

India's bid for Permanent United Nations Security Council Membership



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ABSTRACT

The United Nations was set up in the backdrop of Second World War which represents the liberal model of collective security. It has been successful in decolonization process and preventing another world war. The United Nations seeks to prevent the successive generation from the scourge of war. The UN Charter established UNSC (United Nations Security Council) as one of the six main organs of UN (United Nations). The major responsibility of UNSC is to maintain international peace and security. The membership in UNSC constitutes with 15 member countries, of which 5 are Permanent members and 10 as temporary members. The UNSC is the only body in the UN which has teeth to bite. It has the power to make decisions that member countries are obligated to implement under the Charter. With rapidly changing geopolitics of the present 21st century, it becomes imperative that reform is needed in the UNSC as today, the global politics has been marred with structural changes like threefold increase in the world population, decentralization of powers, a shift in material power of the state and influence from the West to the East with multi-polarity transition.

Keywords- India, United Nations Security Council, Membership

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations is an international organization which was established in the year 1945, which emerged after the failure of League of Nations to prevent the Second World War. The UN has six major organs namely, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the UN Secretariat. Among all the organs, the importance of United Nations Security Council is immense. The primary responsibility of UNSC is to maintain international peace and security. The security council consists of 15 members states, comprising of 5 permanent members namely, the USA, the UK, China, Russia and France, and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by General Assembly on a regional basis. These permanent members have the exceptional power of Veto, which refers to the power of rejecting any resolution of Security Council. One of the most important factors for the rise in number of voices against the present composition of UNSC is the power of veto. The unconditional

veto power possessed by the five permanent members has been seen as the most undemocratic character of the UN.

Need for UN Reforms- The present composition of UNSC reflects the geopolitical situation of 1945; however the present composition of UNSC has seen 142 new countries. It is also said that the UNSC has tooth to bite (sanctions) which makes its decision binding on member states. This has led to encroachment of state sovereignty. The permanent members of UNSC are the one who have emerged as victorious powers in the aftermath of Second World War. The UNSC is also said to be unrepresentative or under-represented as there is no representation from the West Asian, Latin American and African countries whereas there is over representation from the European countries. If a resolution needs to be respected and implemented by all countries, the Council must have representation from all the countries. The Charter also states that the countries which provide considerable contribution to the UN should be members of the Security Council. This has been the ground for reform in the permanent membership of the Council by countries like India, Japan and Germany. There has limited attempts by member countries to reform UNSC. The last reformation was done in the year 1965 when it increased the number of non permanent members from 11 to 15 and increased the necessary votes for the adoption of resolution from 7 to 9. If the UNSC doesn't get reformed at the moment, it might be possible that the faith of people from the institution as a whole gets vanished. According to Gareth Evans (former Australian Foreign Minister) no other body embodies as many dreams, yet so many frustrations. The Security Council acts as the prisoner of great power maneuvering, General Assembly as the theatre of empty rhetoric, the ECOSOC acts as largely dysfunctional and the Secretariat as the inefficient one. But still UN is important.

India's contribution in the United Nations- India has been the founding member of the United Nations. It has actively participated in all the initiatives undertaken by UN. While the UNSC was dysfunctional, India developed its own multilateral agenda with the Non-Aligned Movement and G-77 group. India's role diminished in the UN during 1960s which came both as a result of its image and a deliberate decision by the post-Nehru political leadership to adopt a low profile at the UN and speak only on vital Indian interests. India has been a non permanent member for seven terms (fourteen years), with the most recent one 2011-2012 term. India is seeking its bid in Security Council with G4 countries comprising of Brazil, Japan and Germany in it, where India is getting positive support from four of the five permanent members except China. India has been an active participant in peacekeeping forces of UN. From protecting civilians, disarming ex-combatants and helping countries transition from conflict to peace, India has served the cause of peace. At present, India is the third largest troop contributor. The ideal of Mahatma Gandhi, Non Violence has remained a guiding light for the UN all through these years. In terms of financial contribution, India was the fourth country this year to make full contribution within specified time frame.

Reason why India should be a permanent member of UNSC- Being the second most populous state, India's plea for being part of permanent member is obvious. India's status of being a Nuclear Weapon State also makes India a natural claimant to UNSC. Despite being a nuclear weapon state, India has always strived for No First Use Policy, which shows the maturity and responsibility of India. India has been one of the emerging economies in contemporary times, with sixth largest economy in the world. The Indian

democracy has helped other newly independent countries to pursue democracy and has actively involved them in raising their voices over global concerns. India has second largest armed force after China, which itself shows the capability and responsibility towards global cause. India with G4 prefers majority rule for UNSC expansion. They will not ask for veto for 15 years. Kofi Annan has recommended for reformation in the Security Council. The Formula A of Kofi Annan is giving permanent membership to G4 in addition with 2 African countries with no veto. However, India is not ready to accepting this recommendation.

Apart from India with the G4 grouping, the Coffee Club or Uniting for Consensus group with Pakistan, Argentina, Italy are working towards it. They are of the opinion that the G4 block should not be provided the permanent membership as these are hegemonic powers and regional bullies. The Coffee Club groups are following the Formula B of Kofi Annan which prescribes for semi-permanent members for 4 years.

Roadblocks in India's permanent membership- The status quo bias amongst the permanent members is one of the major obstacles. Russia, USA and China have refused to contribute in negotiating with the permanent membership. India with G4 bloc has limited its option to negotiate a seat solely for itself. For Japan, it seems highly unfavorable to be a part of UNSC because of aggressive China's presence. Regarding Germany, the European countries are highly represented in the Council, which makes the bid of Germany near to impossible. So, India must strive its bid with other African countries as African continent is highly unrepresentative. There are some intrinsic weaknesses in India's pursuit for a permanent seat. There is lack of enough Indian government resources for multilateral diplomacy along with lack of staff. Within the UNSC, India had one of the smallest missions among all of the major powers in 2011 with 24 officials (compared to the 130 officials of US). According to the assessment made for the years 2019-21, India is only the 21 largest contributors to the UN regular budget behind Germany, Japan, Brazil and Italy. An over-reliance on entitlement (intrinsic value) to permanent membership as opposed to strategy of multilateral diplomacy has led to lack of in-depth engagement on key international debates and trends.

According to R.C.Guha, India should not be a part of the race for superstardom; rather it should work upon its internal development. Kishore Mahbubani is of the opinion that India is acting like Sisyphus, pushing immense boulder up on a hill only to witness it rolling down. Prof. Ramesh Thakur asserts that India should proceed with Non cooperation with UN to let it realize the importance of India. G20 is what UNSC should ideally be.

CONCLUSION

Being one of the founding members, India views the UN as a forum that could bring global peace and security in the emerging challenging surrounding. India is working hard with other countries to secure its position as this would help India and countries of the third block to voice their concern on global issues. India can play a responsible role with permanent membership and can help other small countries to seek a friendly advice from India. In the words of Kofi Annan, more than ever before in human history, we share a common destiny. We can master it only if we face it together” and this is the reason why we need more UN today than earlier. Change is the only constant.

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