

India's G20 Presidency: Contemporary Challenges in the Emergent Multipolar World**Jagdish Bhagwat Phad**

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E-Mail: Jagdishphad911@gmail.com**Abstract:**

The G20, which includes 19 major economies and the European Union, has developed into one of the most dominant economic and financial groupings. The group initially focused on financial and socio-economic issues. Nowadays, areas under G20 comprise broader issues including energy security, poverty and hunger, health, climate change, green energy, counter-terrorism, and digital economy.

India has become G20 president for the first time. India's G20 presidency is not without challenges. Food insecurity, poverty, environmental degradation, energy insecurity, terrorism, and instability due to the Russia-Ukraine war are some of the challenges before India. To realise its commitment to 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', India should invest in the G20 so that the developing world and developed industrialized economies work together to make the world a more beautiful, inclusive, and sustainable place.

Keywords: India, G20, Ukraine, Climate Change, Russia, the US, NIEO, WTO, Digital Economy, Biodiversity, Pandemic.

Introduction:

India's philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" inherent in ancient Sanskrit, means "The world is one family". This philosophy corresponds with the theme of its G20 presidency- 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. India's G20 presidency has significantly improved its position as a global leader. India has become G20 president for the first time in the history of the group. India's G20 presidency period is from December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023.

With its leadership capabilities, emergent economy, progress in the sector of Science and technology, and commitment to environmental wellness, India is committed to the well-being of the group and the world as a whole. Currently, as a president, India is aiming for various areas like inclusive and sustainable growth, climate change adaptation, digital economy, and universal health access.

India's G20 presidency is not without challenges. The COVID-19 catastrophe is not over yet, though for over 12 months the pandemic has

been on a downward trend. Additionally, the Russia-Ukraine war has created instability in the world. In this research paper, India's G20 presidency and various contemporary challenges will be discussed.

Contemporary Challenges Before India:**Russia-Ukraine Conflict:**

The most serious challenge before the Indian presidency is the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 astonished the whole world. Since then, there has been a constant fear of the use of nuclear weapons in this war. Apart from this, the war has further intensified food insecurity and disrupted the global supply chain.

As far as this conflict is concerned, New Delhi has adopted a public neutrality towards Russia. It has abstained from successive votes in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and General Assembly that condemned Russia's aggression in Ukraine territory and thus it has maintained friendly relations with Russia. India's position on the Ukraine war has been described as "strategic ambivalence." India could use its cordial relationships with the Western countries and historical ties with Russia to resolve ongoing crisis and bring key stakeholders together around the

same table. India can carry on humanitarian assistance in Ukraine and simultaneously maintain good relations with all-season friend.

Post-Pandemic Recovery:

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to drugs and medicines, vaccines, and health check-ups has become fundamental to the G20 agenda. Due to the Aarogya Setu and Co-WIN platforms India could track the virus' spread and administer 2 billion vaccines. Considering the size and density of the population, India has been one of the most successful countries limiting the further viral outbreak.

G20 members approved the establishment of a Joint Finance-Health Task Force to further strengthen coordination between Finance and Health Ministries in pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. Creating Global health architecture was one of the key priorities of the Indonesian Presidency (2022). As a current G20 president, India can work to make post-pandemic global health governance more inclusive and democratic.

Debt Distress:

According to the UNCTAD report named 'A World of Debt: A Growing Burden to Global Prosperity', global public debt has enlarged more than five times since 2000. According to the UNCTAD, 'many countries are facing a dilemma regarding whether to serve their debt or human population.' This very day, more than 3 billion people in the world live in countries that expend more on interest returns than on education or health. The report recommends "Tackling the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress, massively scaling up affordable long-term financing for development, and expanding contingency financing to countries in need" to improve the debt situation.

Food Insecurity, Poverty and Hunger:

According to the World Bank report, between 75 and 95 million additional people could be living in extreme poverty in 2022 and 255 million lost their jobs because of the Covid-19 pandemic. At present, most of the G20 countries are not on track to achieve the SDG goals of poverty alleviation, zero hunger, and prevention of malnutrition. The pandemic has demonstrated the need for resilient and sustainable agriculture and the peaceful coexistence of humans, and other living beings. India under its

G20 presidency can focus on areas like food availability, sustainable agriculture, and universal access to nutritional food.

Currently, India is one of the top 10 exporters of agricultural products. India can work for inclusive and accessible food and plantation of nutritional crops like pulses, drought-resistant cereals, and dairy products. As president of G20, India must ensure compliance of all the countries with food security liabilities. India became a part of the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) along with Japan and Australia in 2021. India can make food more affordable and accessible and set an example for the world.

Climate Change:

The G20 countries have a strong economic interest in limiting global warming due to climate change's negative impact on their economy and development. The Group has repeatedly restated the timely implementation of international climate agreements and related national commitments. The G20 countries called for the ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. The Sherpa track, which is led by representatives of heads of state, established a dedicated working group, the G20 Hamburg Climate and Energy Action Plan for Growth, on climate and energy in 2017.

Though the G20 countries are committed to minimizing the negative consequences of climate change, the post-Covid-19 data shows that the G20 countries are not on track to achieve their climate commitments and to advance the transition, they need to work expeditiously bound by their liabilities and commitments.

Green Energy:

India is committed to clean and sustainable development. The Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy and Power has informed that "the installed renewable energy capacity in India has increased from 115.94 GW in March 2018 to 172.00 GW in March 2023, i.e., an increase of around 1.48 times." The G20 supports the transition to efficient, adaptable, and clean energy development mechanisms. Almost all the G20 members have significantly increased their renewable energy capacity.

At the COP26 of the UNFCCC in November 2021, the Prime Minister of India announced that

India will achieve the target of net zero emissions by 2070. India's growing nuclear power capacity and the optimum utilization of recently explored lithium ores will ensure its commitment to sustainable development. India has been closely observing trends in renewable energy. India is keen to adopt green hydrogen and lithium as clean and less polluting fuels. To minimize the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, renewable energy share needs to be increased expeditiously.

Digital Economy:

The Digital Economy Working Group, established in 2021 through the Sherpa Track, extends broad guidance to policymakers on harnessing the digital capabilities of economies. This Working Group aims to strive for digital transformation to strengthen public participation and realize inclusive growth. India has been a leader in the world of digital technologies and products. G20 countries are keen to adopt breath-taking innovations like UPI. India can bring together all the democracy during its presidency and exhibit its technology and digital products.

Balancing the ties with Russia and the United States:

As far as the Russia-Ukraine conflict is concerned, the Indian government has adopted a public neutrality towards Russia. It has abstained from successive votes in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and General Assembly that condemned Russia's aggression in Ukrainian territory and thus it has maintained friendly relations with Russia. Since the Russia-Ukraine war, India's relations with the European countries and the US were on a downward trajectory. India needs to work closely with Russia and the US to avoid further controversy and mistrust.

Changing Geopolitical Dynamics after the Rise of China:

Any action that bolsters India and other democracies in the "Global South" helps to check the aggressive nature of China. Amitabh Kant who is a G20 Sherpa of India during its Presidency called India "the spokesperson of all the Global South." According to him, "India has a huge capacity of bringing the world together and leading the world in developmental and geopolitical issues." Chinese President Xi Jinping skipped the G20 summit for the first time since he became president in 2013. India

should work along with the US and Europe to decipher how to successfully counter China on the world stage. The presidency of G20 is significant for India given the changing geopolitical dynamics with the rise of China.

Demand for New International Economic Order (NIEO):

The G20 Presidency is an opportunity for India to become the leader of the 'Global South'. Asian, African, and Latin American countries have faith in India. These countries share the same commitments and aspirations as India. The establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) can prove a revolutionary step for developing countries. India together with developing countries must demand a mutual respect for the sovereignty of a country, regulation of multinational corporations (MNCs), technology transfer, and democratization of international financial institutions.

Conclusion:

India's G20 presidency comes at critical times, when the Russia-Ukraine war is still an ongoing conflict, and the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on societies and economies are far-reaching. India has a prime responsibility in addressing these challenges as a country highly pledged to the multipolar world and standing for justice, inclusiveness, and equity in the global governance complex.

As the world's largest democracy, the country with the highest human resources, and the third largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity, India will contribute significantly to speedy, inclusive, and sustainable development and make its presidency more meaningful and purposeful. It is an opportunity to exhibit India's growth and development besides its rich art and culture and diversity of people as well as the natural world.

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