



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

INDIA'S ROLE IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: NAVIGATING MULTILATERALISM IN THE 21st CENTURY

Author: Aruhi Sharma

B.A Political Science (Hons.) Amity Institute of Social Sciences (AISS)

Amity University Noida

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the evolving role of India in global governance and its engagement with multilateralism in the 21st century. As the world's largest democracy and one of the fastest-growing economies, India has emerged as a key actor in global affairs, particularly in addressing critical issues such as climate change, terrorism, and economic inequality. The study traces India's historical trajectory in global governance, from its post-colonial commitment to non-alignment to its current, more assertive participation in prominent international organizations like the United Nations, G20, and BRICS.

Through a qualitative analysis of India's diplomatic strategies and its contributions to multilateral institutions, this research explores the complexities of India's approach to global governance. Key themes examined include the role of India's soft power, the influence of domestic political factors, and the challenges arising from regional tensions. Furthermore, the study highlights gaps in existing scholarship, specifically the need for more thorough investigations into India's soft power, its sector-specific contributions to global governance, and comparative analyses with other emerging economies.

The paper's findings emphasize India's leadership in shaping global governance structures and its growing influence in fostering international cooperation. In navigating the complexities of multilateralism, India aims not only to assert its global standing but also to represent the interests of developing nations. This research adds to the ongoing discourse on global governance and multilateralism, providing valuable insights into India's strategies and the challenges it faces as it strengthens its position on the world stage.

Keywords: Global Governance, Multilateralism, Foreign Policy, United Nations, G20, BRICS, Sustainable Development, Vaccine Diplomacy, Digital Governance

INTRODUCTION

In an era defined by rapid globalization and intricate global interconnections, the landscape of global governance is experiencing profound changes. The 21st century has witnessed the rise of new global power dynamics, with emerging economies challenging the longstanding dominance of Western powers. India, as one of these rising players, stands out by leveraging its position as the world's largest democracy and one of the fastest-growing economies to expand its influence in international affairs. With global issues such as climate change, terrorism, and economic inequality becoming ever more urgent, India's role in multilateral efforts has increasingly drawn the attention of both scholars and policymakers.

India's historical involvement in global governance has been shaped by its post-colonial identity and its dedication to principles like non-alignment and sovereignty. Traditionally, India's foreign policy has focused on maintaining autonomy in international relations while advocating for the interests of developing nations. However, the shifting global power dynamics, especially the rise of China and the reordering of global influence, have led India to adopt a more proactive and assertive approach within multilateral forums. This shift reflects India's ambitions not just to participate in global governance but to actively influence and shape its structures.

India's engagement with key international organizations, such as the United Nations, the G20, and BRICS, highlights its commitment to working together with other nations to tackle global challenges. Through these platforms, India has consistently advocated for inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, and fair representation of developing countries in global decision-making. However, despite its growing prominence, India faces significant challenges, including regional tensions, internal political factors, and the need to strengthen its soft power.

This paper aims to examine India's multifaceted role in global governance, focusing on its strategies and contributions to multilateralism in the 21st century. By analyzing India's involvement in international organizations and its diplomatic efforts, this study seeks to provide insights into how India navigates the complexities of global governance while addressing both domestic and international challenges. Additionally, this research will highlight gaps in the existing literature, laying the groundwork for future studies that can enhance our understanding of India's evolving role in global affairs.

In conclusion, as India continues to assert its influence in global governance, it is crucial to understand its strategies, challenges, and contributions in order to better grasp the broader trends in multilateralism today. This paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discussions about India's role in shaping global governance frameworks and its potential to lead in tackling critical global issues.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To analyze the strategies employed by India in its pursuit of a more significant role in global governance and multilateralism.
2. To assess the challenges and opportunities that India encounters in its diplomatic engagements and multilateral initiatives.
3. To evaluate the impact of India's leadership and participation in global governance frameworks on international cooperation and policy outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

India's role in global governance has become an area of substantial scholarly interest, particularly due to its growing involvement in multilateralism. This literature review highlights key themes and findings from studies that examine India's diplomatic strategies, its engagement in international organizations, and the challenges it faces in an evolving global environment. India's historical involvement in global governance is rooted in its post-colonial identity and its commitment to non-alignment. Basu (2020) asserts that India's foreign policy has traditionally prioritized sovereignty and self-determination, which has influenced its

approach to multilateralism. The author emphasizes that India's participation in the Non- Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War set the foundation for its current diplomatic strategies, allowing it to navigate complex international relations while preserving its autonomy. As global dynamics have shifted, particularly with the emergence of new economic powers, India has adapted its strategies to increase its influence in multilateral spaces. Kumar (2022) highlights that India's active participation in forums such as the G20 and BRICS reflects its desire to play a more prominent role in shaping global governance. India's leadership in these platforms is not just a reaction to external pressures, but also an expression of its aspirations to collaboratively address global issues. India's involvement in multilateral organizations has centered on addressing critical global challenges like climate change, terrorism, and economic inequality. Chatterjee (2021) explores India's role in regional multilateralism, suggesting that India strives to balance cooperation with competition among its neighbors while asserting leadership in South Asia. The study underscores India's efforts to foster regional stability through initiatives such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and its engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Rao (2023) examines India's leadership in the G20, particularly during its presidency, which has allowed India to advocate for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. The author contends that India's role as G20 president provides a crucial opportunity to influence global economic governance, addressing issues like digital transformation and climate finance. Rao's analysis highlights the importance of India's diplomatic initiatives in shaping the agendas of major international forums.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite its growing influence, India faces numerous challenges in its pursuit of a more significant role in global governance. Kumar (2022) identifies regional tensions, particularly with Pakistan and China, as major obstacles to India's diplomatic efforts. The author stresses that India's ability to manage these challenges will be vital for its success in multilateral engagements. Additionally, the literature underscores the need for India to strengthen its soft power and diplomatic capabilities to effectively shape global governance. Chatterjee (2021) suggests that India can enhance its influence through cultural diplomacy and by engaging with the Global South. By leveraging historical ties and shared values with developing countries, India can bolster its credibility and increase its influence in international decision-making processes.

RESEARCH GAP

Although there has been substantial scholarly work on India's involvement in global governance and its role in multilateralism, several key areas remain underexplored, offering opportunities for further research. This section outlines the main gaps in the existing literature.

- 1. Comprehensive Analysis of India's Soft Power** While some studies have briefly addressed India's soft power and cultural diplomacy, there is a lack of detailed analysis on how these factors enhance India's effectiveness in multilateral platforms. Most research has focused on India's hard power and economic capabilities, overlooking the significant role that India's cultural heritage, democratic values, and historical relationships with other countries play in its diplomatic influence (Chatterjee, 2021). A more in-depth exploration of soft power could offer valuable insights into India's strategies for engaging with global governance.
- 2. Impact of Domestic Politics on Foreign Policy** Another important gap is the insufficient examination of how India's domestic political landscape affects its foreign policy and multilateral engagement. Although some studies touch on the influence of political leadership and party ideologies, there is a need for deeper analysis on how changes in domestic politics, public opinion, and civil society involvement shape India's foreign strategies (Kumar, 2022). A better understanding of these internal dynamics could provide a more comprehensive view of India's approach to global governance.
- 3. Regional Perspectives and Comparative Analysis** Many studies focus on India's role in global governance from a national standpoint, often neglecting the regional context and comparisons with other emerging powers. There is a clear need for research that examines how India's strategies in multilateral forums compare with those of countries like Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia, especially in the context of groups like BRICS and the G20 (Rao, 2023).

Comparative studies could reveal differing approaches to global governance and highlight best practices.

4. **Longitudinal Studies on India's Evolving Role** Given the rapidly changing global environment, there is a need for longitudinal studies that track India's evolving role in global governance over time. Much of the existing literature offers a snapshot of India's current strategies and contributions but lacks a historical perspective that considers how past events and decisions have influenced its current role (Basu, 2020). Long-term studies could help identify patterns, successes, and challenges in India's diplomatic efforts, offering valuable lessons for future policy-making.

5. **Sector-Specific Analyses of Global Governance Issues** Although India's general contributions to global governance are well-recognized, there is a lack of research focused on specific global challenges, such as climate change, health security, and digital governance. Studies that investigate India's leadership and initiatives in these particular areas could provide a more detailed understanding of its role in shaping global governance frameworks (Kumar, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach, centered on an extensive review of existing literature, including academic articles, policy papers, and reports, that explore India's involvement in global governance. Key references will be works by Basu (2020), Chatterjee (2021), Kumar (2022), and Rao (2023), which offer valuable insights into India's diplomatic approaches and participation in multilateral organizations. The analysis will include case studies on India's leadership in global initiatives, such as its role in climate negotiations and its involvement in the G20. Additionally, the research may feature interviews with international relations experts to gather varied perspectives on India's changing role in global governance, enhancing the analysis of its influence on the global system.

India's Historical Engagement in Global Governance Post-Colonial Identity and Non-Alignment

- **Historical Context:**

- After gaining independence in 1947, India sought to establish its sovereignty and identity on the global stage, heavily influenced by its colonial past. This legacy fostered a commitment to principles such as self-determination and non-interference in the affairs of other nations.

- **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):**

- India was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, which aimed to carve out a third path during the Cold War, separate from the Western bloc led by the United States and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union.

- The NAM promoted the idea of maintaining independent foreign policies and advocating for the interests of developing nations. Through its leadership in this movement, India became a prominent voice for the Global South, supporting decolonization and economic development.

- **Principles of Foreign Policy:**

- India's foreign policy was shaped by core principles such as non-alignment, peaceful coexistence, and support for anti-colonial movements. These guiding tenets influenced India's approach to global governance and its interactions with international organizations.

Evolution of Foreign Policy

- **Early Years (1947-1960s):**

- In the initial years following independence, India concentrated on nation-building and economic development. While domestic issues were prioritized, the government also aimed to establish a significant

presence in international affairs.

- India played a crucial role in the formation of the United Nations and actively engaged in discussions surrounding disarmament, peacekeeping, and human rights.
- **The 1970s and 1980s:**
 - The 1970s marked a period of assertiveness in India's foreign policy, highlighted by the nuclear test in 1974 (Smiling Buddha) and a focus on regional security.
 - India sought to strengthen its relationships with other developing nations and continued to advocate for disarmament and economic equity on the global stage.
- **Post-Cold War Era (1990s):**
 - The conclusion of the Cold War brought about significant changes in the global order, prompting India to reevaluate its foreign policy. The economic liberalization of the 1990s led to a more pragmatic approach, emphasizing economic growth and strategic partnerships.
 - India began to engage more actively with global institutions, aiming to reform international financial organizations and enhance its role in entities like the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- **21st Century Developments:**
 - In the 21st century, India has increasingly positioned itself as a key player in global governance. The rise of emerging economies and the challenges posed by global issues such as climate change, terrorism, and pandemics have led India to adopt a more proactive approach in multilateral forums.
 - India's involvement in the G20, BRICS, and other international organizations reflects its ambitions to shape global governance and advocate for the interests of developing nations.
- **Current Foreign Policy Framework:**
 - India's contemporary foreign policy is characterized by a balance between strategic autonomy and active participation in multilateralism. The "Act East" and "Neighborhood First" policies demonstrate India's commitment to strengthening relationships with neighboring countries and enhancing its influence in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - The focus on sustainable development, climate action, and digital governance in India's foreign policy aligns with its broader objectives of promoting inclusive growth and addressing global challenges.

India's Current Role in Global Governance

Overview of India's Global Engagement

India has increasingly established itself as a significant player in global governance, participating actively in numerous international organizations and forums. This involvement is characterized by its strong commitment to multilateralism, sustainable development, and the promotion of peace and security. As of 2025, India is a member of several influential global bodies, including the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the G20, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This growing involvement reflects India's expanding influence and its aspiration to actively shape the frameworks of global governance.

Digital Governance & Cybersecurity

India has become a significant force in digital governance, particularly in the realms of financial technology and cybersecurity regulations. With more than 1.4 billion Aadhaar-linked digital identities, India's biometric-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) facilitated \$1.7 trillion in transactions in 2024 (Reserve Bank of India, 2024).

On the global stage, India is championing the cause of data sovereignty, advocating for fair data-sharing standards at the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF). In terms of cybersecurity, India has partnered with the U.S. and the EU in the Global Counter-Ransomware Initiative (GCRI) to tackle digital crime.

pace Diplomacy & India's Leadership in Outer Space

India's space program has gained significant influence in global discussions on space security and exploration. After becoming the first country to land successfully on the Moon's south pole with Chandrayaan-3 in 2023, India has leveraged this milestone to advocate for a UN-supported framework that ensures fair space resource-sharing. Moreover, its participation in the Artemis Accords (2024) demonstrates India's dedication to peaceful and cooperative space exploration.

Contributions to Global Governance

- **United Nations:** India has served multiple terms as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), with its most recent term spanning from 2021 to 2022. During this period, India concentrated on critical issues such as counter-terrorism, maritime security, and advocating for reform within the UNSC to ensure better representation of developing nations. India has consistently pushed for a permanent seat on the UNSC, arguing that the current structure does not accurately reflect the geopolitical realities of the contemporary world.
- India's growing role in global governance is evident through its economic and policy contributions. By 2024, the country was responsible for approximately 7.5% of global GDP growth, positioning it as a key economic driver among G20 nations. Trade between India and G20 members reached \$1.2 trillion, marking a 15% rise compared to 2020 (World Bank, 2024).
- In climate leadership, India's National Solar Mission has driven a 450% surge in solar power capacity since 2015, accounting for 30% of global solar energy additions between 2017 and 2023 (IEA, 2023). Additionally, India's advocacy for debt relief within the G20 has enabled the restructuring of over \$150 billion in debt for low-income countries (IMF, 2024).
- **Climate Change Initiatives:** India has made significant strides in addressing climate change by committing to reduce its carbon emission intensity by 33-35% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, as part of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. The country aims to establish 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030, focusing heavily on solar and wind power. By early 2025, India had already installed over 200 GW of renewable energy capacity, positioning it as one of the leading nations in renewable energy production. Additionally, India launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to promote solar energy and foster collaboration among solar-rich countries.
- **Global Health:** India has made notable contributions to global health governance, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. As one of the largest vaccine producers globally, India provided over 200 million doses to more than 100 countries through initiatives like the Vaccine Maitri program. This effort not only underscored India's critical role in global health security but also reflected its commitment to assisting developing countries during times of crisis.

Economic Contributions

India's economy is anticipated to become the third-largest globally by 2030, making it a major contributor to global economic growth. As of 2025, India's GDP is estimated to be around \$3.5 trillion, cementing its position as a vital player in international trade and investment. Key statistics include:

- **Trade:** India's trade with G20 nations amounted to approximately \$1 trillion in 2024, illustrating its growing economic influence and increasing ties with global markets. This trade covers diverse sectors, such as technology, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products. India has also participated actively in regional trade agreements, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), although it chose to opt out of the final agreement in order to protect its domestic industries.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** India has attracted considerable foreign direct investment (FDI), with inflows totaling \$81 billion in 2020-2021, positioning it as one of the top destinations for global

investors. The Indian government has implemented reforms to improve the ease of doing business, making the country even more attractive to international investors.

Table 1: Foreign direct investment inflows and major sectors in India (2020–2024)

Year	FDI Inflows (USD Billion)	Major Sectors
2020	81	Technology, Services
2022	85	Manufacturing, IT
2024	92	Green Energy, Infrastructure

Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India (2025)

Challenges and Opportunities

While India has made remarkable contributions to global governance, it faces several challenges:

- **Geopolitical Tensions:** India's relationships with neighboring countries, particularly Pakistan and China, remain fraught with tension. Ongoing territorial disputes and regional security concerns present significant diplomatic hurdles for India, limiting its ability to project power and influence in the region.
- **Domestic Issues:** India is confronted with a range of internal challenges, including poverty, inequality, and social unrest. Addressing these issues is vital for enhancing the country's credibility and effectiveness in global governance.
- **Global Power Shifts:** The rise of other emerging economies, particularly China, presents both challenges and opportunities for India. While competition is evident, there is also room for collaboration in areas such as climate change and economic development.

Despite these challenges, India has opportunities to take a leading role in initiatives focused on peacebuilding, sustainable development, and climate action. Its active participation in forums such as the G20 and BRICS enables India to advocate for the needs of developing nations and promote a more equitable framework for global governance.

Current Statistics

- **UN Peacekeeping:** India remains one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, with over 5,000 personnel deployed across various missions as of 2025. Since 1948, India has participated in more than 50 UN peacekeeping operations, contributing to international peace and security. Indian peacekeepers have served in a wide range of capacities, including military, police, and civilian roles, helping stabilize conflict-affected regions.
- **Trade:** India's trade with G20 nations reached approximately \$1 trillion in 2024, signaling its growing economic influence and expanding ties. The trade covers numerous sectors, such as technology, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and agricultural products. India has also been a key player in regional trade agreements and initiatives aimed at enhancing economic cooperation among member states.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** India attracted FDI inflows of around \$81 billion in the fiscal year 2020-2021, making it one of the top global destinations for foreign investment. The Indian government's reforms to improve the ease of doing business have further bolstered its attractiveness to foreign investors.

Case Study: India's Leadership in COVID-19 Vaccine Diplomacy

India played a pivotal role in promoting global vaccine equity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Vaccine Maitri initiative, the country distributed over 250 million vaccine doses to 98 nations, including low-income regions in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America (WHO, 2023). This initiative reinforced India's leadership in global health governance, with the WHO recognizing its contribution in addressing

vaccine shortages at the height of the pandemic.

- **Case Study: India's G20 Presidency and Global Financial Reforms**

As the G20 president in 2023, India championed the creation of a Global Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) framework, advocating for secure and accessible digital finance systems. The proposal gained support from 18 countries and was implemented in pilot programs across Africa and Southeast Asia (World Economic Forum, 2024).

- **Renewable Energy Capacity:** As of early 2025, India has reached over 200 GW of installed renewable energy capacity, positioning itself as one of the world's leaders in renewable energy. The country has set an ambitious goal to achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, emphasizing its commitment to sustainable development and addressing climate change.

- **Global Health Contributions:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, India supplied over 200 million vaccine doses to more than 100 countries through initiatives like the Vaccine Maitri program. This initiative reinforced India's status as a key player in global health security and underscored its commitment to supporting developing nations during health emergencies.

- **Participation in International Organizations:** India is actively involved in several key international organizations, including the G20, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Within the G20, India has engaged in discussions on global economic governance, climate change, and sustainable development, reinforcing its growing influence in shaping international policies.

3. Evaluation of India's Influence on Global Governance Frameworks and International Cooperation

India has progressively solidified its position as a leading actor in global governance, playing a crucial role in shaping international cooperation and policy outcomes across various sectors. This section delves into the impact of India's participation in global governance frameworks, highlighting the nation's contribution to key international issues such as trade, peacekeeping, climate change, health security, and digital governance.

India's Role in the United Nations (UN) Security Council Engagement:

India has long advocated for reforms within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), pushing for a more representative structure that better reflects the global power balance. As part of its diplomatic goals, India has continued its bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC, citing the need for greater inclusion of emerging powers, particularly from the Global South.

- **Non-Permanent Membership:** India has served as a non-permanent member of the UNSC on multiple occasions, including during its recent tenure from 2021 to 2022. India's priorities during this time included tackling terrorism, ensuring maritime security, and promoting reforms in the UNSC to reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century.

- **Counter-Terrorism:** India has used its position to emphasize a global approach to countering terrorism, particularly following the 2019 Pulwama attack. India has called for stronger actions against state-sponsored terrorism and for the establishment of a comprehensive international legal framework.

- **Maritime Security:** Given India's strategic location, India has pushed for international cooperation in maintaining the safety of vital shipping lanes, emphasizing the need for a stable maritime environment to support global trade.

Peacekeeping Contributions:

India is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, with over 250,000 personnel deployed since 1948. As of 2025, more than 5,000 Indian peacekeepers are actively engaged in various missions worldwide. India's involvement underscores its commitment to peace and security.

- **Military and Civilian Roles:** Indian peacekeepers serve in various roles, including military, police, and civilian capacities. Their contributions in conflict zones such as Lebanon, South Sudan, and the Golan Heights have been instrumental in maintaining stability and providing humanitarian aid.

India's Influence in the World Trade Organization (WTO)

India is an active participant in the WTO, advocating for a global trading system that favors developing economies. The nation has consistently pushed for policies that create a more inclusive environment, especially for agricultural trade and dispute settlement mechanisms.

Advocacy for Fair Trade:

India has continuously championed the needs of developing nations within the WTO, with a focus on agricultural subsidies and market access for the Global South. India's advocacy efforts are reflected in its stance on ensuring that trade rules do not hinder the developmental aspirations of emerging economies.

- **Development-Centric Trade Policies:** India has called for special and differential treatment for developing countries, emphasizing the importance of policies that account for the specific needs of emerging economies.
- **Dispute Resolution:** India has actively used the WTO's dispute settlement system to challenge trade barriers and defend its interests. Notably, India has contested agricultural subsidies from developed countries, which it believes disrupt global markets and undermine developing nations' competitiveness.

Reform Proposals:

India has proposed key reforms within the WTO to make it more responsive to the needs of developing countries. These include improvements to the dispute resolution system and ensuring that the Doha Development Agenda, aimed at reducing trade imbalances, is fully implemented.

India's Role in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)

As a founding member of BRICS, India has been instrumental in promoting a more balanced global economic order. The BRICS forum provides India a platform to advance the interests of emerging economies, particularly in areas like trade, finance, and infrastructure.

Economic and Political Contributions:

India has been a key player in shaping the BRICS agenda, particularly in terms of development financing and global economic governance. India was a driving force behind the creation of the New Development Bank (NDB), which focuses on funding infrastructure projects in developing countries.

- **Development Initiatives:** India has advocated for initiatives that promote equitable growth and greater representation for emerging economies in global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Policy Coordination:

India has used BRICS summits to push for reforming international governance structures, including the United Nations and other global institutions. India's leadership in BRICS reflects its desire to promote a multipolar world order that fosters collaboration and addresses common global challenges.

India's Influence in the G20

India's role in the G20 highlights its growing influence in global economic governance. As the world's fifth-largest economy, India plays a central role in shaping discussions on economic growth, climate change, and international trade.

Leadership in Global Economic Policy:

India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 was a significant milestone, where it led discussions on post-pandemic recovery, sustainable development, and global financial reforms. Under India's leadership, the G20 focused on promoting an inclusive global economy that addresses the needs of developing nations.

- **Climate Finance and Digital Transformation:** India has been a vocal advocate for increasing climate finance to help developing countries transition to green energy. It has also emphasized the importance of bridging the global digital divide, advocating for digital infrastructure and equitable access to technology.

India's Engagement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

India's participation in the SCO enhances its strategic engagement in Central Asia and its focus on regional security and economic cooperation.

Regional Security Cooperation:

India has been an active participant in the SCO's security framework, particularly its efforts to combat terrorism and extremism in Central Asia. The SCO provides India a platform for discussing regional stability, aligning with countries like Russia and China on matters of mutual concern.

- **Counterterrorism and Regional Stability:** India's contributions to the SCO's counterterrorism efforts have been critical in addressing regional security challenges, particularly in Afghanistan and neighboring countries.

Economic Integration:

India has used the SCO to foster economic cooperation with Central Asian nations and has promoted regional connectivity projects, including the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which aims to improve trade routes between India, Iran, and Russia.

India's Climate Change Leadership

India has been a strong advocate for climate justice, emphasizing that developing countries must not be disproportionately burdened by climate change mitigation efforts.

Paris Agreement and Renewable Energy:

India has made significant commitments under the Paris Agreement, including a target to reduce its carbon intensity by 33-35% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. As of 2025, India has over 200 GW of installed renewable energy capacity, aiming to reach 500 GW by 2030.

- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** India launched the ISA to promote solar energy globally, particularly among countries that receive high levels of sunlight. This initiative has fostered collaboration among solar-rich nations and helped to drive investment in renewable energy technologies.

India's Climate Commitments vs. Achievements

Table 2: India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement and current status (as of 2025)

Commitment	Target Year	Status (2025)
Reduce carbon intensity by 33-35%	2030	On track
500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity	2030	200 GW achieved
Net-zero emission	2070	Long-term goal

India's Global Health Contributions

India's pharmaceutical industry has been a cornerstone of global health security, especially in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vaccine Diplomacy:

During the COVID-19 crisis, India's Serum Institute became the world's largest producer of vaccines, and India distributed over 200 million vaccine doses through its **Vaccine Maitri** program, benefiting over 100 countries.

- **Health Security Contributions:** India continues to play an integral role in global health governance, supporting global health initiatives through its leadership in the World Health Organization (WHO) and its involvement in various health diplomacy efforts.

India's Digital Governance and Technological Innovations

India has pioneered several digital governance initiatives that have influenced global policy frameworks.

Aadhaar and UPI Systems:

India's **Aadhaar** identity system and **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** have revolutionized access to financial services and digital governance. These innovations are now being studied and implemented by other countries seeking to create inclusive digital infrastructures.

Cybersecurity and Global Cooperation:

India is also working toward enhancing global cybersecurity norms. It participates in various international forums and dialogues on cybersecurity, emphasizing the importance of a secure and open cyberspace for global development.

India has made substantial contributions to global governance across multiple sectors, including peacekeeping, climate action, trade, health, and digital governance. By actively engaging in multilateral forums such as the UN, WTO, G20, BRICS, and the SCO, India has shaped international policy and fostered cooperation on key global issues. While challenges such as regional tensions and domestic development concerns persist, India's leadership role continues to influence global decision-making, positioning the country as a key player in addressing contemporary global challenges.

Challenges and Opportunities Facing India in Global Governance

India's role in global governance has grown significantly over the past few decades, but it faces several challenges that may affect its ability to achieve its desired influence in multilateral forums. At the same time, the evolving global landscape presents numerous opportunities for India to expand its leadership role in shaping international policies and frameworks. This section discusses the key challenges and opportunities India encounters in its diplomatic engagements and multilateral initiatives.

Geopolitical Tensions and Security Concerns

India's foreign policy is heavily influenced by regional security dynamics, particularly its relationships with neighboring countries like Pakistan and China. These ongoing tensions pose substantial challenges to India's diplomatic efforts and global governance objectives.

Pakistan:

- **Long-standing Border Disputes:** India's relationship with Pakistan is primarily shaped by their long-standing territorial disputes, notably over Kashmir. The conflict has often resulted in heightened military tensions, impeding cooperation on broader regional issues.

- **Cross-border Terrorism:** Pakistan's alleged support for terrorism and insurgency in Kashmir remains a significant point of contention. India's efforts to combat terrorism on both national and international fronts have been complicated by Pakistan's resistance to taking action against non-state actors operating within its territory.

China:

- **Border Disputes and Military Standoff:** India's relations with China have been affected by their unresolved border issues, leading to periodic military standoffs, such as the 2020 Galwan Valley clash. This has raised concerns about regional stability and has made it challenging for India to fully engage with China in multilateral settings, particularly in forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).
- **Strategic Competition:** The rise of China as a global superpower, coupled with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has increased strategic competition in Asia and globally. India's opposition to the BRI and its growing strategic alignment with countries like the United States, Japan, and Australia through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) reflects its apprehension over China's growing influence.

Despite these tensions, India has sought to manage its relations with both neighbors through diplomatic channels, regional cooperation, and multilateral forums. However, the challenge remains in balancing these regional issues while asserting its role on the global stage.

Domestic Development Challenges

India's domestic challenges, including poverty, inequality, and political instability, impact its ability to project soft power and leadership in global governance. Addressing these internal issues is crucial for India's long-term success on the international stage. India's aspirations for leadership in South Asia face challenges, especially within SAARC, where regional diplomacy remains fraught with tensions, particularly between India and Pakistan. These ongoing disputes have hindered the organization's effectiveness, limiting its capacity to promote substantial economic cooperation.

In response to China's expanding regional presence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India has strengthened its ties with BIMSTEC and ASEAN. Additionally, India introduced the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) at the 2023 G20 Summit, which is viewed as a direct counter to China's infrastructure-driven diplomatic efforts.

Poverty and Inequality:

- India remains home to a significant portion of the world's poorest population. While the country has made substantial progress in poverty reduction over the past few decades, income inequality continues to pose a challenge, undermining the potential for inclusive growth.
- The ongoing disparity between urban and rural areas, along with unemployment and underemployment, remains a critical issue. These internal disparities often affect India's ability to advocate convincingly for inclusive development on the global stage.

Social Unrest and Political Stability:

- India faces sporadic social unrest due to factors like caste discrimination, religious intolerance, and regional tensions. Political instability at times can impede the government's ability to adopt consistent foreign policies.
- The ongoing debates around economic and labor reforms, particularly related to agriculture and labor laws, have sparked protests. These issues sometimes divert attention from foreign policy priorities and can undermine India's credibility in advocating for stability and peace globally.

India's ability to address these domestic issues will determine its credibility and effectiveness as a global leader. Economic growth and political stability are essential for strengthening its voice in global

governance.

Global Power Shifts and Emerging Economies

India's global influence is shaped not only by its own capabilities but also by broader shifts in the global power structure. The rise of other emerging economies, particularly China, Brazil, and South Africa, presents both challenges and opportunities for India.

Competition with China:

- **Strategic Rivalry:** As China continues to expand its influence across the globe through initiatives like the BRI, India faces a strategic rivalry that often puts it at odds with China, especially in forums like the UN and the G20. India is concerned that China's increasing economic and military power might marginalize India's own standing in key global governance institutions.
- **Regional Influence:** China's growing influence in Asia, especially in Africa and Central Asia, competes directly with India's own regional ambitions. India's response has been to strengthen alliances and economic partnerships with countries that are similarly wary of China's growing dominance.

Collaboration with Other Emerging Economies:

- **BRICS and the Global South:** India's engagement with other emerging economies, especially through forums like BRICS, provides an opportunity to shape the future of global governance. India has been able to forge strong partnerships with Brazil, Russia, and South Africa to push for reforms in global institutions that better represent the Global South.
- **Leadership in the G20:** As the world's fifth-largest economy, India's leadership in the G20 allows it to advocate for policies that promote inclusive economic growth and development. India's efforts to include the voices of developing countries in the G20 agenda, particularly on issues such as climate change and digital transformation, are a step toward countering the dominance of Western economies.

India's ability to leverage its relationships with emerging economies will help it secure a more prominent role in shaping the global economic order.

Climate Change and Sustainable Development

India's position on climate change reflects its commitment to sustainable development while balancing the need for economic growth. As a country facing the severe impacts of climate change, India has been proactive in addressing environmental issues on the global stage. However, this presents both challenges and opportunities.

Although India has made significant strides in global governance, some scholars argue that regional geopolitical tensions and internal policy inconsistencies hinder its overall effectiveness. Critics point to India's decision not to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2020, viewing it as a move toward protectionism rather than a step toward greater economic globalization (Kumar, 2024).

Furthermore, India's push for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform has faced opposition from permanent members such as China and the U.S., who see its bid for permanent membership as a potential source of instability. Additionally, while India's per capita carbon emissions remain lower than those of developed countries, they have been steadily rising, drawing criticism despite the nation's commitments under the Paris Agreement (Climate Watch, 2023).

Challenges:

- **Development vs. Climate Action:** India's rapid economic growth is dependent on energy-intensive industries, and its reliance on coal has contributed to environmental degradation. Balancing the need for development with environmental concerns remains a key challenge.
- **Climate Finance and Technology Transfer:** India has advocated for climate justice, urging

developed countries to meet their financial commitments to climate action under the Paris Agreement. India has also called for increased access to climate technologies to help developing countries transition to a low-carbon economy.

Opportunities:

- **Leadership in Renewable Energy:** India has become a global leader in renewable energy, particularly solar power. The country's ambitious renewable energy goals, including the target to install 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, position it as a key player in the global push for sustainable development.
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** India's launch of the ISA has allowed it to take a leading role in promoting solar energy globally, particularly among developing countries. The ISA is an opportunity for India to foster international cooperation on clean energy.

India's leadership in sustainable development, if paired with increased global cooperation on climate finance, could transform the country into a key global advocate for climate justice and green technology.

Opportunities in Digital Governance and Technological Innovation

The digital economy and technological innovation present significant opportunities for India to expand its influence in global governance. India has made strides in digital infrastructure and technology that have international implications.

Digital Infrastructure:

- India's **Aadhaar** program, a biometric identification system, is one of the largest of its kind globally and has become a model for other nations in terms of identity management. Additionally, the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** has transformed digital payments, making India a leader in digital financial inclusion.
- India's leadership in digital governance initiatives provides it with an opportunity to influence global discussions on digital economy policies, cybersecurity, and data governance.

Technological Diplomacy:

- India has increasingly positioned itself as a key player in global technological innovation, particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity. India has actively participated in shaping global norms around digital governance and data privacy, contributing to forums like the G20 and the UN.

India's ability to leverage its technological advancements will enhance its global influence, especially as the digital economy continues to shape international governance frameworks.

India's diplomatic engagement and its contributions to global governance come with several challenges, including geopolitical tensions, domestic development concerns, competition with rising powers like China, and the complexities of addressing climate change. However, these challenges also present significant opportunities for India to shape the future of global governance. By leveraging its leadership roles in multilateral organizations, engaging with emerging economies, and advancing its interests in areas like digital governance and sustainable development, India is poised to assert itself as a key player in global policy and decision-making. Addressing these challenges effectively will enable India to navigate its role in a rapidly changing international order and help redefine global governance frameworks in the 21st century.

India's Future Prospects in Global Governance

Strategic Positioning in a Multipolar World

India is increasingly asserting itself as a pivotal player in the evolving multipolar global order, leveraging its economic growth, strategic partnerships, and technological advancements to influence international relations. Through active participation in forums such as BRICS, the G20, the Quad, and the Shanghai

Cooperation Organization (SCO), India enhances its diplomatic leverage. By balancing relations among global powers and prioritizing issue-based coalitions, India aims to strengthen its strategic positioning and influence global governance structures.

Leveraging Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

India's rich cultural heritage and democratic values position it as a global leader in soft power. Initiatives like the International Day of Yoga and the establishment of the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies in Mumbai aim to enhance India's cultural diplomacy. Bollywood, Ayurveda, and spiritual traditions further contribute to India's global appeal. By expanding cultural diplomacy, strengthening educational collaborations, and enhancing people-to-people ties, India seeks to solidify its global influence and contribute meaningfully to multilateral engagements.

Addressing Global Challenges through Leadership

India has demonstrated leadership in tackling global challenges such as climate change, public health crises, and economic instability. As a key proponent of sustainable development, India played a significant role in shaping the Paris Agreement and continues to advocate for equity in global climate policies through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance (ISA). In public health, India's vaccine diplomacy during the COVID-19 pandemic showcased its capability to provide humanitarian aid. By advancing global cooperation on emerging threats like cybersecurity, terrorism, and economic inequality, India aims to cement its role as a responsible global leader.

Expanding Regional Influence in South Asia and Indo-Pacific

India's strategic interests lie in ensuring stability and prosperity in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. As a dominant power in South Asia, India has strengthened regional cooperation through initiatives such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Additionally, India's active role in the Indo-Pacific through engagements with ASEAN, the Quad, and regional security frameworks underscores its commitment to a free and open maritime domain. Strengthening economic partnerships, security alliances, and regional connectivity are key to India's leadership in these regions.

Institutional and Policy Reforms for Future Leadership

To enhance its role in global governance, India is actively pursuing institutional and policy reforms. The country is engaged in ongoing Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) on United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reforms, working alongside other reform-oriented countries to build support for the expansion of the UNSC. Domestically, economic and legal reforms aim to improve India's global competitiveness and align with international standards. Strengthening multilateral cooperation through active participation in UN reforms, WTO negotiations, and international financial institutions is also crucial for India's aspirations for global leadership.

Strategic Areas for India's Global Leadership

India can establish itself as a leader in several strategic areas, including:

- **Technology and Innovation:** Advancing digital governance, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity cooperation.
- **Sustainable Development and Climate Action:** Promoting renewable energy and advocating for equitable climate financing.
- **Trade and Economic Diplomacy:** Enhancing participation in global trade agreements and supply chain diversification.
- **Peace and Security:** Strengthening counterterrorism efforts, nuclear non-proliferation, and regional stability.
- **Public Health and Humanitarian Assistance:** Expanding global health initiatives and vaccine

diplomacy.

- **Reforming Multilateral Institutions:** India should collaborate with emerging powers like Brazil, Indonesia, and South Africa to advocate for structural changes at the UN and WTO.
- **Expanding Climate Diplomacy:** Creating an Indo-Pacific Climate Finance Mechanism could further strengthen India's commitment to sustainable development.
- **Boosting Regional Connectivity:** Advancing trade and infrastructure initiatives under BIMSTEC and QUAD to counter China's influence.
- **Strengthening Cyber & Digital Governance:** India should push for a UN-supported global digital regulatory framework to promote fair AI and data governance practices.
- **Developing an India-Africa Partnership:** Strengthening diplomatic and trade ties with African countries, following China's approach but emphasizing sustainable investment strategies.

India's future in global governance is shaped by its ability to navigate complex multilateral frameworks, leverage its strategic advantages, and contribute to global problem-solving. By reinforcing its diplomatic influence, expanding regional leadership, and driving reforms in international institutions, India aims to emerge as a formidable force in shaping the 21st-century world order. Its commitment to a rules-based, inclusive, and multipolar global system will define its role as a leading power in global governance.

CONCLUSION

India's role in global governance has evolved significantly, transitioning from a policy of non-alignment to proactive engagement in international institutions. As a key member of organizations such as the United Nations, G20, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization, India has demonstrated its commitment to addressing critical global challenges, including climate change, economic disparities, security concerns, and global health crises. Its growing economic stature, coupled with its strategic diplomatic initiatives, has positioned it as a strong advocate for the interests of developing nations, particularly in reshaping global governance structures to be more inclusive and representative.

However, India faces several challenges in its pursuit of a greater role in global governance. Geopolitical tensions with China and Pakistan, internal socio-economic disparities, and competition from other emerging economies pose obstacles to its diplomatic ambitions.

Additionally, India's push for structural reforms in global institutions, such as its long-standing bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, requires navigating complex international power dynamics. Overcoming these challenges will demand a balanced approach, combining assertive foreign policy with cooperative multilateral diplomacy.

Despite these hurdles, India's future in global governance looks promising. Its leadership in sustainable development, digital innovation, and regional security presents new opportunities to expand its influence. By strengthening regional partnerships, deepening its engagement in economic and security frameworks, and leveraging its technological advancements, India can solidify its position as a key player in shaping global policies. Furthermore, India's growing role in climate action, particularly through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance, and its contributions to global health security through vaccine diplomacy highlight its potential to drive meaningful change on the international stage.

As the global order shifts towards multipolarity, India is well-positioned to shape the future of international governance by championing the interests of emerging economies, advocating for institutional reforms, and fostering global cooperation. By striking a balance between national interests and international responsibilities, India has the potential to become not only a major geopolitical power but also a driving force in creating a more equitable and inclusive world order.

REFERENCES

1. Basu, S. (2020). India's foreign policy in the 21st century: Global governance and strategic autonomy. Oxford University Press.
2. Chatterjee, A. (2021). Multilateral diplomacy and India's role in the global order. Cambridge University Press.
3. Das, R. (2019). India and the United Nations: Security, peacekeeping, and reform debates. Routledge.
4. Gupta, P. (2022). India's engagement with BRICS and the global South: A strategic perspective. Springer.
5. Jain, M. (2020). Economic multilateralism and India's position in global trade institutions. Palgrave Macmillan.
6. Kumar, R. (2022). Emerging powers and global governance: India's role in the G20 and WTO. SAGE Publications.
7. Menon, R. (2023). India and climate diplomacy: Leading the fight against global warming. Harvard University Press.
8. Mishra, V. (2021). India's quest for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council: Prospects and challenges. *Policy Studies Journal*, 49(2), 245–268.
9. Nair, S. (2023). India's digital diplomacy: Leveraging technology for global influence. Taylor & Francis.
10. Pandey, T. (2020). India's security policy: Navigating regional and global threats. Brookings Institution Press.
11. Patnaik, A. (2022). India's engagement with the Indo-Pacific: Strategies and implications. *The International Affairs Review*, 45(3), 310–333.
12. Rao, K. (2023). India's leadership in the G20: Economic governance and policy impact. *Economic Policy Journal*, 28(4), 420–440.
13. Sen, D. (2021). India and the international financial system: IMF, World Bank, and beyond. Princeton University Press.
14. Sharma, P. (2022). India's energy policy and global governance: The role of the International Solar Alliance. *Renewable Energy Studies*, 15(1), 150–175.
15. Singh, H. (2019). India's peacekeeping missions: Contributions to global security. *Journal of International Security*, 36(2), 178–195.
16. Sinha, A. (2023). India's trade policy and the WTO: Challenges and opportunities. *World Trade Journal*, 40(1), 75–98.
17. Srivastava, B. (2021). Soft power and India's cultural diplomacy: A growing global influence. *International Studies Quarterly*, 64(3), 350–372.
18. Verma, K. (2020). India and multilateral institutions: Reforming global governance structures. Yale University Press.
19. Yadav, L. (2023). India and the geopolitics of South Asia: Diplomacy, security, and regional cooperation. *Asian Studies Review*, 52(4), 505–528.
20. Zaveri, M. (2022). India's role in global health governance: COVID-19 and beyond. *Global Health Journal*, 11(2), 112–135.