whole.

The entire African continent needs fairer treatment and partnership that would thwart the stereotypical attitude of the developed countries and negligence to legitimate demands of Africa. So G20 is destined to bridge the gap that largely exists between the developed West and developing African countries. In addition to energy and climate change, there are also the issues that would make AU prominent in G20, such as "reallocation of Special Drawing Rights and the implementation of the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative, a fair and equitable energy transition for continental access to electricity, which could be formally raised by African Union representatives in the G20 to support collective interests of African countries."³⁴

Moreover, G20 has the provision for digital payments and the African experience, expertise and innovation in this regard may be shared

with the G20 member countries. For example, AfrEximBank has inaugurated the most complex and large network of cross-border facilities for payments that involve 42 currencies of different countries, starting in 2018. Kenya is the first country in the world to introduce a “contactless domestic payment system” by its “M-Pesa scheme”. Taking into account all these aspects, Ebba Kalondo, the “spokesperson of the African Union Commission”, aptly said, “We have long called for the African region to be fully represented in the G20, just as the EU is with the presidency and the commission in attendance – Africans must be better represented at the world’s key decision forums, not just observers. The G20 can set the bar in this regard.”³⁵ Africa is badly underestimated and very poorly represented in the international arena.

However, it has legitimate claims for the world and Africa. For example, in the wake of the Russian blockade of Ukrainian food grains and oil seeds in the Black Sea region, it is the African delegation approached Russia for food grain release. In the Global New Financial Pact, in Paris, Cyril Ramphosa, the South African President aptly criticised the West for treating Africans as “beggars” not “partner” in the global development process.

G20 and Africa: Thrust for Renewables

The G20 and Africa have common goals, objectives and challenges in materialising the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”³⁶ and the AU’s “Agenda 2063”. Therefore, there is a need to share each other’s experiences and expectations and exchange best practices for achieving a mutually agreeable agenda.³⁷ The G20 is expected to provide the right impetus for greater penetration of renewable energy in Africa, as it can leverage its association with the “African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)” which aims at establishing a single market for African goods and services. Engaging Africa and contributing to its renewable sector will thwart longstanding “resource-hungry” and “new scramble for Africa” rhetoric and create a win-win atmosphere for the developed states and African countries. Engaging Africa in G20 means trading with Africa in a smooth way where their renewable resources could be best utilised for climate change. There is a need for a large-scale utilisation of renewables in the African energy mix. Over 60 percent of global renewable energy is reserved in Africa, and about 30 percent of global crucial mineral resources are available in the continent which can be used for eco-friendly, low-carbon and energy-saving technology production.³⁸ This is in congruence to the fact that the nature-rich African continent is not only a key solution for reducing

greenhouse gas emissions globally, but also a source of economic growth, social inclusion, and energy security. Pertinently, it can help address and resolve pressing issues in Africa, such as poverty, energy poverty, inequality, climate change and calamities.

However, achieving this ambitious target also requires overcoming some major barriers, such as mobilizing adequate financial resources, creating enabling policy environments, developing infrastructure and skills, and ensuring equitable access and distribution, to which G20 can contribute and cooperate with Africa on their environmental policy making and implementation. Africa must seize the opportunity to work with G20 to enhance its role and capacity at the regional and global level in harnessing renewable resources. There is comparably less foreign investment and funding for African renewables. For example, in the last two decades, just 3 percent of global investment was made available to African states for research and development of their renewable sector.³⁹ This was also echoed in the Africa Climate Summit (4-6 September 2023) in Nairobi where the African countries had demanded equitable treatment of the international financial institutions and fulfilment of a longstanding pledge by the industrialised countries to provide \$100bn per year for climate funding in the developing states.⁴⁰ Despite some shortcomings, “The 14th Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM14)” and “The 8th Mission Innovation (MI-8) Ministerial Meeting” of G20 engagements in Goa on 19-22 July 2023 led to the establishment of “Clean Energy Marine Hubs” that is expected to bring both the private and government sectors across “energy-maritime value chain” transmitting maritime production and supply hubs for the perspective low-carbon emissions.⁴¹

Conclusion

While G20 is looking for more renewable and emission cuts, Africa’s primary challenge is how to ensure the availability and affordability of energy supply, even to the poorest sections and remotest parts of the continent. African countries are not major polluters like the G20 members, but its increasing pollution level is a concern that needs to be addressed and resolved; so that, the continent should not be blamed on the lines of Western developed countries shortly. There are hindrances to achieving renewable and affordable energy. But Africa is the only continent where renewable resources are plenty, and utilisation of such resources is disproportionately less. From the G20 perspective, the members of the forum are capital-rich and have better know-how and

expertise to share with the Africans. The G20 countries also require more renewable markets to invest and generate more green and clean energy resources to meet their domestic requirements, international energy expectations and climate change obligations.

The possible permanent membership of the African Union in the G20 forum in the forthcoming Summit at New Delhi will fulfil the expectations of both. The inclusion of AU in G20 will benefit each other for future prosperity and sustainable development. Renewables are not only key solutions for cutting down greenhouse gas burdens but also crucial for achieving energy security, inclusivity, equity and economic growth. The inclusion of AU in G20 and working together for a common future will help the most pressing issues of poverty, inequality and frequent disasters.

Moreover, achieving ambitious targets to mitigate climate change also necessitates overcoming the hindrances in the process of energy transition. The G20 members have capital, technologies and expertise, whereas the African countries have abundant renewable resources; therefore, working together for ambitious mitigation will make the world very proactive in energy transition and climate change mitigation. The G20 Summit in Delhi should strongly commit to a collective Action Plan on climate change along with admitting AU as a permanent member of the G20. Along with this optimism, the idea of the “One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)” initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi under the International Solar Alliance forum, which is based on the mantra that “The Sun Never Sets” and international cooperation and collaboration, is a clear indicative that both the G20 and African countries can best utilise their solar resources to meet their quest for climate change mitigation.

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G20 and Collaboration for Sustainable Water Management: The India Way

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Abstract

India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 provides an excellent opportunity for the country to showcase its successes and share its learning on achieving sustainable water management. India has been trying to address its water security challenges through various initiatives, such as the Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide piped-water supply to all households by 2024. India is also investing in developing water infrastructure, such as dams, canals, and irrigation systems, to improve water availability and enhance agricultural productivity. In addition, India is implementing measures to conserve and manage its water resources, such as rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, and wastewater treatment. However, growing population and economic development, the water demand is increasing rapidly, which is further exacerbated by climate change impacts such as droughts and floods. As a result, water scarcity has become a major challenge for many G20 countries, including India. This paper examines the water management challenges faced by G20 countries and India's best practices in water management. It also provides an overview of the G20 Water Security Action Plan, its objectives, targets, and strategies for implementation. Lastly how collaboration and knowledge sharing among G20 countries will achieve sustainable water management and water security.

Keywords: Water Security, G20 Presidency, Water Management, SDGs, Water Challenges.

Introduction

India's rapid population growth has led to its status as the most populous country in the world, with a current population of 1.4 billion

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people. This accounts for approximately 17.5 percent of the global population. However, despite its large population, India faces a significant challenge in terms of freshwater resources.¹ The country possesses less than 4 per cent of the world's total freshwater resources. There are 766 districts in India, each representing a specific geographic region. Out of these districts, 256 districts are classified as water-stressed which indicates that these regions experience significant water scarcity, struggling to meet the demands of their populations and industries.² To assess the availability of freshwater, a measurement of per capita freshwater availability is used. In 1951, India had an estimated per capita freshwater availability of 5,177 cubic meters. However, over the years, due to factors such as population growth, urbanisation, and increasing water demands, the per capita freshwater availability has been declining.³

By 2014, the per capita freshwater availability in India had decreased to 1,508 cubic meters. This decline reflects the strain on freshwater resources as the population grew and water consumption increased. Projections indicate that by 2024, the per capita freshwater availability in India will further decrease to 1,465 cubic meters, continuing the trend of diminishing water resources. If effective action is not taken to reverse this trend, the per capita freshwater availability in India will drop even further to 1,235 cubic meters by 2050. This projection suggests a precarious situation where the availability of freshwater for each individual will become even scarcer, exacerbating the existing water stress in the country.⁴ Importantly, these projections also indicate significant regional variations, meaning that certain areas within India may face more severe water scarcity than others.

A critical threshold in determining water stress is when the per capita water availability falls below 1,100 cubic meters. If the per capita availability drops below this level, the area is characterized as water-stressed, indicating a severe scarcity of water resources relative to the population's needs. Based on the projections for India's per capita freshwater availability, it is expected that by 2050, numerous regions in the country will be considered water-stressed if effective actions are not implemented. Addressing water scarcity and managing freshwater resources effectively is crucial for India given the current scenario and projected future trends. This entails implementing sustainable water management practices, promoting water conservation measures, investing in water infrastructure, and adopting policies to ensure equitable access to water resources across different regions of the country. Such actions are essential to mitigate the challenges

posed by water scarcity and ensure the sustainable use of freshwater resources in India.⁵

Water security is one of the most pressing issues of our times, demanding immediate global attention and coordinated action. The Group of 20 or G20, presided over by India in 2023, presents a pivotal platform for addressing this issue, especially considering the country's unique experiences and challenges in managing its water resources. Home to the largest population on the globe, India faces significant water management issues heightened by factors such as rapid population growth, urbanization, economic development, and climate change. However, amidst these challenges, the country has launched notable initiatives like the Jal Jeevan Mission and numerous infrastructure developments, showing commitment and creativity in its water management strategies. India, as the President of the G20 in 2023, stands at a crucial juncture where it can not only highlight its strides in sustainable water management but also encourage knowledge exchange and cooperative actions on water security among the G20 countries. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, also stated that "India's G20 Presidency is an opportunity to showcase the country's leadership on water security. India has a long history of water management and is home to some of the world's most innovative water technologies. The G20 can play a key role in promoting international cooperation on water security and helping to ensure that everyone has access to clean water."⁶

Water, an indispensable resource, has gained significant attention in recent years due to the increased demand propelled by a rapidly growing population, economic expansion, and intensifying impacts of climate change, such as frequent droughts and floods. However, the magnitude of the issue, coupled with the commonality of water-related concerns across the G20 countries, underscores the necessity for a comprehensive, collaborative approach to water management. This paper explores the current water management challenges faced by the G20 nations, with a special focus on India, scrutinizing its best practices, and assessing the potential for collaboration. Through this discourse, it aims to understand how a collective endeavour can lead to sustainable water management and reinforce water security among the G20 countries.

Importance of Sustainable Water Management

Sustainable water management is crucial for India for several reasons. First, India is a water-stressed country. The country has a

population of over 1.3 billion people, but only about 4 percent of its land is arable. This indicates that India has a limited amount of water resources. In addition, climate change is causing extreme weather patterns, such as droughts and floods. Third, India is a developing country. As India's economy grows, so does its water demand which is putting additional stress on India's water resources. Sunita Narain, Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment characterised it as “India's G20 Presidency is a chance to put water security at the top of the global agenda. Water is a critical resource for economic growth and development, and it is essential that we take steps to protect our water resources. The G20 can play a key role in mobilising resources and promoting policies that will help to ensure water security for all.”⁷

Sustainable water management is crucial for India and it has the G20 platform to raise awareness on the importance of sustainable water management and to promote collaboration on this issue. India has taken several steps to promote sustainable water management. These include:

- ***Investing in water infrastructure:*** India has invested in water infrastructure, such as dams, canals, and water treatment plants. This investment has helped to improve water supply and distribution and has made it easier for people to access clean water.
- ***Promoting water conservation:*** India has launched several campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of water conservation. These campaigns have focused on encouraging people to use water more efficiently and to adopt water-saving practices.
- ***Promoting rainwater harvesting:*** India has also promoted rainwater harvesting, which is a method of collecting rainwater and storing it for later use. This practice helps to reduce water stress during dry periods.
- ***Adopting water-efficient irrigation practices:*** India has also adopted water-efficient irrigation practices, such as drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation. These practices help to reduce water use and improve crop yields.
- ***Encouraging the use of water-efficient appliances:*** India has also encouraged the use of water-efficient appliances, such as low-flow toilets and showerheads. These appliances help to reduce water consumption in households and businesses.

These initiatives are helping to promote sustainable water management in India. However, there is still more to be done by continuing to invest in

water conservation and water-efficient technologies, India can make progress toward a sustainable future. India is a water-stressed country, and the challenges of climate change are only making the situation worse.

Water Security Challenges in G20 Countries

The global crisis surrounding access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation stands as one of the most urgent challenges in the realms of social, humanitarian, and developmental progress. The mismanagement of water resources not only obstructs poverty eradication endeavours but also poses a grave threat to sustainable development on a planetary scale. The repercussions of this water crisis are far-reaching, with its most devastating consequences felt by the world's most vulnerable and impoverished populations. In this regard, it is an irrefutable assertion that, among the multifaceted array of social, developmental, and environmental issues we face, the water crisis holds the most profound and existential implications for the survival of our planet.

In an era characterized by unparalleled wealth and advanced technological capabilities, the continued failure to ensure global access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation represents an indefensible shortcoming. The prevalence of insufficient water supplies and sub-par water quality serves as a breeding ground for waterborne diseases, surpassing all other challenges as the preeminent global health threat. As a result, safe drinking water and sanitation have emerged as fundamental pillars within the overarching global development agenda, interlinking with diverse developmental initiatives. Of paramount importance is the understanding that access to these essentials can serve as the cornerstone for reducing poverty, leading to enhancements in livelihoods, the creation of job opportunities, the dismantling of disease cycles associated with the lack of access to these basic needs, and the reallocation of resources saved from the health sector to other critical areas of development.

Investments directed toward water infrastructure and related services wield the potential to act as potent catalysts for economic activities and overall development. The health advantages stemming from the availability of adequate drinking water and sanitation services are equally noteworthy. Such benefits encompass substantial reductions in infant mortality rates, decreased instances of morbidity, and a decline in diseases transmitted through vectors. Given the unequivocal connection established by the World Health Organization (WHO) between a significant portion of the global disease burden and pathogens borne through water, the

importance of these benefits cannot be overstated. The adverse consequences of pollutants present in drinking water emanating from industrial, domestic, and agricultural sources are equally alarming.

To tackle these impediments to healthy living, initiatives to ensure safe drinking water and sanitation will make a substantial contribution.

The correlation between safe drinking water, sanitation, and public health has been meticulously quantified and studied. A comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of improvements in water and sanitation infrastructure by WHO underscores the savings that can be achieved by addressing health issues and thereby avoiding various health-related expenditures in the long run. These include diminished investments required within the healthcare sector, reduced financial burdens on patients due to lowered rates of illness, and the valuation of time saved due to the improved accessibility of water and sanitation resources, among other factors.

The mismanagement of water resources poses multifaceted threats to societal, humanitarian, and developmental realms. By ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation, a foundation can be laid for poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and disease prevention. This, in turn, will have a cascading effect on the broader economic development and resource reallocation. The provision of adequate Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (SDS) services can significantly alleviate the burden on women to collect drinking water, especially in rural regions of developing countries. Furthermore, local governments and community organizations competent in meeting essential water and sanitation needs can effectively address other development obstacles. For instance, enhanced community trust in local authorities can foster participatory governance and accountability. Moreover, successful initiatives can lead to the creation of job opportunities, boosting community pride. Hence, the pivotal role of SDS services in sustainable development cannot be overemphasized.⁸

Impact of Population Growth, Economic Development, and Climate Change on Water Scarcity

The issue of SDS extends far beyond its significance as a global concern, making it a compelling choice for the G20 leaders to prioritize. The successful implementation of the SDS initiative promises a mutually beneficial outcome of considerable importance for both developed and developing members of G20 as well as the world at large. Moreover, the SDS issue transcends political divisions. The need to address the SDS

challenge is universally accepted as a health concern jeopardizing millions of lives. Developed countries may view it as an act of enlightened self-interest and an investment in future economic growth. In contrast, developing countries would recognize the potential to save lives, reduce suffering, and unlock substantial economic growth.

India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 provides a unique opportunity for the country to address and highlight the increasing concerns around water scarcity exacerbated by population growth, economic development, and climate change. These challenges are particularly pressing given that the G20 nations house a significant portion of the global population facing water scarcity. Population growth is one of the significant drivers of water scarcity. The exponential increase in population, especially in developing nations within the G20, increases the demand for water for domestic use, agriculture, and industry. As the most populous country within the G20, India's leadership can spearhead efforts toward comprehensive solutions that ensure sustainable water management despite population growth.

Similarly, economic development impacts water scarcity, primarily through industrial and agricultural use. As economies grow, the demand for water in sectors like manufacturing, energy, and agriculture increases, often leading to overuse and depletion of water resources. With India being one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, its G20 presidency can emphasize the necessity of incorporating water sustainability measures in economic development policies.

Climate change, an issue at the forefront of global concern, significantly affects water scarcity. Changes in rainfall patterns, frequent droughts, and higher evaporation rates can deplete water resources and exacerbate water scarcity. With its diverse climate and geography, India is particularly vulnerable to these impacts. The country's leadership of the G20 presents an opportunity to spotlight the effects of climate change on water scarcity and encourage global collaboration to address this issue. India's presidency of the G20 is a valuable opportunity for the nation to lead conversations and actions on the complex interplay between population growth, economic development, and climate change in the context of water scarcity. By doing so, India can promote sustainable water management strategies and help to ensure water security within the G20 nations and beyond.

India's Best Practices in Water Management

Water security at the national level in India has been a priority for the government, leading to the implementation of various initiatives and

programs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi played a crucial role in emphasising the importance of water management by creating a unified Ministry of Jal Shakti to handle all water-related matters. One of the key initiatives was the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' launched in 2014, aimed at achieving open-defecation-free status throughout the country. Improved sanitation practices, including proper disposal of waste and promoting hygiene, contribute to water conservation and overall water security.

In its current role as the G20 President, India is advocating a cohesive, all-encompassing, and consensus-based approach to tackle climate change and water scarcity issues head-on. The ethos of water conservation is deeply interwoven into India's cultural fabric and has gained even more salience today. The concept of 'saving' water transcends mere conservation and emphasizes ensuring a steady supply of clean water to fulfil our collective requirements at any place and time.⁹

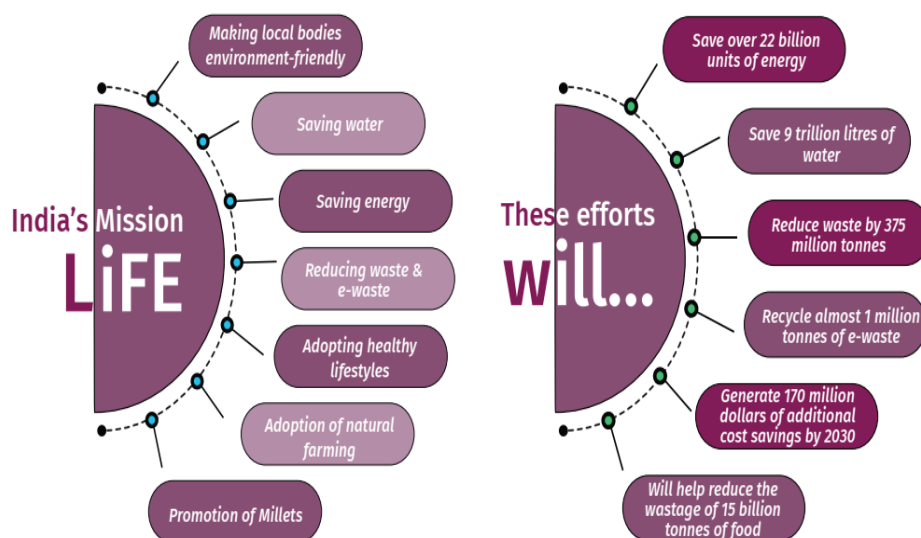
On August 15, 2019, Prime Minister Modi announced the *Jal Jeevan Mission* to provide tap water connections to every rural household in India by 2024. By 2019, only 16.69 percent of rural households had access to tap water connections out of a total of 193.69 million households. However, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the mission. As of January 2023, more than 57 percent of rural households, totalling over 110.73 million households, have been provided with clean tap water connections.¹⁰ Furthermore, the tap water supply has been extended to over 87 percent of schools and 82 percent of Anganwadi centres, ensuring access to clean water for children and promoting their health and growth.¹¹ The impact of these initiatives on public health is notable. A study conducted by Nobel Laureate Kramer from the University of Chicago revealed that providing potable tap water supply to 50 percent of the population through the Jal Jeevan Mission saves the lives of approximately 1.36 lakh (136,000) children annually by reducing water-borne diseases. This demonstrates the positive outcomes of improved water security measures.¹²

The Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, has been at the forefront in initiating numerous strategies to promote water conservation through methods like Artificial Recharge and Rain Water Harvesting. A significant endeavour is the *Jal Jeevan Mission* (JJM) "to provide every rural household with tap water connection by 2024."¹³ Moreover, the ambitious *Namami Gange* mission has sparked a transformative change in our approach to river rejuvenation, ecosystem conservation, pollution control, and integrated river basin management. This mission has recently

received international recognition as one of the top 10 world restoration flagships by the UN for its efforts to restore the natural world. The JJM is the world's most extensive drinking water supply programme that aims to deliver tap water connections to 160 million households. Today over 116 million households, constituting 60 percent of the target, have been equipped with such connections. Based on recent studies, this enhanced access to safe drinking water is projected to save the lives of approximately 136,000 children under the age of five.¹⁴

In addition, India is undertaking the world's most extensive dam rehabilitation program aimed at strengthening climate resilience for crucial water storage infrastructure. *The Atal Bhujal Yojana* has been implemented with the vision of ensuring the sustainability of groundwater resources, fostering a balance between demand and supply. This scheme advocates community-led, Gram Panchayat-specific Water Security Plans, aligning them with existing and new initiatives.¹⁵

These and numerous other initiatives are setting India on the path to achieving water security by 2047. In this context, India hosted the second G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) meeting, focusing on water conservation and sustainable, equitable water resource management.¹⁶ The discussions in G20 meetings on a myriad of topics, including river rejuvenation, climate-resilient infrastructure, groundwater management, and strategies for universal access to sanitation, and clean drinking water will undoubtedly expedite the achievement of sustainable development goals.



Source: Mission LiFE, Monthly Report, March 2023¹⁷

Examples like the *Rani ki Vav* and *Adalaj Vav* step-wells in the Indian state of Gujarat illustrate India's historical commitment to conserving water resources. Reservoirs, tanks, and stepped wells found in various parts of the country were explicitly constructed for water storage. Therefore, by melding old wisdom with new technology, Gujarat offers an exceptional platform for the G20 countries to share and learn from each other's best practices. In addition, traditional Indian architecture, with its innate designs for water conservation, showcases the time-honoured commitment to preserving water. The new-age initiatives proposed by the Modi government, such as the *Swachh Bharat Mission* and the *Jal Jeevan Mission*, are contributing to the water conservation vision and embody this longstanding tradition. These innovative programs not only address the pressing issue of water scarcity but also nurture India's legacy of water conservation.¹⁸

The flagship water management initiatives undertaken by India such as the *Namami Gange Mission* are presented as examples of river rejuvenation. Its five-pronged approach encompasses pollution control, sustaining river flow continuity, nurturing the bond between communities and rivers, conservation of river ecosystems, and provision of sustainable livelihoods. India's strides towards climate resilient infrastructure were also outlined, specifically its strategies for enhancing climate resilience, which include the dam rehabilitation program. This program focuses on the efficient management of critical water storage infrastructure and community-based groundwater management.

These initiatives and programs have contributed to improving water security in India. The focus on integrated water management, sanitation, river rejuvenation, rainwater harvesting, and providing tap water connections has positively impacted public health and reduced the incidence of water-borne diseases. Continued efforts in this direction are crucial to ensuring sustainable water resources and securing the well-being of the Indian population.

In the context of the G20 meeting, the focus is winning global cooperation at every conceivable level and developing a shared understanding of the intricacies of water conservation, and the integration of sustainability principles in the execution of Water Resource Management. The crucial components of this integrated approach include interventions in monitoring and evaluating water ecosystems, robust legal and policy instruments, and emphasis on technological collaboration and joint research.

India's Water Security Model for the World

India's approach to water security has garnered attention as a potential model for the rest of the world, particularly the Global South. One of the crucial factors that set India's approach distinct is the efficient integration of management, technology, and people's participation. Traditionally, the water sector in India has lacked effective management practices and the utilization of modern technologies. However, the state of Gujarat has registered significant progress by implementing an integrated approach to water management. Gujarat's success has paved the way for similar initiatives to be adopted nationwide and serves as a blueprint for achieving national water security.

The initiatives undertaken in India, including the *Swachh Bharat Mission*, *Namami Gange*, *Jal Shakti Abhiyan*, and *Jal Jeevan Mission*, are centred around four core elements: people, technology, climate, and sustainability. These initiatives prioritize the involvement and empowerment of local communities, leverage innovative technologies, consider the impact of climate change on water resources, and emphasize sustainable practices.

By focusing on these elements, India has been able to develop affordable, scalable, and reliable models for addressing water security challenges. These models can be adapted and implemented in various contexts, especially in countries of the global South that face similar water-related issues. India is showcasing and sharing its experiences and knowledge with the G20 members to assist other nations in achieving the same.

G20 Water Security Action Plan

India's recent unveiling of its "Water Vision" within the overarching framework of the prime minister's strategic plan, "Vision India @2047", comes at a crucial juncture in the face of notable global circumstances. The urgency of this initiative is underscored by the findings of the Sixth Assessment Report's 2023 Synthesis Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which unequivocally confirms the severe and escalating impacts of anthropogenic climate change on the world's water resources. These developments occur in tandem with the UN's convening of the 2023 Water Conference, marking the end of a 46-year hiatus in addressing water-related issues at this scale. Concurrently, India is at the helm of the G20, where discussions on water security take centre stage within the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group.¹⁹

The IPCC's latest findings are a stark reminder of the disparate and disproportionate toll that dwindling water security inflicts on vulnerable regions and marginalized communities. This serves as a clarion call for prompt and enduring actions to improve accessibility to water services. These very concerns are now prominently featured on the agenda of the UN Water Conference. India's commitment to prioritizing water security during its G20 presidency presents a unique opportunity for the nation to serve as a beacon of exemplary action for other countries grappling with similar challenges.

A fundamental pillar of India's Water Vision must be to ensure equitable access to safe and managed domestic water services across all rural households. Regrettably, as of now, only 19 States and Union Territories have effectively implemented the Union law to regulate groundwater. It is noteworthy that states like Rajasthan and Punjab are yet to adopt this crucial legislation.

The strategy should pivot toward a comprehensive approach that tackles pollution mitigation and the rejuvenation of rivers. India's ongoing initiatives, including the *Namami Gange* Programme and the *Atal Bhujal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation*, are commendable steps in this direction. Calculations suggest that, by 2050, treated wastewater could amount to a staggering 96,000 million litres per day, a resource capable of irrigating an area 26 times the size of Delhi. To unlock this potential, Indian states must not only acknowledge the newly sanctioned National Framework on Safe Reuse of Treated Water but also bolster their wastewater treatment infrastructure. Presently, the capacity to treat municipal sewage stands at a mere 40 percent, indicating substantial room for improvement. Furthermore, ensuring equitable pricing mechanisms for freshwater is crucial to incentivize responsible consumption.

In the realm of agriculture, where water-intensive practices exacerbate scarcity concerns, enhancing the efficiency of irrigation is paramount. The Per Drop More Crop program, operating under the *Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana*, offers a vital solution. This initiative champions micro-irrigation systems like drip and sprinkler technologies, which have, as of December 2022, covered only 10 percent of their potential area, reaching 7.2 million hectares. Conservative estimates indicate that widespread adoption of water-saving irrigation practices could conserve up to 20 percent of current irrigation water usage by 2050. Addressing this gap

requires robust efforts to extend water-saving technologies, potentially through targeted subsidies.

Integral to sustainable water management is the active involvement of local communities. The *Atal Bhujal* Mission exemplifies this approach by striving to enhance groundwater management across 222 water-stressed districts within seven states. However, the mission's success hinges on the iterative implementation of such programs annually. India's G20 presidency serves as a fitting platform to showcase the strides made by these initiatives, deliberate on their long-term viability, and extend support to other nations grappling with similar challenges. These efforts align seamlessly with the broader objective of accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

India's unveiling of its Water Vision within the framework of Vision India @2047, against the backdrop of the IPCC's latest findings, the revival of the UN Water Conference, and its role in the G20 Presidency, presents a watershed moment in the country's trajectory. By embracing equitable water access, combatting pollution, optimizing irrigation practices, and fostering community participation, India can emerge as a global exemplar in sustainable water resource management. Through sharing its achievements and insights on international platforms, India can catalyse collective action towards achieving the water-related SDGs on a global scale.

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing among G20 Countries

The 2nd Meeting of the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group started focussing on water resource management.²⁰ Delegates from G20 member nations, along with other participating countries, including Indonesia, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the USA, Denmark, Singapore, Spain, Oman, and the Netherlands presented their best practices. Moreover, international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Solar Alliance (ISA), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also showcased their notable strategies in water resources management. The central themes revolving around their presentations included:²¹

- A holistic and sustainable approach to water resource and ecosystem management;
- Initiatives aimed at the rejuvenation and restoration of water bodies and rivers;
- Strategies focused on managing rainwater efficiently;
- Approaches towards effective groundwater management;
- Adapting to climate change through a water efficiency approach;
- Drought and flood management practices;
- Emphasizing civil society participation in watershed management;
- Strategies for efficient water governance;
- Safe drinking water and wastewater management initiatives;
- Techniques for water supply augmentation;
- Inclusive strategies for groundwater management.

The above themes will help address the water management problems, not just for India but for every country that is facing a water-related crisis due to climate change. In addition, specialized initiatives can be undertaken to cater to the needs of different countries.

1. Identify and Address Common Water Challenges

During India's G20 presidency, New Delhi can orchestrate the collective identification and address of mutual water challenges. With diverse topographies and climates across G20 nations, many common issues such as water scarcity, pollution, and the impacts of climate change on water resources can be highlighted. India itself is a prime example, facing severe water scarcity in some regions while combating floods in others. By facilitating discussions on these issues, India can drive collaborative problem-solving actions.

2. Develop and Implement Effective Water Management Policies and Practices

India has an opportunity to lead the development and execution of effective water management policies and practices within the G20 community. For instance, the success of India's Jal Jeevan Mission and Namami Gange programs can serve as models for other countries facing similar challenges. The success stories and lessons learned from these programs can help guide the design and implementation of similar initiatives in other countries.

3. Transfer Technology and Know-How

India's G20 Presidency can promote the exchange of technology and expertise among member countries. India itself has harnessed technology

for water management efforts, such as the use of remote sensing for identifying potential groundwater reservoirs, and the deployment of wastewater treatment technologies. Sharing these innovations can provide valuable insights for other countries and lead to technology collaborations aimed at addressing water issues.

4. Build Capacity for Water Management

By promoting capacity-building initiatives, India can help enhance water management in the G20 nations. This could involve training programs, technical exchanges, or collaborative research projects, helping countries develop the necessary skills and infrastructure to manage their water resources effectively. Such an approach could also promote job creation and economic development.

5. Raise Awareness of Water Issues

India's G20 Presidency offers a platform to raise global awareness of pressing water-related challenges. By engaging global leaders and the media, India can help draw attention to the urgency of issues like water scarcity, contamination, and climate change-induced water stress. The

G20 Summit could be an opportune moment to rally international support and commitment towards sustainable water management goals.

Benefits of Sharing Best Practices Among G20 Countries

The G20 forum plays a crucial role in fostering an environment of knowledge exchange, which has the potential to amplify the benefits of successful water management practices. By sharing best practices and experiences, countries can collectively work towards addressing global water challenges. This collaborative approach can lead to several positive outcomes. One key benefit is the improvement of water security. Through the exchange of successful strategies and techniques, countries can learn from each other's experiences and implement effective measures to enhance their water security. For instance, India's extensive work on rainwater harvesting can serve as a model for countries facing similar climatic conditions, helping them improve their water security.

Another important outcome is the reduction of water scarcity. Strategies that have proven effective in reducing water scarcity in one country can be adapted and implemented in others. For example, India's initiatives for groundwater management and the rejuvenation of rivers can offer valuable insights for countries struggling with water scarcity issues,

helping them alleviate water scarcity through appropriate measures. Furthermore, knowledge exchange can contribute to improving water quality. Countries can share effective water treatment and pollution control measures to enhance water quality. India's success with the Namami Gange Programme, aimed at cleaning up the Ganges, can serve as an example for other nations grappling with pollution in their water bodies, inspiring them to implement similar initiatives.

The exchange of advanced technologies and practices that increase water-use efficiency is another significant outcome. By learning from each other, countries can discover innovative ways to maximize water-use efficiency. India's promotion of micro-irrigation systems under the *Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana* can provide valuable lessons for countries aiming to enhance agricultural water use efficiency. Moreover, sharing strategies and technologies for adapting to the impacts of climate change on water resources is crucial. As climate change affects water availability and quality, countries can learn from each other's experiences and develop climate-resilient approaches. India's dam rehabilitation program, which focuses on building climate resilience in critical water storage infrastructure, can offer important lessons.

Lastly, the exchange of best practices can contribute to promoting sustainable water management practices across the G20. By sharing inspiring initiatives such as India's Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections, nations can be inspired to pursue similar sustainable water management goals, leading to long-term benefits for both people and the environment. The G20 forum has the potential to enhance water security, reduce water scarcity, improve water quality, increase water-use efficiency, adapt to the impacts of climate change on water resources, and promote sustainable water management. By collectively working towards these goals, countries can address global water challenges more effectively and build a more resilient future.

Conclusion

Sustainable water management is important in our rapidly changing world. With global challenges like climate change, population growth, and increasing pollution, a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing this invaluable resource is more critical than ever. With India's G20 presidency, the issue finds adequate attention leading to dialogues, exchange of ideas and technologies, and best practices among the world's

largest economies. Given the inherent interconnection of water issues with other aspects of socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability, the conversations and collaborations fostered through the G20 are significant not only for water security but for the broader pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals.

India's G20 presidency will have important implications for the Global South, specifically in addressing critical issues such as climate change, economic development, and water scarcity. As one of the world's largest economies and a leader of the Global South, India has the unique position to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations. During its G20 presidency, India can advocate for fairer economic policies and practices that support the economic growth of developing countries, such as better access to global markets, more equitable trade agreements, and increased foreign investment. Moreover, India could leverage the G20 platform to push for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to address inequalities and ensure no one is left behind.

As G20 President, India can ensure that the voices of the Global South are heard in international climate negotiations. It could work towards a more equitable distribution of resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation, promoting technology transfer, and capacity building in the Global South. India's leadership in addressing water scarcity through initiatives such as the *Jal Jeevan Mission* and the *Namami Gange Mission* can serve as models for other countries in the Global South. By sharing best practices and lessons learned, India can contribute to efforts to manage water resources more effectively and ensure access to clean, safe water for all. With its long history of water conservation, India is well-positioned to lead this collective endeavour. It can inspire, educate, and collaborate with other nations to address the shared water-related challenges.

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Inclusion of African Union in G20: India's Strategic Move?

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Abstract

South-South Cooperation and ant-colonialism served as the cornerstones of India's relations with Africa so far. The inclusion of the African Union (AU) in the G20 is another milestone in India's bonhomie with Africa. The G20 is no longer dominated by western developed countries, rather it has widened its structure by including many emerging and developing countries. India's support for the inclusion of the AU is viewed as a strategic move as it will benefit New Delhi in many ways, not the least of which is by increasing the likelihood that Africa will back India's bid to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Furthermore, Prime Minister Modi's action is the correct start toward a just, equitable, and democratic international infrastructure and governance. This paper throws light on the different aspects of India's G20 presidency, focusing primarily on the inclusion of the AU in the Group of 20. The strategic move of India to achieve its goal through the G20 Presidency, the benefits of inclusion of the African Union, and finally suggests how India should deal with complex issues and problems.

Keywords: G20, India, African Union, UNSC, South-South Cooperation

Introduction

India has longstanding relations with Africa and remained a strong supporter of Africa's development. However, the trade relation was limited in the initial years but after India adopted the economic liberalisation policy, its approach towards Africa changed. For faster economic growth and

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higher energy demands, both India and Africa are dependent on crude oil, coal, and natural gas at rates of roughly 79 percent, 18 percent, and 15 percent, respectively.¹ Africa and India have come together to advocate the interests of developing nations on international fora like the WTO, United Nations, etc.

The Republic of South Africa and the Republic of India have collaborated in a sustained way to enhance bilateral relations since the Seattle WTO meeting in 1999.² Suffice it to say that India-Africa relation is based on mutual understanding and the shared goal of faster economic development of their people and the region.

As India is going to remain at the centre stage of global affairs for hosting one of the most powerful summits, i.e., the 18th G20 Summit, it would use its influence to bring like-minded nations to the forum. At the moment everyone wants to see how India utilizes this opportunity and comes out with bright colours. All members of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the entire G-7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, USA) along with major multilateral bodies like IMF, WB, WTO, and UN will participate in the G20 summit. It is expected that India, on behalf of the Global South pursue the cause of developing countries and carve an equitable international order.

The G20 is not a treaty-based organization like IMF, or UN in which members are legally bound by the rules and regulations. However, it is an important world forum as it includes the world's biggest economies both from both North and South. The G20 helps to support the financial stability and global governance system and development across the globe. India as the current President will do its best to host the Summit under the leadership of Narendra Modi. The Summit which will be held in New Delhi in 2023 has a huge list of topics to be discussed at the same time India representing the South will raise the important issues faced by these South Asian countries in particular. It assumes a central role in shaping world economic policies addressing the critical and complex challenges faced by the world.

The logo and theme of G20 under India's Presidency is "One Earth, One Family, One Future" (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam derived from an ancient text in the Maha Upanishad*) signifies the importance of global unity, where all act as a single family, as a single unit. This phrase weakens the boundary of nations even though all have their limitations and problems which can be solved only if everyone joins hands as a single family. The logo along with the theme represents India's commitment to an inclusive and sustainable development environment with global cooperation. This is

the symbol of unity and progress where Ashoka Chakra is used to symbolize peace, progress, and eternal motion as its centre. This also shows India as a land of diversity that believes in the inclusivity of all. In this context, the efforts to include the AU in the G20 Summit are apt.

Objectives and Vision of India's Presidency

India has a big responsibility as President of G20 and must use it as an opportunity to shape the world narrative and prove itself to be one of the important players in the world. The broader objectives and vision that the G20 forum attempts to fructify under the India's Presidency are:

Objectives	Vision
Sustainable development and inclusive economic growth	India is trying to shape the global agenda and seeking collaborations among nations.
Digital Reformation and Technological Innovation	The logo and theme reflect India's vision of making the world more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous in future (particularly in the case of Africa)
Climate Change and more use of Renewable energy	India takes the responsibility to facilitate dialogue, policy reforms, and promote collective actions

(Source: Author's compilation)

For pursuing India's vision as a global player and set the global agenda, seeking collaboration in the G20 platform is an opportune time. Therefore, by accommodating new like-minded members with the rationale to shape the grouping into a truly global representative body, the inclusion of the African Union is a pragmatic decision. India takes responsibility with great skills to broker peace and facilitate growth through dialogue and policy reforms; through collaborative peaceful actions as "the time is not for war. It is not for revenge against the West or for opposing the West against the East."³

Assessing the Importance of G20 Summits along with its Structural Defects

The G20 was founded on November 15, 2008, at the level of Leaders of Nations and Governments in Washington, DC, to address the global economic downturn. Finance Ministers and Governors of central banks from economically significant countries had previously met informally and

with a technical focus. Nineteen nations, representing around 85% of the world's GDP, over 75 percent of its trade, and roughly 2/3 of its people, make up the G20. Now G20 has become a high-profile group where major economies are participating to meet and tackle global crises of all kinds. However, the role of G20 in its infancy was critiqued on the following lines:

- The G20 functions based on loose-knit club summits rather than using well-established institutional frameworks.
- An organization whose members are self-selected
- Intense attention was directed at the G20's membership structure and the arbitrary process used to choose them.⁴
- The G20's legitimacy is contested both within by its member nations and externally.
- "My Country First" has become the attitude of members, therefore, can never work for a greater cause for the world.

In response to such generic criticisms, the G-20, while addressing global economic concerns, has undertaken several institutional adjustments to broaden its scope and involvement. It has increased the number of invitees to its summits to give wide representation in policy formulation. The Presiding country can invite special guests to the summit as well. Among these, those who question the composition of G20 must also realize that until now the whole of Africa was not represented.⁵ To address the structural loopholes in the G20 grouping, it is imperative to make changes in its composition; therefore, inculcating the African Union in G20 falls in line. Out of 55 nations in Africa, only South Africa is a member of the G20 and the regional organisations are only observers. But G20 decisions substantially influence the whole of Africa while the region is underrepresented in the forum.⁶ Akshay Mathur of Gateway House, an Indian think tank, argued that the G20 has become more inclusive than before by including the African Union in its membership. He also praised the G20 for giving developing nations a chance to show their leadership skills and for rotating its Presidency among its members. He said that no single country can dominate the world agenda and that everything will be done based on consensus and cooperation.⁷

The inclusion of the African Union in the G20 group was not the first attempt of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Efforts were already made to include the African Union in the 2015 G20 Summit in Turkey. The 2015 G20 Summit in Turkey had three priorities - Inclusiveness, investment, and implementation focusing mainly on Low-income developing Countries (LIDC).⁸ Developing good relations with Africa became a priority and a

key component of Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey realized the importance of Africa and initiated the first major opening to the continent under the AKP government, which declared 2005 as the "Year of Africa" and tried to reach out to the continent through various projects. Between 2002 and 2013, Turkey increased its diplomatic missions and aid to Africa, from \$73 million in 2002 to \$3.3 billion in 2013. (Some of the increase was due to accounting adjustments, such as adding technical training exchange programmes between government agencies to the aid budget). Turkey also boosted its trade with sub-Saharan Africa, raising its share of total exports to the region from 0.4 per cent in 2002 to 1.3 per cent in 2013.⁹

Importance of Africa as a Member of G20

Africa is a rising continent that aims to be a significant player in the world economy. While the world is moving towards protectionism, Africa has taken a bold step in the opposite direction by launching the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). With almost every country in the continent as a member, this is the world's largest free trade area by number of countries in it. Recognizing the economic importance of the African Union for the world, it has been invited to the G20 summits on several occasions.

Many countries like China and Germany have supported its industrialization, and have initiated private investment programmes with Africa in 2017, besides many other initiatives. Africa has growing confidence in its potential, with its young population, and achievements in agriculture, telecommunication, consumer markets, banking, etc. Many of the world's fastest-growing economies are in Africa as well. Moreover, the developed economies of the world should assist the continent, which is rich in mineral resources, in reviving its economy. Currently, the continent is the eighth-largest economy in the world, and by 2063, it has set the goal to be the third-largest economy. This goal can only be achieved if it gets a seat at the high table like the G20. The continent's leaders have the best knowledge of how to use their capabilities for decision-making for the benefit of both the world and the continent. Besides its economic potential, the continent also has other areas of interest, such as environmental issues. The continent's deep and dense forests can act as a carbon sink to reduce the emissions that cause climate change.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IREA) estimates that by 2050, Africa will be able to provide more than 10 per cent of the world's wind power and 60 per cent of the world's renewable solar energy. Keeping

the energy demand and climate change perspectives, the African nations can be valuable members of the G20. Second, the governance structure of Africa can also serve as a lesson. For instance, Rwanda's reconciliation and discovery approach has been viewed as a global justice paradigm. African politicians and scientists are also at the forefront of COVID-19 management in developing nations.¹⁰ South Africa, Brazil, and India known as G20 Troika will be joining this year for the Summit, and South Africa will lead the Summit in 2025. The G20 Troika is the group of three G20 member countries of past, current, and succeeding country that will host the G20 Summit. By hosting the G20 summit shortly, South Africa will champion the voice of the Global South. According to Cyril Ramaphosa, it is necessary to modernize our multilateral institutions to make them better equipped to meet the challenges. The Development Reimagined, a women-led African consultancy, pointed out that the G20 needs the African Union to enhance Africa's representation while contributing to its economic growth.

The support for the African Union's entry into the G20 is equally contested. The countries who are in support include the United States, the UK, China, Russia, India, France, Germany, Italy, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, Japan, and the European Union; countries who opposed are Australia, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Countries like Italy, Canada, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia all are much smaller economies in size than Africa, but are already developed economies, and therefore have direct impacts on global challenges that African nations cannot. Some critics also argue that India is wasting time by proposing Africa's entry into G20, as it may complicate the group's decision-making process and dilute its effectiveness. Those who favour the African Union's entry advance that its entry will "make the G20 more representative, inclusive, and, therefore, more influential. Instead of representing only 65% of the world population, it will then speak for about 80% of the planet's people. This will enhance the group's moral credibility, advancing the cause of fairness and justice."¹¹

On the other hand, the African Union expressed great appreciation for countries who support its entry. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on January 2023, who visited Africa, said that African communities are "disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of global challenges. Any serious solution requires African leadership and voices." But still, some critics feel that India is wasting time by proposing Africa's entry into G20. India seems confident in facilitating Africa's entry which will undoubtedly strengthen the voice of the Global South, will help bridge the divide

between the developed North and the developing South, and it will undoubtedly bring the two areas of the world together.

India's Strategy to Include AU in G20 Summit 2023

India and Africa have a long history of cooperation and partnership in various fields, such as trade, education, culture, and security. However, there are still many opportunities and challenges for enhancing their relations in the 21st Century. The section that follows potential areas of collaboration and the benefits of including African countries in the G20.

The Narendra Modi government, while highlighting India's historical relations with Africa, has actively pursued strong bilateral relations during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing medical and vaccine help. The government is serious about India's trade with and investment in Africa. India's private sector is keen to invest in sectors like skill and capacity-building, health facilities, agribusiness, digitization, and marine security. India's involvement with Africa will grow for easy access to the African market through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA). Africa is a lucrative destination for its large human resources, expanding middle class, and growth of the service industry. The potential for India's foreign direct investment in areas like agricultural-related businesses, apparel and clothing, pharmaceuticals, and vehicle components is huge.

One of the promising areas of cooperation between India and Africa is health care. India has become a popular destination for medical tourism, attracting patients from all over the world who seek quality and affordable treatment. According to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report, the proportion of tourists seeking medical attention abroad rose from 5.4 per cent in 2010 to 15.4 per cent in 2019. India has also stated that the inclusive and open development model for Africa will include the provision of health care. This can benefit both sides, as India can share its expertise and experience in the health sector, while Africa can improve its health infrastructure and outcomes.

Another potential area of cooperation between India and Africa is digital governance. Africa is interested in launching a digital identity system of people like Aadhaar to promote good governance. India can assist Africa in implementing such a system, as it has successfully enrolled more than 1.2 billion people in Aadhaar, the world's largest biometric identification program. However, there are also some challenges and risks involved in

such a project, such as data privacy, security, and inclusion. Therefore, India and Africa must work together to ensure the digital identity system is ethical, transparent, and accountable.

However, China has a strong presence and influence in Africa, as it supports more infrastructure development in the region with a large sum of money. China's economic footprint is much deeper than India's, and it may use its debt leverage to pressure Africa to accept its dominance and agenda.¹² India has to overcome this challenge diplomatically and strategically. It should use its soft power and goodwill vigorously. India should also engage with the African leaders and ambassadors, and listen to their concerns and aspirations. India should also use its effective telephone diplomacy, and leverage its existing platforms and mechanisms, such as the Focus Africa programme and the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, to showcase its commitment and contribution to Africa's development. Finally, if some countries are still doubtful or reluctant, India should use the majority interest and consensus to push for the decision to include Africa in the G20 summit, which will start on 9th September 2023. If India succeeds in making the African Union a member of the G20 group, it will be a great achievement and a milestone for India's presidency. Prime Minister Narendra Modi believes that the voice of the Global South will help bridge the gap between the developed North and the developing South, and it will undoubtedly bring the two regions of the world closer together. Moreover, the India-Africa partnership will provide opportunities for both African and Indian people, besides addressing global issues.¹³

What Should be Africa's Strategy?

To get the best benefits out of the G20 Summit, the leaders of the AU must plan out a strategy that focuses on a few important things. First, they must carefully select the leaders who will represent AU in the G20 Summit. This could include the chairperson of the AU Commission, who oversees the union's daily activities and represents it at the meetings of ministers, central bank governors and technical working groups convened by the G20's Finance Track and Sherpa Track. These tracks are responsible for developing new G20 initiatives that have major implications for African economies, such as the debt service suspension initiative and the Sustainable Finance Roadmap.

Second, the AU representatives can only be effective in G20 if the African policymakers develop common positions on global economic issues. They need to replace the fragmented views with one single voice of Africa to influence the G20 decision-making. Third, the AU needs a clear agenda to reform the global financial architecture related to climate change, food and energy security, public health emergencies and other challenges. Finally, the AU should build coalitions with other G20 members and extend its partnerships beyond governments, including think tanks, academics, civil society groups and others. This can help the AU to influence the G20 members and advance its interests.

Conclusion

India's call for giving a seat to the African Union at the high table of the G20 Summit will benefit the Indian economy as well as enhance the position of India worldwide. The slogan used by India for the 2023 Summit i.e., *Vasudeva Kutumbakam* (the whole world is a family) signifies the importance of all nations having a voice in the development of the world. Leaving behind or isolating any country to participate in the global governance system will be unfair and injustice to those countries. And when it comes to Africa, one should not forget the severe vulnerability of these people to global problems happening elsewhere.

However, the growth of Africa is only possible if Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is open to that continent which will boost their economy. Relation with Africa will bring benefits as it is rich in many things like natural resources along with deep and dense forests which can absorb carbon emissions into it and provide oxygen to the world. Africa is also trying to influence the global system with its strategy by aiming to increase its voice and influence throughout the world. The demand made by Africa to be part of G20 in 2023 when India is hosting gives a clear idea that south-south cooperation can only help to make the world governance system inclusive, transparent and equal for all. So, the idea proposed by Narendra Modi before the Summit to make G20 to G21 by including the African Union is the best example of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. India takes the responsibility to bring peace to the world by being the facilitator for dialogue and policy reforms. It is always focusing on the collaborative action of all if the problem is to be solved. A significant obstacle that cannot be disregarded in this situation is China's advantage, which encourages additional infrastructure development in the area and makes it clear that its economic imprint is far wider than India's. This can be altered if India becomes successful in bringing the African Union into G20 permanently.

India's proposal to give a seat to the African Union at the G20 forum is a strategic move that will benefit its economy and enhance its global position. Africa's development also depends on collaborative projects by attracting foreign direct investment. The G20 forum will be a lucrative platform for the entire Africa to fetch the benefits. Africa has many assets, such as natural resources and forests that can absorb carbon emissions, therefore an asset for the G20 in its pursuit of Climate Change goals. Above all, with the inclusion of Africa in G20, the global governance system becomes more inclusive, transparent and equitable. Africa is also trying to increase its voice and influence in the world by pursuing its engaging strategy.

The idea to incorporate Africa as proposed by India to expand the G20 is a great example of the pursuit of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. As India takes the responsibility to bring peace to the world by facilitating dialogue and policy reforms through the G20 platform, it is to focus on the collaborative action of all to solve common problems. Other actors' non-involvement in Africa has led to China's dominant footprint in every sector of the African continent with massive investment in infrastructure. This can be rationalized by making the AU a significant stakeholder in the G20 forum and giving way to Africa to access required investment and access to global power networks.

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India's G-20 Presidency and India-China Standoff

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Abstract

The 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi has become a matter of intensive domestic as well as global debate in recent times. New Delhi has shown a fine example of global leadership quality for which the global community has lauded India. How India's G20 Presidency will impact the regional equation is a matter of introspection. China has shown a sharp reaction to the issue of hosting of G20 event in Jammu and Kashmir implying that it has not taken this success easily. It is viewed that Chinese President Xi Jinping deliberately skipped the New Delhi summit in the backdrop of its border friction with India. Experts also advance that China will resort to pressure tactics and standoff tactics against India more in the coming days the way it acted in Doklam (2017) and Galwan (2020). The paper tries to understand whether India's G20 success will have any impact on China's Standoff tactics against India.

Keywords: G20 Summit, China-India border, standoff tactic, Global Leadership

Introduction

The Presidency of the Group of 20 or G20 by India has brought an unprecedented opportunity for New Delhi to showcase its global leadership capability. This is an occasion where India will keep trying to build up the culture of collective action and consensus building to deal with critical issues with global implications. This also brings opportunities for India to raise its voice against the discrimination faced by peripheral countries of the Global South and voice their concerns at the multilateral forum. India has advocated bringing the attention of the G20 Countries for the inclusion of various challenges for discussion in the agenda such as problems with macroeconomics and trade, issues having global impacts on development,

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climate change and energy, health, counter-terrorism, migration and refugees, etc. Thus, with the motto of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, or “One Earth - One Family - One Future” India has set its G20 agenda as “inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive.” This suggests that India wants to address issues of global implications through an inclusive approach. It believes in the approach of consensus building, mutual respect and multilateralism. Following these approaches New Delhi wants to guide the world towards new heights of peace, prosperity and stability while effectively tackling the contemporary challenges.

While India has set out for a greater global role with the aspiration to shoulder greater global responsibilities, the neighbourhood seems today a drag on its aspiration. In its neighbourhood, India is facing a tricky situation as China is expanding its presence and influence among its small neighbours, besides confronting India at the border. Since 2017, China has been frequently involved in border standoff tactics with India in various strategic locations viz., in Doklam and Galwan (2020). Though the standoff strategy as a pressure tactic against India by China is not new, such activities in the current circumstance are inappropriate as this is not an era of war. In both recent incidents, the two countries were almost on the verge of military escalation. Even though the G20 forum is not purely a mechanism to resolve geopolitical tensions, nevertheless, it provides a platform to introspect and act upon restoring global peace and resolve hostility by garnering global support. It was expected that India and China would soon overcome their differences and cooperate in the forum by leveraging the opportunity. China rather has been critical of India’s leadership and created a buzz within the Chinese strategic circles.

Perceptibly “China has shown obstructive behaviour so far during the G20 meetings and opposed several Indian G20 initiatives in the past year.” It took divergent views on almost all issues at G20 meetings in the run-up to the Summit. According to a report in *The Economic Times*, China had opposed the inclusion of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', the Sanskrit phrase from the Maha Upanishad which is the Indian presidency's G20 theme, in documents of the G20 energy ministerial meeting as well as other G20 documents. China argued that the G20 documents could not use the term 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' in the official text as it is in Sanskrit, which is not one of the six official languages recognized by the United Nations. Beijing has also objected to matters such as Mission LiFE (Lifestyle For Environment), women-led development, and MSMEs. It also reportedly obstructed discussions on tackling climate change at G20 meetings and did not participate at the tourism meet held in Srinagar. All these suggest that

“Beijing has reservations against India's leadership of the Global South.”
(*The Economic Times*, 06 September 2023).

Brief Strategic Past

China's critical perception of India and consequent activism is nothing new. For many decades, the Sino-Pak strategic nexus against India has been well known. In recent times, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project is another manifestation of their nexus that sufficiently impinges India's sovereignty. While China has resolved all its border disputes with other neighbours, it is deliberately unwilling to move forward. The trade relations is heavily tilted in China's favour and in every occasion and forum, China checkmates India. For example, China remains a stumbling block for India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), objects to ban Pakistani-based terrorists, etc. Undoubtedly it will be a huddle in India's prospect for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

In addition, India's proximity to the USA, its presence in the Indo-Pacific region and its association with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) is certainly not seen positively by China. From the economic, trade and strategic point of view, Indo-Pacific will remain a theatre of intense competition. With the increasing proximity of China and Russia recently, how India-China relations will evolve is a matter of conjecture. Largely China perceives India as a counterweight prepared by America. With the unfolding of the China-Russia-North Korea axis, how the global power equation will evolve and how it will impact the Southern Asian strategic situation would be a subject for academic introspection. Finally, the ghost of China's attack in 1962 still hunts their relationship and it will continue to do so for the foreseeable future, for the fact that Doklam and Galwan clashes have freshened up the bitter memories.

Standoff Tactics

The history of the 1962 war between India and China still reverberates and impacts every scope for cooperation between them. The unresolved boundary dispute between them impinges frequently upon their day-to-day dealings during the last few years, though for some decades their economic relations took centre-stage in their bilateral dealings. But with the Galwan incident, the border dispute is back to the fore and likely to hold attention for the foreseeable future. At present, both countries are led by strong political leaders backed by political stability. Meanwhile, despite border tensions, both are engaged in the economic sphere which is on an

upward trajectory. Therefore, many wonder what is the nature of strategic ambiguity between them.

As the geoeconomic fulcrum shifts from the West to the East, the Asian region is experiencing high economic growth rates. Also, from a strategic point of view, this region is very important. The 'rising China' and 'emerging India' are the two largest economies entangled with geostrategic competition in the region. China sides with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue and considers the issue as a drag on India's capability to control the region. It also enters economic/aid deals with India's neighbours primarily to encircle India in its periphery. But India's resolve to resolve the Kashmir issue and aggressive development of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh through legislative and infrastructural means seems to have not been viewed positively by China. Rather China tries to distract India with the border standoff technique.

Since 2014, China has been uncomfortable, and Beijing wants to keep the Pakistan-India tussle alive in South Asian geopolitics. China believes the Kashmir dispute is the key to influencing Indian policy-making. By analyzing the statements made by Chinese authorities in the last couple of years Beijing's stance on existing South Asian geopolitics can be understood. The anchor points of Sino-Pak 'all-weather' friendship are their mutual apprehension against India and the status of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Chinese authorities have repeatedly highlighted Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue on every international forum. China not only supports Pakistan on terrorism but also vetoed the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions to save Pakistani terrorists. Probably Chinese concern is that India and the US's strategic partnership can strengthen the base for the solution to the Kashmir problem. According to China, Kashmir is India's 'soft underbelly' which Beijing wants to manipulate to gain strategic advantage over India.

China's Real Intention

The rivalry between China and India to influence regional politics in South Asia has been an ongoing phenomenon. The tension built up at Doklam (Bhutan) by China and India's strong stand was just a reflection of China's design and India's resolve. The BJP-led government in New Delhi is pursuing the 'neighbourhood first' policy in which the immediate neighbourhood is the priority in India's strategic calculation. In 2014, PM Modi invited all the leaders of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries plus Tibetan leader to his swearing-in

ceremony which hints at the importance the Prime Minister himself gives to the region. India projects sincerely that it is an opportunity for the small neighbours instead of a threat. He also made several official visits to the neighbouring countries but that goodwill was short-lived, especially with Pakistan for its sponsor of terrorist incidents in India. Terrorism remains the greatest obstacle to regional peace. The current government in India has taken drastic steps to destroy the terrorist networks and their financial supply routes within and outside Kashmir. Both China and Pakistan have started to realize that the Kashmir issue is slipping from their hands and therefore, they look for all other opportunities to pull India down. While China attempts to continue with a border standoff on the Ladakh border, Pakistan remains busy harbouring terrorists, and the G20 forum could be a casualty of this nexus to sabotage India's presidency.

China's active participation is warranted in the G20 and India is looking forward to it. If China chooses to boycott, many issues will be left unaddressed and this will adversely affect India's reputation as a global leader who can build global consensus. Reportedly, Chinese analysts view that India might attempt to leverage the G20 summit to internationalize the China-India border dispute. On the other hand, analysts in India view that China is "trying to provoke India ahead of G20 Summit" by releasing "the 2023 edition of its "standard map" depicting Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin region occupied by it post 1962 war as part of its territory." (The Hindu businessline, 29 August 2023) The fact is, the India-China border situation remains tense, with both countries deploying significant troops and military assets near the disputed area. Though diplomacy is active in addressing the issue, negotiations have achieved very limited success. Therefore, it would be safe to assume that though China will behave according to international norms, Sino-Indian border tension might overshadow the G20 proceedings. If Chinese President Xi Jinping finally skips the Summit in New Delhi, it will hint that "China is deliberately not trying to resolve its border issues with India", says Fareed Zakaria.

Concluding Thoughts

As India gears up for its presidency of the G20, China needs to rethink its approach towards New Delhi. India's inclusive approach and consensus-based strategy have already attracted positive global attention. If China attempts to sabotage the process or attempts to hinder the consensus summit resolution outcome, it will certainly be singled out. Not only has India become the most important leader of the Global South but it has given

a clarion call to the world community to accept India's leadership cooperate for the larger interest of regional stability and shared global leadership. The aim should be working together to master, lead and give direction to the world rather than competing to checkmate. In their best interest, and for the interest of the entire region, China and India need to facilitate an amicable resolution of the border dispute, and Beijing should refrain from standoff and pressure tactics against India. What signals the Chinese premier's absence from the G20 Summit will convey can be an unending academic debate; many think that Xi's absence is purely for Chinese domestic political reasons, but certainly, this episode indicates future hurdles for border resolution in Ladakh.

India and G20: Ushering an Era of Peace

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Abstract

The end of the Cold War has witnessed the rise of players like Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa that at one time were on the fringes of shaping global politics. These regional powers have risen to prominence and have the potential to play a decisive role through groupings such as the G20 and BRICS, etc. While the potency of UN and multilateral agencies is inadequate, the expectation from modern groupings such as the G20 which is more inclusive has given rise to greater expectations, especially with India's ascendancy to the presidency. This paper is an attempt to analyse and explore the possibility as to how India can effectively use this opportunity to set a global narrative of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. The paper argues that India with its history of non-alignment, strong trade and diplomatic relations, and goodwill with developing countries positions India to leverage the G20 to arrive at a consensus on common problems like economics, environment, etc., that challenge the present world order. The vision of peace which is embedded in our tradition can be harnessed to influence nations towards a collaborative effort to address global challenges and conflict ushering an era of peace.

Keywords: G20, India's G20 Presidency, post-Cold War international system, African Union

The Context

In the background of the Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush drew attention to the possible ushering of a New World Order and in an address to the nation he stated that "we have before us the opportunity to

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forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order where the rule of law and not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of the nations” (Glass, 2018). The question was whether he was reaffirming the principles of the Atlantic Charter of a world in which “the principles of justice, freedom, democracy, free market, equal opportunity and fair play was to protect the weak against the strong” or was its rhetoric that conjured up visions of the start of a unipolar world of Pax Americana? (Patrick, 2019) Moreover, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the consequent end of the Cold War that for so long dictated a bipolar structure had certainly altered the state of the international system. But talk of a New World Order was intended to mean more than that, suggesting a change in the very nature of the system (Patrick, 2011).

Following the end of the Cold War, the emerging situation in Europe and the rest of the world has strengthened the need to revise and redefine the content of national security policies. The new security structure has lessened the traditional role of the military factor and is being substituted by a wider implementation of common security measures which seems to have become an imperative. The collapse of the Socialist ideology coincided with the acceleration of the process of globalization has witnessed increasingly growing interdependence among the states and the rise of new non-state actors like Multinational Corporations (MNCs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) calls for the use of methods of ‘cooperation’ (Nayar, 2006).

With the end of the Cold War, the global architecture has changed which witnessed the rise of new players like Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. These countries once on the receiving end of global politics have now emerged to play an influential role in shaping the new order (Hurrell 2019). While having augmented their influence in their respective regions, and their participation in groups such as the Group of 20 (G20) and Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), etc, they seem to be the most prominent emerging regional powers of the global South (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2009).

The post-Cold War has also witnessed a theoretical debate leading to the “broadening of the concept of ‘security’ beyond military consideration to include political, economic, societal, and environmental aspects” (Buzan, 1997). The most significant change in the 21st century has thus been the shift in focus from state security to ‘human security’, highlighting the particular vulnerabilities of people who suffer violence

from representatives of the state, as well as other forms of violence and injustices (Hama, 2017).

In addition, the post-Cold War seemed to usher in optimism of a new era, but the following decade witnessed these hopes dashed. We continue to live in a dangerous world, where a fresh crisis arrives as regularly as the morning paper. Although inter-state war have decreased there are several threats to international peace in several ways beyond the control of nation-states. Most notably, ethnic conflicts, religious militancy, terrorism, competition over scarce resources and unfair economic competition (Yilmaz, 2008). Furthermore, the pervasiveness of terrorism, intra-state conflicts and transnational crime has continued to pose a colossal threat to global peace and security. The world continues to witness terrorist activities, contagious intra-national conflicts as well as transnational criminal activities (Yilmaz, 2008; Hama 2017).

In the wake of the recent Russian-Ukraine conflict, China's increasing influence, a doubtful American hegemon, the repercussions of the pandemic and the continuing political and economic uncertainties, the world's scenario has become more complex. The effectiveness of the UN and multilateral agencies is inadequate; raising expectations from modern groupings such as the G20, which is more inclusive. Although this has exacerbated challenges for the G20, it has also given rise to greater expectations, especially with India's ascendancy to the presidency. India's leadership of G20 is an opportunity to set a global narrative of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" (DasGupta, 2023).

Although the G20 leader's forum was born in response to the global economic crisis, it has dealt with various political and social issues since its inception. These social issues have included food security, global health, corruption and climate change, among other reoccurring topics of concern. Indeed, the German hosts of the 2017 summit made explicit reference to "issues of global significance" such as "climate change, development policy, labour market and employment policy, the spread of digital technology and, topically, counter-terrorism" and noted that these issues "are often closely linked with economic questions" (G20, 2017).

The Indian presidency of G20 comes at a crucial stage. The world is still reeling from the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War. At this point, the narrative that India adopts and propounds shall have far-reaching consequences. It can utilize its position to effectively establish regional peace and stability. Contrary to the

notion that peace can be established in the absence of armed conflict, certain factors like the economic and social stability of the State also play important roles (Pant, 2022).

The G20 presidency places India on the high table where it will preside over the world's biggest forum for economic cooperation. Furthermore, being the leader of the countries that consist of the world's biggest economy with '75 per cent of international trade' and '60 per cent of the global population' implies that the leadership of and decisions of its members will have an overwhelming influence on the global economy and trade (Tandon 2022).

The post-Cold War international system is no longer dominated by any single power. The world today is highly interdependent both at the regional as well as the global level. India's non-partisan approach and the narrative adopted besides the widespread support that it has received enables India to not only secure its interest but also move beyond the narrative dominated by geopolitics and security. The continuing global policy and economic uncertainties though pose greater challenges to the G20 in general and India in particular, India's approach to steering differences towards dialogue and fashioning inclusive growth through consensus has been well received by countries of the Global South, thus providing India the political clout with emerging power. Furthermore, India with its history of non-alignment and strong trade and diplomatic relations with both the West and Russia and the goodwill with developing countries, positions itself to leverage the G20 to arrive at a consensus on common problems like economics, environment etc., that challenges the present world order (Sebastian, 2021).

India and International Peace: A Historical Background

On 24 October 2021, during the 82nd edition of the radio programme, '*Man Ki Baat*' the Prime Minister recalled India's effort toward the world. India has participated in the UN Peacekeeping mission has been associated with the UN even before its independence and has contributed to world peace and development (*Times of India*, 2021).

India has acquired the centre stage in terms of being the harbinger of justice, harmony and peace as it embarks on the 2023 G20 Presidency. The progress of India is an epitome of peace dates back to the history when Jawaharlal Nehru promoted the concept of the non-aligned movement and principles of *Panchsheel* (Chaudhuri, 2019). With the visionary leadership

of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, India embarked on a transformative journey by implementing liberalization policies. This strategic move marked a pivotal turning point, swinging open the doors to a multitude of investment opportunities and propelling India to new heights of growth and development which can be witnessed in recent times as well.

The policy of non-alignment and the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) has become a part of India's identity and such sentiments expressed by subsequent Prime Ministers. At the 16th NAM summit, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reiterated the faith in NAM and said that it still holds water in today's context. Further, underlining the relevance of NAM, he stated, "the Non-Aligned Movement was formed to try to save the world from a political and military rivalry that threatened to destroy it. We fought against the injustice of colonialism, and the arrogance of the Cold War. Our Movement made a significant contribution to widening circles of cooperation, peace and stability in the world. Our voice was heard with respect" (MEA, 2009). During the 16th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran, Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai said, "NAM remains as relevant today as when it was created (in 1961). We need to reinvigorate the movement for a greater focus on the issues of global governance, reform of international institutions, food security and energy" (IANS, 2012). The 'Non-Alignment 2.0' document published by the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), New Delhi, restates how strategic autonomy which is the defining value and continuous goal of India defined in the idea of non-alignment should continue to be the core of India's global engagement. Although the world has changed drastically and is full of uncertainties India must endeavour to renovate the same values and goals for the coming century (Khilnani 2012). India has thus rightly focused on the agenda of being inclusive, and collaborative based on the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (*Economic Times*, 2023).

Principles of Panchsheel

The enduring relevance of the Panchsheel principles in contemporary times remains evident. Panchsheel, deriving from Sanskrit, embodies five essential virtues known as "The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence." These principles serve as a guiding framework for governing interactions among nations. The foundational significance of Panchsheel played a pivotal role in the establishment of Indo-China diplomatic ties (Kumar, 2012). These principles are underpinned by mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, Mutual non-aggression

Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, Equality and mutual benefit as well as peaceful co-existence (MEA, GoI).

India holds the view that Panchsheel constitutes the bedrock of global order, with its principles serving as a fundamental cornerstone. Furthermore, Panchsheel has been instrumental in building and shaping international order. India explicitly stated "Only with coexistence can there be any existence.... We regard non-interference and non-intervention as basic laws of international behaviour" (MEA, GoI). The Panchsheel principles aligned with India's aim to uphold its autonomy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. India's primary objective was to establish equitable standing among nations and ensure defence against external aggressions.

Importance of Peace

The importance of Peace in global geopolitics cannot be overemphasised. In today's world where every country is involved in enhancing hard power i.e., using military capabilities to show its strength as well as the Cold War in terms of security, India is being hailed as a promoter of peace based on its values and norms. Especially, in recent times where the Russia-Ukraine crisis is on, the void of peace in international geopolitics can be felt. World War I and II bear testament to the fact that war can never be an option as it leads to loss of life, and humanitarian, and giving priority to peace should always be preferred. In general, wars are the costliest affair. President Woodrow Wilson put forward a 14-point plan aimed at achieving global peace. These principles subsequently served as the foundation for the peace negotiations (National Archives and Records Administration, 1918).

India's Diplomatic Efforts to Achieve Peace

The seizing of control over Afghanistan by the Taliban raised fundamental questions as to how peace could be achieved where the conflict posed a bleak future in terms of human rights violations, attacks and oppression of women, arbitrary detention, summary executions, internal displacement, and unlawful restrictions, etc., (OHCHR, 2022). Indeed, the daily reports of violence – including extra-judicial killings, disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture, heightened risks of exploitation faced by women and girls, and a breakdown in the rule of law – give us no confidence that the Taliban has any good intentions. (United Nations, 2022).

India believed in identifying the root causes of the conflict and in response in September 2020, at the intra-Afghan peace talks in Doha, it played a vital role in reaffirming the long-held Indian position that any peace process and reconciliation efforts should be “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled” (MEA, 2020), i.e., it has to respect the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and promote human rights and democracy (Roy, 2020). India was also one of the few countries to be involved in the Afghan Peace Negotiations initiated by the USA. This shows the changing geopolitical dynamics and India’s consolidated efforts to achieve peace at the global level.

India was very effective in stating that “this is not an era of war”. It is of dialogue and diplomacy amid the ongoing war in Ukraine (Parashar, 2022). India stated that “It is essential to uphold international law and the multilateral system that safeguards peace and stability.... This includes defending all the Purposes and Principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and adhering to international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians and infrastructure in armed conflicts” (PIB, 2023). The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible. The peaceful resolution of conflicts, efforts to address crises, as well as diplomacy and dialogue, are vital. Thus, it becomes imperative for India to uphold international law and the multilateral system that safeguards peace and stability in the region.

India’s importance as a mediator of peace talks is also recognised by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had said that New Delhi could play the role of a mediator between his country and Ukraine to end the ongoing conflict. He stated that “India is an important country. If India sees to play that role (mediator) which provides resolution of the problem, it can support such a process” (Gyaneshwar, 2022).

Although India’s foreign policy orientation has remained cautious, on several occasions it has been reactive and has engaged to shape the outcome of crises or conflicts. This is not the first time India has been involved in such peace negotiations. New Delhi has periodically engaged in international conflict mediation, both during the Korean crisis (1950) and the Vietnam crisis (1979). In both these conflicts, India assisted in peace-building initiatives through the use of non-traditional forms of peace-building, such as by containing the conflict and its escalation (Banerji, 2023). The Indian proposal at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for the termination of the Korean War was adopted resulting in the

formulation of the “Armistice Agreement”. As the chairman of the nine-member United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK), India under the chairmanship of KPS Menon was successful in conducting the election peacefully leading to a democratically elected government for the newly independent state of the Republic of Korea (Embassy of India, 2022).

India vehemently criticized the actions taken by the United States in the context of the Vietnam War. Additionally, India lent its support to Hanoi’s proposed “Four Points” aimed at finding a resolution to the Vietnam conflict. Concurrently, India's participation and role in overseeing the International Commission for Supervision and Control during the Vietnam War was a logical continuation of the policy of non-alignment. This involved active efforts to negotiate and manage the complexities of the conflict and for India this was an effort to build its global status as the only neutral power (ibid).

During the Korean War, India played a crucial role in mediating peace efforts on the Korean Peninsula. Despite lacking specific geopolitical interests in the region, India actively engaged major stakeholders like the US, USSR, and China. The year 1952 saw India's resolution on Korea adopted by the UN, reflecting its unique position of neutrality while believing in the reunification of the peninsula. India extended medical aid by deploying the 60th Parachute Field Ambulance Platoon—a mobile surgical hospital—to treat wounded soldiers, civilians, and prisoners of war (Banka, 2020). In 1950, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made substantial diplomatic efforts to prevent the conflict from escalating into a global war, emphasizing a swift ceasefire. After a series of unsuccessful attempts, India ultimately forged a widely accepted solution leading to the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953. Subsequently, an essential step was the formation of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) to determine the fate of over 20,000 prisoners of war from both sides (Herald, 2020).

India's role was pivotal as it assumed the leadership of the NNRC, with Poland and Czechoslovakia representing the Communist bloc, and Sweden and Switzerland representing the Western bloc. Working alongside the CFI (Conference of Foreign Ministers), the NNRC oversaw the gathering of non-repatriated prisoners into camps within the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). These prisoners were given the choice to return to either Korea or China, and India's leadership provided a neutral middle ground, acting as an intermediary for their transfer (Ramesh, 2018). India's

influence was notable in hastening the resolution of the conflict. By opposing a UN policy that could have prolonged or escalated the war, India effectively contributed to its intended conclusion (Herald, 2020).

Despite its subtlety, a statue at the North Korean border subtly pays tribute to this historical episode. Among the displayed flags is India's, with the saffron colour faded but the navy-blue Ashoka Chakra and green band remaining distinct. This period marked the Nehru administration's initial opportunity to apply its policy of neutrality as a promoter of global peace and also as a promoter of Panchsheel.

Furthermore, concerning terrorism, India has been constantly fighting the menace. Time and again India has found itself to be the victim of terrorism but it has actively advocated for the elimination of terrorism on multiple international forums. India has been a leader in representing the interest of the global south not for dominance but for giving a voice to the South to raise its concerns, not only in terms of countering China but also for equitable distribution of resources, a democratic world order, and better living conditions for all.

India and G20: Prospect Towards Peace

In November 2022, the Prime Minister unveiled the logo, theme and website of India's G20 Presidency. In the background of dominant narratives such as the balance of power, clash of civilisation, conflict that dominates and shapes the world-view India adopted the theme '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' – One Earth, One Family, and One Future. It is a universal maxim that conveys the idea that humanity is interconnected and emphasizes the importance of unity, compassion, and cooperation among all people. It is also the most "practical way to 'Recover Together', Recover Stronger" as expressed by the C20 (Civil 20, India 2023) Indonesia 2022. It helps us move from an "I-Them" approach to an "I-We" approach".

Addressing the US Congress in 2023, the Prime Minister reiterated the value of democracy which is rooted in the spirit of equality and dignity and stated India's belief in the spirit of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' and about India's engagement with the world for everyone's benefit (G20 India, 2023). The Prime Minister also called for a "global order that is based on respect for the UN Charter, peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. He further called for the revival of multilateralism and the reform of multilateral institutions, with better resources and representation" (G20 India, 2023).

While narratives such as ‘balance of power’, ‘clash of civilizations’, realism theory, etc., dominantly shape world views, there are also aspects that make our universe interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. Human society needs to align to this truth of co-existence. Therefore, the logo of G20 for 2023 reiterates the age-old Indian wisdom of ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ – One Earth, One Family, and One Future.

It is not a utopian ideal. It can be considered as a universal maxim whose purpose is not imposition, but to enable mutual respect and evolve human consciousness and society (Civil 20, India).

Furthermore, unlike the Cold War period where the global level dominated the regional level, in today’s world, the regional and global levels of interaction are highly interdependent. Beyond just the military and nuclear capability of one country having an impact on the decisions of another, this interaction also extends to crucial decisions on climate change, public health, energy, etc. However, without support from India’s regional groups, the emerging power might be seriously constrained in playing a global leadership role. Garnering widespread support is paramount in realizing India’s goal of being a key player in the global decision-making process. This prioritization would effectively create a rippling effect that can help secure Indian interests over a variety of factors, not just limited to military security (Bava, 2007). This includes the possibility of the G20 engaging with the United Nations (UN), especially about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established in 2015. Broadening of the agenda has been a source of consternation to some observers of the G20 who are concerned about the problem of the G20’s “mission creep” and have called for a refocus on the basic task of stabilising the global economy (UNDP 2019).

Currently, where the UN and the international multilateral agencies are found insufficient there is much expectation from groups such as G20, as it is more inclusive and less constrained by regional discourse. Furthermore, in a partisan world, India was seen as the possible arbiter or neutral peacemaker (DasGupta, 2023). Many issues – economic, social and political security – which were once largely dealt with at the local, national or regional levels are now global. India with a stable democracy and sound governance, albeit with some limitations, can deliver on key issues and as it rises to power there are speculations but also expectations that it will be able to change the global order (Ballawar 2020).

Furthermore, the G20 as a forum is known to recognise the importance of inclusive collaboration and collective action and will continue to be a

leading multilateral platform that holds a strategic role not only in economic growth and stability but also in political stability. Given India's non-aligned position, it can find a space as the organiser of a global coalition while also leading the Global South (Zeeshan, 2021).

Given the material power and the political will, India will also need to tailor its foreign policy to address concerns at both the regional level and those of the developing countries. It will have to navigate a delicate balance overcoming pressure from the US, Russia and even China while wading through issues at both international and national levels. While India tries to draw the world toward collective interest to ensure that global institutions are more effective it will have to also negotiate with the national interest of some states that could be hostile to global institutions (ibid).

For decades India has been a 'rule-taker' and the flagbearer of international cooperation but now it's capable enough to become a 'rule-maker' and uphold the norms and principles that meet the interest of states. To achieve this arduous task India will have to adopt a multilateral pro-active foreign policy and build its political presence and influence by being the solution to the global challenges. India has embarked on this journey and as it champions the virtue of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' and the priority placed on development and an inclusive global economy it would ensure a grand coalition that could promote good governance and peace (DasGupta 2023).

In the year 2020, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar launched a brochure outlining India's priorities as it campaigned to secure an elected seat on the UN Security Council. It stated that "India's approach will be guided by "Five S", as set out by the Prime Minister: Samman (Respect), Samvad (Dialogue), Sahyog (Cooperation), and Shanti (Peace), to create conditions for universal; and Samriddhi (Prosperity). It also stated that "India's overall objective during this tenure in the UN Security Council will be the achievement of N.O.R.M.S: a New Orientation for a Reformed Multilateral System" (MEA, 2020).

India bears a significant obligation to the international community—to leverage its national influence in support of the greater global welfare. The call for *Purna Swaraj* (or complete independence) in 1929, was a call for independence not only of the Indian people but but also the emancipation of others. This aligns with the aspirations of India's visionary leaders, spanning from Mahatma Gandhi to Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and from Jawaharlal Nehru to Subhas Chandra Bose find its reflection in the idea of

‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’. The struggle and ideal of our national leaders who aspired not for their freedom but for the freedom of all were message universal and global and have transcended boundaries, emphasizing a universal and worldwide outlook inspiring Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, etc.

While the world looks toward India with anticipation and hope, the G20 presidency provides India with an opportunity to embrace the vision of peace which is embedded in our tradition, and promote dialogue while addressing regional and global challenges by harnessing its capabilities and using its influence to foster collaborative efforts to global challenges and conflict.

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Book Reviews

Dipmala Roka, *Not An Accidental Rise: Harsh Vardhan Shringla*, New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2023, ISBN: 978-93-94915-47-3, pp. xvi+154, Price: Rs. 980.00.

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– **Sitakanta Mishra**

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India has produced several talented diplomats whose contribution to India's diplomatic journey has been immense. From V.S. Srinivasa Sastri to KM Panikkar to S. Jaishankar, Indian diplomats have “long enjoyed a justified reputation as among the world's best in individual talent and ability”, rightly says Shashi Tharoor. Since its independence, New Delhi has walked many tightropes on many global affairs but manoeuvred successfully to protect its national interests, largely owing to (besides other factors) its innovative diplomatic postures and the acumen of its high-calibre diplomats.

The book under review is a biographic sketch on the contribution of an Indian foreign service official, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, who will be remembered as a stalwart who “has never wavered in his commitment to doing his absolute best and never faltered in his determination to serve his nation”, as the author rightly observes. The author's academic curiosity about diplomacy, the pursuit of national interest and the role of diplomats is strongly discernible in each section of the volume. Dipmala Roka has anchored perfectly Ambassador Shringla's evolution in specific chapters how he was a frontline student with a cosmopolitan upbringing with a pan-Indian outlook (for he lived in cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, and Bangalore) and holistic education; as one of the youngest IFS officers (at the age of 22); a fated leader with humanity and inclusivity; a ‘perfectionist’ diplomat who undeniably one of the best-prepared persons

to hold the position of India's Foreign Secretary. The author narrates from the core of her heart that by virtue of his integrity and expertise, Ambassador Shringla was poised to rise to the helm of affairs in India's diplomatic establishment, not certainly by chance or 'accident'.

The first ten chapters (1-10) of the volume lucidly reveal Ambassador Shringla's life journey, starting from his childhood, school and college days, his cracking of Indian Foreign Service examination in 1984 and his postings in various capitals of the world with challenging assignments. It is obvious that as a student he was a voracious reader and fascinated by the subject of History during his higher studies at St. Stephen's College in Delhi. But it is interesting to know that Shringla was an 'avid hockey player' during his college years. Besides, he mastered multiple languages, both Indian and foreign, and remained deeply rooted to date in Indian culture with a composite social identity.

To begin his diplomatic career, the young IFS officer Shringla was assigned the French language to adopt, and in January 1986 he left for his first foreign assignment to Paris, France. As a junior officer, he joined his batchmate Atul Khare, and officers of the previous batch – Satish Mehta and Kuldeep Bharadwaj. Owing to the pressure to grasp the new language and a stint with UNESCO, he had "little time to appreciate the sights and sounds of Paris". Shringla's substantive foreign assignment started with his posting to Vietnam in February 1988 which remains for him a 'memorable tenure'. Subsequently, he became an integral part of India's diplomatic relations with Israel, USA, South Africa, SAARC nations, Thailand, etc. Also at home, he was assigned important portfolios, such as the Director (North), Joint Secretary of MEA Headquarters dealing with the SAARC Division, UN Political Division, and finally the BSM (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar) Division. During this period, he promptly played many tricky diplomatic roles. For example, in 2011, the constitutional crisis erupted in Maldives and President Nasheed sought refuge in the Indian High Commission which became a vexing issue between India and Maldives. Ambassador Shringla was sent to Maldives to deal with the situation and largely for his persistent efforts and rapport, Nasheed's safe release was ensured.

The list of Ambassador Shringla's diplomatic achievements, leadership skills, and organizational abilities is fairly long. His able coordination of India's aid to the Rohingya camps through *Operation Insaniyat*, his contribution to qualitative improvement in India-Bangladesh relations, overseeing the 'Howdy Modi' event in the USA by garnering

Congressional bi-partisan support, and most importantly the coordination of the largest evacuation exercise 'Vande Bharat Mission' (VBM) as India's Foreign Secretary during the COVID-19 pandemic are a few intriguing examples. In all these and many more, his administrative decisions as Foreign Secretary were 'quite striking' and visionary. Drawing from his "unusual depth and variety of multilateral experience", Shringla foresees significant changes in India amidst the changing geopolitics, characterized by 'disruptive dynamics'. He strongly feels that the UNSC is "frozen in time and needs to be reformed". He is of the strong opinion that "foreign policy should be intelligible", and "relevant to the actual requirements of the common man." (p. 130)

In the conclusion, the author straightforwardly states that the Ambassador's life is "one of evolution and constant improvement" and rightly, therefore, "the last word has not been written about Harsh Shringla." We have witnessed Ambassador Shringla's leadership and management skills during India's G20 Presidency, making it a grand success and will be codified in golden letters in India's diplomatic history. His personal life and professional career is an open book for everyone to draw lessons.

Lastly, the book is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the existing pool of literature on India's diplomacy/ foreign service, and a must-read for policy-makers, and diplomats. Especially for IFS aspirants, Ambassador Shringla is a reservoir of inspiration.

Ajay Singh, *The Architect of the New BJP: How Narendra Modi Transformed the Party* (New Delhi: Penguin/ Ebury Press, 2022), Price: 599.00, Page: 288, ISBN: 978-0670096961

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– **Suman Shingala**
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Every strong building is often appreciated for its strong roots and so are the organizational structures. To have a stronghold in the market they have a well-organized operational structure. After 67 years of Independence, India needed a leader who could put India on the world map. One of the fastest growing economies in the world, 5th largest economy in the world surpassing the UK in 2022. A country that holds a strong influential power over other countries with not just words but also its actions in one of the biggest crises the world faced in this century – COVID-19. India and its people have seen him in his rising years but a handful of them have seen him build this structure that now holds the biggest political party in a myriad country like India.

Ajay Singh pens down Prime Minister Narendra Modi's journey from a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) worker to working as a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) *Karyakarta* to Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001. An excellent guide to anyone wanting to know how Prime Minister Modi oversaw both the strategic and tactical aspects of the BJP's growth. The writer points out three basic tactics: one, with the help of full-time workers, loaned from the RSS, Modi helped build a superstructure of the BJP organization. Second, he urged "notables" from outside the Sangh fold to join the party so that they could appeal to a wider audience. Third, once Modi realized people were responding to him, he used his ability to move voters like none other, distilling ideas he had picked up on various assignments for the RSS.

The Prime Minister of India unequivocally proves that micro-management is not taught in books, it takes an eye to see the beauty in

details. The book covers key propositions by Ajit Singh of Modi's ability to successfully use party organizations as the interface between the people and what they want on the one side and the bureaucracy/government on the other side. Analysis Modi's organizational skills among the most important are: 1) Focused self-discipline expected of every member of his poor, religiously inclined Gujarati family to work together systematically for its well-being, and 2) His participation from the age of 8 in the daily meetings at the local RSS with its focus on self-discipline and building a cohesive nation within a Hindu cultural context.

Micromanagement of the Jagannath Yatra in 1987, the Ayodhya Rath Yatra of Advani in 1990 and subsequently EKTA Yatra in 1990-91 are the key notable areas where he was seen on ground levels managing not only the preliminary routes but also the emergency gateways. The writer came to know this name in BJP president Murli Manohar Joshi's Ekta Yatra (1990-91). (*'There is someone called Narendra Modi who is managing this yatra in an extraordinary manner.'* Though UP was then ruled by the BJP, with Kalyan Singh as CM, the police escort team found it difficult to penetrate the inner security ring of Joshi's cavalcade. *'Their volunteers are daredevils and drive their Maruti vans in such a manner that it is next to impossible to come near the vehicle carrying Joshi'*)

A believer in turning conventional wisdom on its head, he carefully planned strategy and not for the heck of it. His State-wise approach in Himachal Pradesh (HP), Uttar Pradesh (UP), Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Chhattisgarh, before he was a CM, is proof of it. With his rich understanding of the Indian masses during his wandering years in quest of spirituality and as a whole-timer in the RSS, Modi discovered that a leader would gain popularity and people's trust if he became a symbol of their aspirations.

The book particularly covers Gujarat and the workings of the government in the state from 1979, the Morbi flood and a spectacular relief operation carried out during that time. It was from there that people heard and appreciated the RSS. The dedication and commitment of the volunteers were shown in the form of reaching out to the people in need. This over time changed the way people looked at the organization considering its rumoured involvement in the assassination of Gandhi. The patience, foresight and perseverance of winning municipal elections in Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, and Rajkot to planning Nyat Yatra for people and from conceptualizing and structuring the inner strength of the party by using tools like *Chintan Baithak* and *Abhyasvarga* revealed his attention to detail.

The chapters are divided categorically focusing on Modi's involvement in and around India in chronological order. BJP won the Gujarat election in 1995 with Keshubhai Patel as CM. Modi by then was working on various fronts, mostly organizational programmes running all over the state. Developing a feedback system and keeping a tab on the workings of the party members. More time is given to record keeping of workers, strengths and weaknesses. BJP's cadre composition now included Other Backward Casts (OBCs), Dalits, and tribals. With Congress ceding the ground, it left a vacuum that was filled in by Modi. Trust was building, stepping stones were laid with Machhu Dam Disaster and AMC services, which were now visible to people.

Besides, Narendra Modi's lesser-known contributions are highlighted in the book. From setting up a base for volunteers to work in Himachal to his campaign in Madhya Pradesh "*ek vote mein do pradesh*" was rightly structured with the help of his cadres which went into intense training to understand and win over the people of MP. Often it is assumed that his rise is loosely connected to 'Hindutva' – but the outlandish paths he took to build the party's bases in different states will prove the opposite.

Based on extensive interviews with many party workers, leaders, observers and publishers the book uses its in-depth research and concrete examples to explain how the BJP has transformed over the decades. However, the book lacks a few predominant elements like the party's and Narendra Modi's involvement in international politics and its workings. Along with its relations with other existing political parties in India.

During his 14 years as Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi underwent many challenges from the party and the people questioning his means and methods. However, he started most of the developmental schemes that came in during his tenure. Starting from inviting industrialists to build their base in Kuchh after the aftermath to bringing in Nano and Gujarat Gaurav Yatra to Resurgent Gujarat, now known as Vibrant Gujarat and *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Abhiyan, Jaal Shakti Scheme, Krishi Mohatsav*, Gujarat International Financial Tec-City (GIFT), building of Narmada Dam and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel statue (Statue of Unity). It was his foresight and his understanding that he has to not only deliver to people but also be seen delivering that made him an international newsmaker. It was here where his larger-than-life persona started to grow into a plant.

In the later years, Modi can also be seen equating himself to the party as a whole while running his campaign as Prime Minister. His vision of building Gujarat based on three pillars: industry, service and agriculture gave it a balanced development with the extra mile to take care of micromanagement. “When political choices around the world are undergoing a tectonic shift, India, the biggest democracy, after a decade of political instability has finally completed a revolution as it returns to the system of one-party dominance.” India saw its leader rise in the year 2014.

This book is a must-read for all those seeking answers to questions regarding the BJP’s victory in 2014 and the persistence of its electoral success. Simply written with a reporter’s eye for detail, Ajay Singh profiles the political mind of Narendra Modi.

Urmi Satyan, *Cultural Sentiment and Diaspora Sensibilities: Reflections on the Select Anthologies by Bharati Mukherjee and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni* (YKING BOOKS: Jaipur, January 2023), Price: Rs. 1125.00, Page: 137, ISBN: 9789392240485

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– **Akshita Sinha**

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In the book under review, Urmi Satyan categorically says that “in a constantly changing geographical space that defines home, the dwelling of a diaspora is yet to be finalized, at least psychologically. The home accommodates culture, traditions, kith and kins and warmth. The space that accommodates one physically is not home but a space that comforts and inhabits one’s emotions in the home.” According to the author, the book *Cultural Sentiments and Diaspora Sensibilities (CSDS): Reflections on the Select Anthologies by Bharati Mukherjee and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni* is a delicacy for all readers with a penchant for diving deeper into the stories they read. The book delves into the psyche of every character that Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Bharati Mukherjee have created in their anthologies, *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* and *The Middleman and Other Stories*, respectively.

From the eleven stories in *The Middleman and Other Stories* to the nine in *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives*, Urmi Satyan presents an extensive study of the behaviours and beliefs of each of the characters and their narratives. Beginning with the life and journey of the authors themselves, the book encompasses the anthologies and the diasporic experiences spread around the world. As Urmi Satyan states, “By and large, diaspora narratives are centered on journeys across borders, cultures and psychological aspects. Diaspora narratives present the parallel action plan of dislocation (from the land of origin) and relocation (to home-like connection to the land of adoption)” (p: 123).

The book comprehends the journey of dislocation and relocation through the author's reflections on every plot and setting of the story. It is divided into five sections. The first chapter "Introduction" sets the tone for the book by explaining the theories about culture, ethnicity, assimilation, immigration, and identity, through a scholarly lens and thus provides holistic and well-argued information that enhances our comprehension of the concept of 'Diaspora'. Like the pleating of a saree, the author brings together all the stories from the anthologies in the next two sections, titled (1) Home, Culture and Identity in Diaspora: *The Middleman and Other Stories* and (2) Home, Culture and Identity in Diaspora: *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives*. These chapters introduce the plot and setting of the stories and critically evaluate the process of cultural adoption and its associated emotions.

The fourth chapter, titled, "The Cultural Crossroads: A Search for Home and Identity" explores the dilemma that every migrant and diaspora faces, irrespective of their intention, choice, wish or way of becoming one. The author says that "When an ethnic culture encounters or collides with the foreign culture, sparks of feelings of displacement, loneliness, non-belongingness, rootlessness are the most probable as result. As the initial stage, the diasporic, rooted in his ethnic culture is just like the seed that is sown into an unsuitable land. The processes of adoption and adaptation are continuously under the process of learning the new way of life." (p. 109) This chapter is based around the metaphorical crossroad where the characters get stranded – be it Panna, Alfred, Jasmine, Jason or Maya (from *Middleman and Other Stories*) and Leela, Dutta, Monisha, (from *The Unknown Errors of Our Life*). They are indefinitely stuck between the push and pull of the host and home countries. The author of CSDS deliberates upon this cultural crossroad and its associated conflict, situations, and experiences that are uniquely similar irrespective of the differences in there, perhaps, the most poignant similarity in all the characters.

Through this journey, the book reaches its 5th chapter, "Conclusion" which is divided into four subsections and thus covers the four major points, generally found in the diasporic narratives. The subsections like (1) Objectification of Women, (2) Derogatory Remarks on Indian and Hindu Gods, (3) Immigrants' Desperate Attempts to be Americanized and (4) Exploration of Women's Inner World guide the readers to catch hold of cultural sentiments and diaspora sensibilities that a diasporic experience.

The book contains fine observations such as the differences and similarities in the female protagonists of Chitra Banerjee's and Bharati

Mukherjee's stories. The difference in experiences of the first and second generations of migrants is also brought to the surface. There is a wide gap in characteristic features in Chitra's traditional and Bharati's flamboyant characters. Chitra's fictional cohort is socially conscious whereas Bharati's are materialistically conscious. Chitra's characters are morally grounded whereas Bharati's entangled characters can't even think about morality (p. 122). It is really interesting to read the foreword where the author of *CSDS* draws parallels between a life of a diasporic and a life of an Indian married woman. Just like a diaspora, an Indian girl also moves away from her parental home to her husband's home and experiences the tug of war between making a "home away from home".

The language used throughout the book is simplistic, focusing more on the text than its ornamentation, and yet it has a flow and rhythm to it that keeps the reader engaged. The author uses phrases such as "... seesaw image between past and present, developing and developed country; rural town and ultra-modern city; simple and a stylish lifestyle" (pp. 4, 9, 30, 90, 102, 111, 113) more than once, to help the readers experience the 'here' and 'there' aspect of migration. Additionally, the book mentions intertextualities about the concepts scattered around the stories as well as the interviews, academic discussions, and comments on the original texts by the authors as well as the academic scholars. Quotations and excerpts from scholars such as Uma Parmeshwaram, Amitav Ghosh, Jerome De Groot, Gurbhagat Singh, Geoffrey Chaucer, Usha Bande and many others are carefully chosen with precision to enhance and support the author's claims and opinions. In her discussion over the *Unknown Errors of Our Lives*, a story in the book of its namesake, Satyan presents two poems by the poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal titled 'Assimilation-No!' and 'Integration-Yes!' and explains the very essence of assimilation and integration to the culture of the host land. The author brings attention to the need and existence of hybridity/heterogeneity of identity. She also quotes Jerome De Groot stating: "*The memories that the diaspora inherits and collects through experiences communally frame the diaspora Identity. And it is this connection that fine-tunes between ethnic and adopted identities and eventually helps frame a hybrid identity.*" (p. 105)

The author displays the subject of the diaspora in literature by portraying how crucial the role of ethnicity is in constructing an identity in the diaspora. The author cites published works such as E.S. Lee's study of E.J. Ravenstein's Laws of Migration, Push and Pull theory of E.S. Lee, history of the term diaspora from ICSSR in 1993 to Roben Cohen's features of diaspora identity, ethnicity as explained by Werner Sollors, Frederic

Barth, Ashcroft. The author's presentation through the Ethnicity and Identity Construction model facilitates the understanding of these concepts adequately.

Aptly named, the book reflects upon the stories from *The Middleman and Other Stories* that have startling and open endings that speak for the ambiguous social surroundings that they are dropped into. As Urmi Satyan states: *The use of open endings becomes a technique by which to emphasize the pressures, excitements and uncertainties of the present moment. Mukherjee's use of first-person narration here allows for interiority and access to her characters' thoughts. (CSDS: 120) Cultural Sentiments and Diaspora Sensibilities* smoothen the edges of the abrupt beginnings and ambiguous endings of most of Mukherjee's short stories. Every story has a reference to context. This is either a social, cultural, political, economic, historic and also, sometimes, psychological. *Buried Lives* has a political context to the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983-2009) (p. 54). *The Forgotten Children* has a socio-cultural context with the "We two, Our Two" or "hum do humare do" slogan (p. 91). While doing so, the author also pays attention to the point of view of the protagonist, through the conscious as well as the analytical aspect of a reader. As is seen in her explanation of the female protagonist Maya from *The Tenant*, in *The Middleman and Other Stories*, Urmi Satyan writes: *For Maya, Brahmin isn't a caste; it's a metaphor. "You break one small rule and the whole constellation collapses"*. This satirical sentence shows how much she is annoyed by the fact that traditional people are intolerant and irrational about insignificant things. (p. 47)

The author explores the vital psychological aspects of the stories. For the story *Fathering* from *The Middleman and Other Stories*, she states, *"With the tool of a fictional story of Eng- an estranged child and her father, Mukherjee points to the fact how offspring of the migrant families lack proper upbringing and eventually suffer from chronic loneliness. We see in the present story that nature (biological inheritance) and nurture (environmental factors) affect Eng's personality."* (p. 48)

In *The Management of Grief*, the readers are introduced to David Kessler and Elizabeth Ross's Grief Management Model, for a greater understanding of the process of grief in humans. (p. 60) In *The Intelligence of Wild Things* from *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives*, she says, *The disparity between the twofold lives develops a rift which grows with every experience she (Monisha) passes through. Her husband's and brother's*

indifference to her love and her inability to live up to her mother's expectations give her a feeling of insignificance. (p. 75) Hence, the readers are introduced to the inner psyche of the characters with additional knowledge regarding relevant concepts.

The author brings attention to how women play a crucial role as “the carriers of culture” in constructing a diaspora identity. *Women have the innate ability to nurture and thus to protect nature. A woman's basic potential is to protect her surroundings – of culture and customs and thus to render her care and service for the elevation of the same.* (p. 120) In these stories, home, family and society play an important role. As highlighted by the author of CSDS, through her analysis of the female protagonist Monisha in *The Love of A Good Man for Whom, what is more startling is to find the problem of gender inequality as all-pervading. Monisha's bewilderment raises a question of gendered space for women in society. Despite being a multitasker, multidimensional and multitalented, a woman has to compromise the wishes, expectations and priorities.* (p. 83)

The author also opines that linguistic differences affect the process of cultural assimilation and linguistic match may work as a bridge point between two cultural spaces. In a nutshell, the book focuses on the concepts of assimilation, integration, gender differences, culture, identity, alienation as a few of the important concepts Chitra Banerjee and Bharati Mukherjee have presented through their stories. The female protagonists have gone through assimilation and integration as a process of diaspora. It picks up on the colonial mindset of the ‘starry-eyed wonder’ that Asians possess towards Western countries. The author writes “*Western countries have succeeded in enchanting the Asians. Non-invited, unwelcomed and even non-familiar by/to the Western world, the diasporics start dreaming and worshipping ‘the stars and stripes’.*” (p. 92) For assimilation, the author states with emphasis: *The complexity of the process of assimilation depends upon the way the migrants adopt and adapt to the 'other' land.* (p. 94) She also stands up for the complexity of the diasporic experience, *The transnationalism, multilingualism, and sometimes traumatic history of such (Mukherjee's) characters complicate any oversimplified notion of assimilation.* (p. 121)

The book ends with a strong conclusion about the trio of two authors and their female protagonists that construct the pillars for the cultural sentiments and diaspora sensibilities – the essential aspects of being, diaspora. Hence, it's a piece of literary analysis that tracks the journey of diaspora, from dream to reality; be it the relentless tug of war between two

existences, the need for belonging, the desperation for acceptance into the mainstream or/ and the feeling of nostalgia. Most importantly, it portrays the evolving nature of a migrant who evolves through the process of diaspora and acquires a prismatic identity. Change is an inherent part of life, and it applies to various aspects, including definitions and identities. Experiences often bring new perspectives to existing meanings. Thus the present book *Cultural Sentiments and Diaspora Sensibilities* illustrates this by expanding upon how diasporic experience enriches identity and culture and adds diverse influences and experiences to create a more fulfilled narrative.

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