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India's Role in the United Nations: History and Prospects

Abhinandan Ashok Neeralgi^a

^aO.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India

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The paper provides a comprehensive overview of the study of India's role within the United Nations (UN). It also analyzes the different aspects of India's contributions to the UN, from historical involvement to peacekeeping efforts. The paper aims to uncover India's contributions, the evolution of its role since independence, the strategic actions India should take to achieve UN goals and information on India's UN involvement. The paper traces India's historical relationship with the UN, from its foundational role in the organization and significant early contributions, such as in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to its active participation in peacekeeping missions. Despite its consistent support and significant contributions, India has not yet secured a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, highlighting the ongoing geopolitical challenges, particularly with China. It also emphasizes India's unwavering support for the UN and its efforts in peacekeeping and sustainable development and suggests that India needs to strive for greater influence within the UN by seeking permanent membership and actively contributing to the UN's sustainable development goals. The paper underscores the importance of balancing local and global issues to enhance India's role in achieving the UN's objectives.

Keywords: *united nations, India, struggle, security.*

METHODOLOGY

The author did Non-Empirical Research, which is Secondary Historical Research, where the author has collected all the basic information about the topic of India's role in the UN and India's contributions in the UN and what role should India play in the UN towards achieving the goals of the Organisation from scholarly articles from JSTOR and Taylor and Francis Online and Google Scholar etc.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the contributions made by India to the UN?
2. India's Role in the UN and what are the changes since Independence?
3. What role should India play in the UN towards achieving the goals of the Organization?

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations was established in the year 1945 when Second World War ended and fascism and Nazism were defeated.¹ During the same period, the colonial authority was reduced, and this presented a unique instance in the world's history. At the same time, India was about to gain independence and was too ready for a post-colonial future. The position of India was improved on the world stage after decolonization, India was supported by moral authority and credibility by Mahatma Gandhi. As a result of this, the UN became very close to India, to support India and for the future of humanity. Jawaharlal Nehru who was close to Gandhi was soon to be the first Prime Minister of India and his sister Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, led India's UN delegation in the beginning years and in the year 1953 became the first woman president of the UN General Assembly.

¹ Manu Bhagavan, 'A New Hope: India, the United Nations and the Making of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (2010) 44(2) *Modern Asian Studies* 311-47 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27764658>> accessed 15 March 2024

EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

There are many significant achievements by India in the early period. India assured a cooperative affiliation between the makings of the post-colonial by the new Indian state and the new world body made the universal, the relationship emerged when India participated in the drafting of the Declaration of Human Rights (DHR). These are considered India's achievements in the beginning. Hansa Mehta was the representative from India to the UN Commission on Human Rights and Mehta was also a member of the Indian Constituent Assembly and Fundamental Rights Subcommittee.

FORMATION OF THE UN AND INITIAL CHALLENGES

The UN was underplaying for the Allies during World War II in the beginning. It was comprehended in the Atlantic Charter wherein 1942 an agreement was signed by Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill and it was named FDR. Atlantic Charter was upheld by the Declaration by the United Nations to oppose the Axis powers and it was signed by twenty-six countries. The plans were laid out for a post-war order in Washington, D.C and it was done by four states the US, the UK, the Soviet Union and China. These states also planned which countries to be invited to a follow-up meeting which would be after some time in San Francisco where the formalization of outlines discussed in D.C took place. The official charter of the UN was the result of efforts by fifty countries that participated in the meeting in the year 1945.²

INDIA'S STRUGGLES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE UN

The San Francisco meeting didn't include colonized people; many people said that the UN was an instrument of Western imperial power and others considered it as a great opportunity. The Atlantic Charter supported their hope; it stated that the President of the US and the Prime Minister of the UK have a right to know certain common principles in the policies of their countries on which they rely for the betterment of the world in the future. It was decided that people's rights would be respected concerning choosing a government where they live; sovereign rights and self-government should be seen. The British Empire said the Charter

² *Ibid*

doesn't apply to us but then it was made clear that it will apply to both countries. India was invited to participate though it was represented by people who were appointed by the British. This new world medium was joined by many groups to demand India's independence and equality for the colonized people and to provide justice to them. Vijaya Laxmi Pandit was considered the lightning rod for these efforts. She took advantage of the trip to inform Americans about the condition of India. In Virginia, Vijaya Laxmi Pandit laid out some broad goals for the new world order. She said 'We cannot only restrict to national issues, which were disastrous in the past. We must have a broader vision and even in the future, there should be a wider vision, international rather than national perception. Pandit addressed the official delegates and participated in the public meetings as many as possible to board-caste an anti-imperialist message.³

INDIA'S ROLE IN PEACEKEEPING AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

India has been always a major key element in supporting the UN regarding maintaining international peace. Independent India in 1947 became an integral part of the World's largest organization.⁴ In support of this India has largely contributed many troops. India has participated in more than 49 missions about peacekeeping. About 168 peacekeepers of India are known for their sacrifices while they were on UN missions. It could also be seen that many prominent commanders of UN missions were from India. India has been a founder member of the UN since 1945 as India signed the charter on 26th June 1945.⁵

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Along with this people from Indian administrative and Foreign Service have been a great support system to the UN Secretariat and UN agencies. For instance, Indian scholar Radha Kumar, a famous persona in international human rights was honoured by appointing as a chairperson of the UN University's Governing Council.⁶ Despite being the principal

³ *Ibid*

⁴ Montgomery Blah, 'India's Stance and Renewed Commitment to UN Peacekeeping' (2017) 41(3) Strategic Analysis 257-272 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2017.1295605>> accessed 12 March 2024

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*

organization, it had its struggle to maintain peace globally. The task seemed quite challenging due to various reasons like geographical divisions and the influence of politics on it, the internal rifts in the country, or the unorganized functional structure. However, the UN stood strong in fighting the challenges regarding development and human rights. The Security Council of the UN sought to produce, shape and implement the key ideas in the same regard. To be noted even in this India captured its position as an elected member in 2021-2022. It was indeed helpful in planning actions required for responding to humanitarian needs.

UN'S STRENGTH AND INDIA'S INVOLVEMENT

The UN has more strength and power to provide an effective operational environment. This serves as a medium to gather several different governments, societies, and private sectors to achieve global objectives. The Security Council aims to solve the issues which threaten global peace and harmony. The council has used powers to fight out non-proliferation, and terrorism and maintain peace. Throughout, the UN working for peacekeeping, India always has been a role player. India has demonstrated its power through the intellectual policies and philosophy of peacekeeping. The development of the Indian economy has been a result of the benefits of the development schemes and programs of the UN. The benchmark trials and their effects like the India - US nuclear agreement in 2007-2008 had an impact globally. The act and the decisions were recognized worldwide.

INDIA'S ROLE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

India is the only Asian country that has served seven times as a member of the Security Council and probably it will continue to serve in the future. India has been a great power to the council as it has gained trust across the globe. The reputation among foreign countries has been maintained well. India has always worked for the council in several directions including strengthening the council with confidence and support when needed. India has always handled security issues with much intelligence. In the term of India the council must reach out its focus on many wings special on problems related to climatic changes across the globe. India is the

largest democratic country and has immensely contributed to the UN for missions related to peacekeeping.⁷

CONCLUSION

India made several contributions to the UN from the beginning and India was a strong supporter of the United Nations. India is considered a founding member of the United Nations and being a founder member indirectly shows how much key role the country has played.⁸ Indian contributions to the UN have been diversified and the one thing that should be identified here is the true support of India without selfishness. India had never asked for its benefits where the only thing it demanded was support and the rest of the activities are supported by India. The government of India has tried to participate in as many missions have possible where the country has always performed in supporting other countries whether they received it or not. India does not have that much importance in the United Nations though India tries to depict itself as an influential country, the reality is different where the country always tries to improve its existence but the country is less estimated. A country like China plays a dominant role and on the other side if we see there is no permanent membership for India where Permanent membership plays a key role in delivering the services but here India is not being considered to deliver service.⁹

The role of India in the United Nations has changed a lot since independence where India had received various appreciations for its tasks.¹⁰ In the initial stages the country was not self-sufficient and was at a growing stage and due to this India played a causal role. The key thing that is needed is funding and the source of funding for India to the UN in the early years of independence was very limited and as a newly developed country, India did not have enough sources and grip on global politics. The capacity of India is so high that it can be easily part of UN permanent membership but the circumstances during that period had not allowed India to become a part of UN permanent members. The experts believe that the permanent members

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ David M. Malone, 'The United Nations' Evolution and India's Role' (2020) 44 Strategic Analysis 490-501 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2020.1834664>> accessed 12 March 2024

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Manu (n 1)

who were at the beginning had greater advantages than the countries that joined later where the only problem India is facing is the political issues with China. As everyone knows India and China are bordered countries and are involved with many conflicts where there are many issues in various sectors between India and China. Even though the issue is common at the global level it is different in the UN where China is trying to decrease the strength of India by using the powers of the UN. The common problem that is being faced is India's membership in NSG as well as in the International Security Council. India should see that the United Nations' role should be limited to global development but not to global politics.¹¹

India is actively involved in every activity that is being directed by the UN for the sake of global peace and development. The main goal of the organization can be identified in the form of sustainable developmental goals where the sustainable development goals include various targets that are set by the United Nations such as peace, decreasing pollution, etc.¹² The contribution of India to each goal will help to achieve the goals of the UN where India should try to be active in every target that is being set by the United Nations. India should try to get active membership in the organization so that India can deliver better to achieve the goals of the UN. The government of India should try to focus in two ways where one way is focusing on the issues related to the locality which means at the local level and the other one at the global level. The main goals of the United Nations are only to make countries sustainable for growth and development and if India could complete its schemes, then there would be higher chances of results in achieving the goals of the organization.¹³

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² 'India to Take up Issues like Terrorism, Vaccines, Climate Change at Unga: Ambassador Tirumurti' *The Hindu* (20 September 2021) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-to-take-up-issues-like-terrorism-vaccines-climate-change-at-unga-ambassador-tirumurti/article36561202.ece>> accessed 12 March 2024

¹³ *Ibid*