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India's Longstanding Pursuit for a Permanent Seat at the United Nations Security Council: Do the Indians Have a Case Even?

Syed Zahid Shah

Retired Senior Pakistan Navy officer, Master's Degree in War Studies, M.Phil scholar in International Relations at Riphah International University, Islamabad. Alumnus of US Naval War College and NDU China.

Dr. Asia Karim

Assistant Professor at Riphah Institute of Public Policy.

***Corresponding Author**

ABSTRACT

The discussion of reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been escalated with the changing global balance of power and more dissatisfaction with its post-1945 era. The paper is a critical analysis of the desire of India to get a permanent seat in the UNSC in the wider context of the suggested institutional reforms. It assesses alternative reform agendas, specifically those that are promoted by the G4, the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) alliance, and the African Union, and evaluates the political possibility of Charter amendment. The paper evaluates the main arguments by India to permanent membership such as population, democratic qualifications, economic development, military strength, peacekeeping service and presence in the international arena. The paper presents arguments that several of the justifications given by India are structurally irrelevant to the requirements of UNSC reforms or normatively disputed using comparative indicators and evaluations by third parties. Although the paper recognizes the obsolete nature of the current composition of the Council and the validity of the reform demands, it argues that the increase in permanent seats and particularly the use of veto authority would tend to have a detrimental impact on institutional paralysis. It concludes that India can have a better seat in a reformed Council, although the chances of getting permanent membership with a veto power are few with the current geopolitical limitations.

Keywords: UNSC, Reform agenda, India, G4, Uniting for Consensus, African Union.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations was formed in October 1945, as a successor of League of Nations. The major victorious powers of the Second World War (the United States, the United Kingdom, ex-USSR, France and China) became permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council. In 1965, the strength of the non-permanent members of UNSC was increase from 6 to 10. However, there has been no change in the composition of the elite club of P5 till-to-date despite the fact that number of UN member states have increased from 51 to 193 and much has changed on the geographical and political scene of the world. By early nineties, member states started raising demands for reforms in the UN so as to “make it more democratic and representative” (Parlami, 2025) . Germany and Japan, losers of the WW-II but presently big donors of the UN, came forward to claim permanent seats as part of any future expansion in the UNSC. Sensing the environment to be conducive, India also proposed its candidature for the slot at UNSC. Not only that India is promoting its desire with the reciprocal support of other aspirants, it has managed to receive some backing from four out of five permanent members i.e. US, UK, Russia and France (Ballesteros, 2024) . However, India’s own qualification standards, China’s opposition (including a veto in such a scenario) and the USA’s principled disagreement on expansion of veto powers will be few of the major hurdles in realization of Indian dream to get a permanent seat at the UNSC. Nevertheless, Indian leadership and media are out-rightly engaged in promoting its case for a seat on the big table, capitalizing on its projected economic and political clout (Rani & Das, 2024) . This article, taking an argumentative line, will discuss the prospects of India getting the permanent seat in the backdrop of the prospective expansion of UN Security Council.

Background of the Call for Reforms in the UN Security Council

While it had been an its earnest desire of India since 1950s to be recognized as a major player in the world affairs, it was the end of Cold War with a resultant Unipolar world order and a greater global push for reforms in the UN system, which provided greater momentum to India's pursuit for a higher status in the UN (more so, UN Security Council). However, before analyzing the Indian case, it would be appropriate to briefly discuss: The broad reforms in the UN being considered, focusing on the expansion in the UNSC, potential for implementation of the UNSC reform proposals and analysis of the Indian standpoint in contesting for a Permanent seat in the UNSC.

Since its formation, the UN membership number has increased from 51 to 193 as of now. As regards the supreme body, UN Security Council, the strength in the rotational (non-permanent) category was increased from 6 at the initial times to 10 in 1965 (the number is the same as of today). However, the status of permanent members (having Veto powers) has remained stuck at Five till today and consists of the US, the UK, Russia (formerly USSR), China and France. General geographic

representation of the P5 group is: Western Europe (UK and France), Eastern Europe (Russia), the Asia-Pacific (China) and the Americas (USA). Over the period, UN member states have considered the composition of the UNSC (especially the big-5) as not corresponding to the increased membership of the UN organisation. Member states feel that the structure is unbalanced. As it can be seen from the above composition in the permanent membership, the regions of Africa and Oceania (Australia) are not represented at all, while Europe is over-represented in contrast to Asia and the Americas. Besides, there have been growing criticisms over the UNSC for its inability to avert a large number of global conflicts; inadequacies in the application of a comprehensive peacekeeping mechanism and inability to manage crisis situations (Parlamis, 2025). Furthermore, many member states are vocal about the non-democratic and unrepresentative outlook of the UNSC. The comity of nations also desires greater transparency in the working of UNSC. Consequently, reforms in the UN, including those in the UNSC has remained a generally unrealized agenda of the UN debates since long. Frequently debated proposals for reforms in the UN focus on the composition and the working of the Security Council.

The world has seen great shifts in global power outlook since the San Francisco conference over 80 years ago. In this context, UNSC setup looks strikingly outdated. Global military, economic and political power has been redistributed among nations over the past four decades or so. There are many emerging states which are participating actively towards global governance. These emerging nations demand greater representation in the Security Council (Hosli & Dörfler, 2019).

Brief Study of Reform Proposals

As a first, in 1992, the UNGA adopted a resolution on the question of equitable representation on, and increase the membership of the Security Council (UNGA Resolution 47/62, 1992). Later, UNGA decision 62/557 has mentioned that Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) need to deliberate reforms in the UNSC around 5 key areas:

- a. Categories of the membership of UNSC.
- b. The Veto powers question.
- c. Equitable representation.
- d. Proposed size of the UNSC along with its working methodology.
- e. Connection points/ Working process between the UNSC and UNGA.

The same was further reiterated in Dec, 2024 through the UNGA Resolution 79/125 on the subject (UNGA, 2024). With regards to enlargement of UNSC, the proposals from different groups of countries are as follows (Ballesteros, 2024).

G4 (India, Germany, Brazil & Japan)

The G-4 mutually supports one another and along with further 2 seats for African countries and asks for 6 additional permanent seats with veto powers in the UNSC. They further seek overall expansion of the UNSC to 25 members.

United for Consensus Coalition (UfC)

The group is co-sponsored by Italy, Pakistan and Mexico, and among others include Spain and few Latin American countries. This group supports expansion of UNSC to 25 members. But it suggests that all the additional ten members should be non-permanent. However, the 10 new non-permanent members should be elected for a longer term with the option of re-election. These new quasi-permanent members will be elected in an equitable manner, representing various regions of the world.

African Union (*Ezulwini* Consensus)

This group, comprising AU countries, supports expansion of the Security Council with a total of 26 members, out of which 10 (P5 + 5) will be permanent members holding the veto power. They ask for at least two permanent and three non-permanent seats for the African continent in the reformed UNSC.

The common criteria collectively pushed by the G4, is based on their support to the UN cause, economic strength and the regional roles these countries are capable of playing. This group argues that their geographic size and regional status – being large democracies – automatically qualify them for permanent seats in the UNSC. For a long time, India has had the aspirations to be a regional power and argues that it is capable of playing a major role on the global arena too. However, China is suspicious and against allowing a competing regional power in the Security Council, in the form of India or Japan even. The UfC, while in principle agreeing to expanding the UNSC, proposes an increase in the strength of non-permanent members; a new category of semi-permanent members with equitable regional representation along with extended terms. However, this group opposes any increase in the category of permanent members (P5) having veto powers. This argument of UfC is primarily based on the notion that increasing veto powers will further compound the very issue being faced due to same in the current shape of the UNSC. During the last meeting in September 2024, the UfC Group deliberated upon the UN adopted "Pact for the Future" including the prospective Security Council's reform process (UfC, 2024).

Prospects of Implementation

There is an increasing consensus on the necessity for reforming the UNSC. While variations in opinions and interests continue, Mr. Antonio Guterres, the current UN Secretary General, is working persistently to bring the UN member states to an agreement on a common proposal. Notwithstanding, whichever formula is agreed upon in whatever timeframe, the subsequent process will take its toll before the new aspirants meet their hopes. (CFR Editors, 2025). According to UN Charter, 2/3rd majority vote will be required for amendment in the Charter and then any new Permanent member to get elected for UNSC; this means support of over

128 out of 193. Later, this would further require support from all the present P5 in UNSC. Veto or later non-ratification by any of the P5 will block the whole process.

It is quite evident from what has happened so far since 1993 that the process of reforms is going to take some time to materialize. If at all the UNSC is restructured, there is a greater likelihood that any new members (Permanent or Semi-Permanent) will not have veto powers, while the present permanent members will probably not forego theirs. Hence, the point of view of UfC to be more acceptable to the P5.

Indian Aspirations for a Permanent Seat in the Security Council

During the past three decades or so, there had been radical changes in India's foreign policy. Few significant governing factors include the post-Cold War disintegration of the USSR, the emergence of the US as the only superpower, China's rise and globalization. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) platform which was the centerpiece of India's foreign policy for decades, has suddenly become irrelevant. While India is still trying to stick to the same concept, after losing the Soviet Union as a balancing force against the US and China, the Indian policy makers are in a deep foreign policy dilemma in aligning with the emerging realities. This included a sinusoidal path of its policies towards the US and EU, an approach towards its neighbours and revamping its Middle East policy.

Indian Standpoint for Permanent Seat in the UNSC

According to Indian standpoint, it now enjoys global respect and Indian power is recognized world over. The Indian economy is thriving and it has built a potent military. Either it is a party or is invited to many of the important global and regional forums, like BRICS, QUAD, SCO, ASEAN, G-8, G-20, OIC and GCC. For some time, India has started considering itself as a deserving candidate for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. It is a widely held belief in India and in like-minded states that whenever restructuring of the UN happens, India would be a cornerstone of the same. India's assertion for its candidacy to the coveted permanent seat in UNSC is hinging on few basic tenets. First, India is home to a population of more than one billion, i.e. almost one-sixth of humanity. Secondly, it is one of the largest democracies. Thirdly, India has a large military and maintains the strength to assert its leadership role in the region. Lastly, India has been a consistent lead contributor to UN Peace Keeping efforts (Rani & Das, 2024). The ensuing sections will analyse the prime claims by India on merit and draw pertinent conclusions.

Analysis of Indian Claim

World's Largest Population

India asserts that being a country with the world's largest population of more than a billion, it deserves a permanent seat on the Council. Whereas, it can be argued that if sheer size of the population would be the criteria, current permanent

UNSC members like France and the UK fall way behind many countries. For current P-5 founding members of UN, the criteria never included size of population, so why it should now be considered during any proposal for further expansion. It is pertinent to mention that according to Chapter-V, Article-23 of UN Charter, population count is not the qualifying criterion for even being elected as a non-permanent member of the UNSC or its Presidency¹. Hence, India's claim on the basis of a large population can be an academic discussion point in IGNs or multilateral debates, but it does not merit any practical or worthwhile consideration for the purpose of obtaining a permanent seat at the big table.

Largest Democracy

As regards the Indian democracy, despite various predicaments like dismal human rights record, religious intolerance, maltreatment of low-caste Hindus and state-sponsored subjugation of minorities, India has somehow been convincing the West about its observance of the democratic outlook. Since independence, India has promoted itself as the world's largest democracy. However, critics have observed India's democracy as a classical deception where the superstructure of democratic government eludes the reality of practical authoritarian rule by local landlords, bureaucracy and ruling party elites, reinforced by a social culture of caste system, inequality and rampant poverty & misery (Oldenburg, 2007).

Democratic Standards

While democracy watchdogs categorize global democracies differently, they unanimously agree that India has a "hybrid regime" - neither a full democracy nor a full autocracy. In the report of the year 2021, Freedom House had dropped the rating of India from "Free to Partly Free (the only remaining category is Not Free)". The same PF rating continues till now. Whereas, for world disputed regions, Indian Occupied Kashmir rates as "Not Free". In the same year, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project slashed down India to the status of "Electoral Autocracy" and continued decline. Furthermore, the esteemed Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has consistently designated India in the category of "flawed democracy" for almost a decade, mostly positioned at number 46th and below. Now connecting this declining dossier of flawed democracy with the claim of being the largest population of the world, it can be safely concluded that "Indian democratic downfall has rendered almost 1/6th of the world's 8 billion population into the category of an autocratic regime." (Tudor, 2023). According to the EIU 2024 report, it says, "...in India, the ruling party (BJP) has stoked religious sectarianism and fostered an environment in which anti-Muslim sentiment is not only tolerated but often encouraged by political

¹ United Nations Charter, Chapter V: The Security Council - Composition. Article-23:The General Assembly shall elect ten other Members of the United Nations to be non-permanent members of the Security Council, due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution.

elites. The increasing resort to identity politics by political actors looking to build support is having a negative impact on social cohesion.” (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2025)

Human Rights Condition

While India is often projected as the world's largest democracy, having a Constitution that recognizes a broad set of fundamental rights, in the background of this constitutional ideal is a more disquieting truth - a systemic and persistent pattern of human rights abuses. These human rights violations are not simply extravagances of a proven authoritarian state but are also the product of profound social divides, often fueled by state complicity, communal antagonisms, and caste hierarchies (Sato, 2025). In line with the 3rd party evaluations and recommendations by its sub-committee, Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has downgraded National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRCI) accreditation status from 'A' to 'B' due to its failure to act on the recommendations by GANHRI. This is considered a substantial setback to India's Human Rights standing at the global stage. In its 2024 communique, GANHRI had noted that most of its past recommendations of 2011, 2016 and 2019 regarding NHRC's lack of projecting and addressing severe human rights violations had not been addressed and may be taken as a sign of India's disinclination to conform with the Paris Principles². Furthermore, GANHRI has raised serious concerns about its (NHRCI) independence and operational effectiveness (Jasphine, 2025). According to HRW report of 2025, Indian authorities continue to discriminate against members of minority communities. The State and Central Government have been unable to control the widespread ethnic subjugation and human rights violations in Manipur, a state in North-Eastern India. Manipur violence has claimed lives of hundreds of people (mostly ethnic minorities) and displaced over 60,000 inhabitants since May, 2023. Indian intelligence agencies have been blamed by many foreign governments for assassinating separatist leaders abroad, including in the US, Canada and Pakistan. In India, many members of religious minorities, scheduled castes, migrant workers and females consistently face targeted attacks.

Ethno-Religious Persecution

Human Rights violations in Indian Held Kashmir are stark. Hundreds of Kashmiris, including human rights activists and media workers, remained in custody under India's draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention of Atrocities Act (UAPA) and the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. These laws provide complete immunity to security forces from accountability and prosecution, even against serious human

² Adopted in accordance with UNGA Resolution 48/134 on 20th Dec 1993. Compliance with the Paris Principles is the central requirement of the accreditation process that regulates NHRI access to the United Nations Human Rights Council and other bodies. This is a peer review system operated by a subcommittee of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) called the Sub-Committee on Accreditation.

rights abuses in disputed Jammu & Kashmir and other north-eastern states. During Electoral campaigning, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had been consistently spreading hateful sentiments against religious minorities, especially Muslims, inciting deep discrimination, hostility and violence against them. Indian authorities have been miserably failing to effectively implement the law or tackle incidents of sexual harassment throughout the country. Indian state authorities have kept hundreds of Rohingya Muslim refugees in illegal detention. That had prompted the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCED) to press upon the Indian government in July 2024 to put an end to the arbitrary detention and desist from their (Rohingya refugees) forced deportation back to Myanmar (HRW, 2025)

Indian Economic Reality

The latest report of the World Bank recognizes India as “one of the fastest growing economies of the world,” and if it continues the path, India is likely to achieve high middle-income status by 2047. During the past two decades, India’s share in the global economy has doubled - from 1.6 percent in 2000 to 3.4 percent in 2023 - making it the world’s fifth-largest economy (WorldBank, 2025) . However, according to Deloitte Global Economics Research Centre, “growth in the current fiscal year has remained vulnerable to global headwinds. Any stagnancy or slowdown in the US economy, failure to secure a trade deal with the United States and delays in synchronized recovery across Western economies could disrupt India’s growth trajectory under a pessimistic scenario.” (Majumdar & Ghatak, 2025) Indian economy, though made substantial progress in the last decade or so, has not been able to display vibrancy. Its economic indicators are observed to be inconsistent and need to be analyzed holistically to support the Indian argument. Poverty level in India is at a standstill, and the living standard of the general public is far less than desired. Investment infrastructure hurdles e.g. inconsistent electricity, inadequacy of transport networks and limited digital access, is continuously restricting effectiveness and increasing regional disparities. In India, the business atmosphere is severely restricted by complex regulatory measures and red tape (OECD, 2025). It is statistically proven that India is currently home to the world’s largest number of poor people in a single country. In the list of the poorest countries in the world according to GDP-PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) index, India ranks at number 67 in the world, well below the Philippines, Iraq and Algeria. (Ventura, 2025) Established UN Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) indicators are Health, Education and Standard of Living, while recently climate effect has also been factored into the MPI. In the October 2025 MPI report of UNDP, of its over one billion inhabitants in India, an estimated 235 million (almost 18%) are poor (UNDP, 2025). Whereas, comparatively, China is almost 3% and 5% for Germany and Brazil, respectively, on the MPI scale. Furthermore, more than 70% of the poor population are the inhabitants of rural areas. Almost 30% of the Indian population is illiterate, with scheduled castes, tribal inhabitants and females being particularly affected.

Indian Military Might

The strength of the Indian Military has developed hugely in the recent past. Hence, currently, India has the fourth-largest military force in the world in accordance with Global Firepower's 2025 report. Indian force structure projects significant military power with approximately 5.1 million personnel, modern airpower and a strong naval build-up (GFP, 2025) . Its strength comes from modernized weaponry, strategic depth, nuclear capability (nuclear triad), and growing indigenous defence production. India is on a path of extensive naval expansion and is aiming to achieve a Blue-water navy capable of contributing towards enhanced regional influence. However, in practical terms, recent regional confrontations like the post-Pulwama Indo-Pak conflict of 2019, Sino-Indian border skirmish of 2020 and Indo-Pak conflict of 2025 have proven that systematic military build-up has not given India any decisive battlefield dominance. Many international observers, e.g. Claude Rakisits, have commented that India's poor military performance against its much smaller neighbour Pakistan has regional and international consequences that will influence future diplomatic and military calculations (Rakisits, 2025) . It can well be deduced that Indian material military strength is still far from winning it a regional or global strategic supremacy. Its neighbouring powers continuously challenge Indian superiority claims.

Indian Contribution to UN Cause

India, has repeatedly reminded the world of its contributions to the UN cause of maintaining global peace in terms of supporting UN initiatives, particularly the UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). In the realm of financial support toward UN's cause, India's contribution can be termed as negligible in comparison to Japan, France, UK or Germany (Table-1). For instance, in 2025, India contributed USD 37.6M (0.0009% of its nominal GDP), whereas Japan, with a similar GDP contributed USD 237.2M (0.0056% of its nominal GDP) to the UN.

Country	Contribution to UN (USD)	GDP (USD)	Nominal	Percentage Contribution of GDP (%)
Japan	237.2M	4.20 Trillion		0.0056
Germany	194.9M	5.01 Trillion		0.0038
France	132.3M	3.36 Trillion		0.0039
UK	136.8M	3.96 Trillion		0.0034
Italy	96.3M	2.40 Trillion		0.0040
Australia	69.8M	1.75 Trillion		0.0039
Brazil	48.0M	3.08 Trillion		0.0015
Netherlands	44.4M	1.20 Trillion		0.0037
India	37.6M	4.13 Trillion		0.0009

Source: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/un-funding-by-country>

Table-1: **UN Financial Contribution as Percentage of national Nominal GDP - 2025**

UN Peacekeeping evolved over time from missions focused solely on conventional military duties to post-Cold War sensitive tasks of maintaining sustainable peace. Around 120 countries contribute troops for UN PKOs (UN, 2025). As regards providing troops for UN-sponsored PKOs, India stays within top five contributors list alongside fairly smaller countries like Bangladesh, Burundi, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Uganda etc. Analysis of the last five years' data of top five contributions to UN PKOs has brought out some interesting facts (Table-2). With a huge standing military of around 4 million, India's average contribution to UN PKOs had been 0.15% of Active Duty personnel, while the UN top five contributors average is 5.45% of Active Duty (a few even as high as 11%). Hence, Indian contribution to UN Peace Keeping Operations is far below par (almost 36 times less than the UN average) in terms of the country's own military strength. There are even a few instances when the host nations were apprehensive of Indian troops' deployment under the UN Peacekeeping mandate. For instance, in the Congo region, the Indian troops were blamed for their failure to stop the killing of innocent people. Thus, India's image is at risk if such incidents get repeated and it might affect how other countries view India (Taneja, 2025). There is a simmering debate in India on reassessing parameters of its contribution to UN PKOs, considering operational failures, economic struggles, diplomatic fallouts etc. Hence, it can be argued that already under-par performance of India in UN PKOs might further reduce/ diminish in times to come.

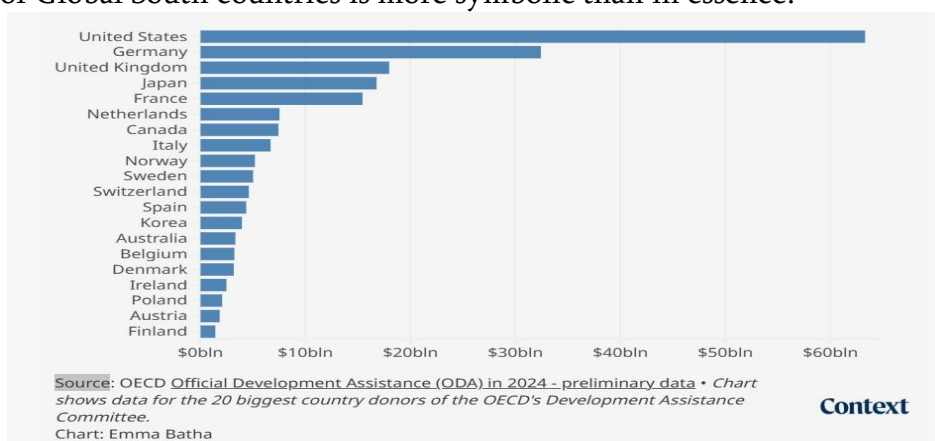
Year	Country	Troops to UN	Strength of Active Duty (Military and Paramilitary)	Percentage contribution against Active Duty (%)
2025	Nepal	5951	150000	3.97
	Rwanda	5897	48000	12.29
	Bangladesh	5677	260000	2.18
	India	5375	3982550	0.13
	Pakistan	2808	1154000	0.24
2024	Nepal	6114	157000	3.89
	Rwanda	5904	48000	12.30
	Bangladesh	5859	260000	2.25
	India	5466	3980000	0.13
	Indonesia	2735	650000	0.42
2023	India	5901	3950000	0.15
	Nepal	5878	156000	3.77

	Uganda	5764	52000	11.08
	Bangladesh	5393	260000	2.07
	Ethiopia	4984	200000	2.49
2022	Bangladesh	6728	263000	2.56
	Uganda	6163	52000	11.85
	Nepal	6013	157000	3.83
	India	5878	3982550	0.14
	Burundi	5057	40000	12.64
2021	Ethiopia	8611	200000	4.31
	Uganda	6162	53000	11.63
	Bangladesh	5912	355000	1.67
	Nepal	5434	150000	3.62
	India	5408	3068000	0.18

Note: Multiple Data sources. Minor variations are accepted.

Table-2: Comparative Contributors to UN Peacekeeping Missions

India’s International Footprint: In comparison to other major powers in the international system, India's global economic footprint remains at the most below average. While Indian economy has progressed significantly, its ability to use economic tools to further its regional or global leadership desires remains modest. India has not even reached the list of top 20 global aid providers in 2023-24 (Batha, 2025) – (Figure-1). The majority of India’s largest trade partners are “developed” nations, and all of them have higher per capita income levels than India. Hence, Indian rhetoric of being a force multiplier and champion for global change as a leader of Global South countries is more symbolic than in essence.



India has even sought to create or actively participate in competing structures and tools to counter international governance systems. Creation of multilateral forums like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and subsequent expansions in 2023/ 2024 posed a significant challenge to G-7 group of western economies. However, BRICS members’ internal disagreements have obstructed progress, resulting in unfulfilled early ambitions of disrupting the Western-led

global economic system (Ferragamo, 2025) . Concurrently, the chief obstacle to Indian ambition to become a leader of the Global South is its complex relations with China. The two countries are neighbours, partners and rivals. While India seeks to influence smaller Indo-Pacific countries, almost all these countries have China as the common principal trading partner. Being individually incapable, India requires US assistance and thus undermines the strategic autonomy India seeks from traditional great power competition. It can well be argued that India's global economic and strategic footprint has been large enough to be noticeable but small enough to attract partnerships and alternative models for global order. (Rossow, 2025)

Salient Conclusions from the Analysis

The above analysis of the basis of India's claim towards the permanent seat in UNSC, clearly demonstrates that most of its assertions are either insignificant or do not have any role in the quest. The argument of being a “large democracy”, once synthesized, brings about the fact that the “large” part (meaning the large population) argument is insignificant, as neither the UN Charter nor the historical composition of the UNSC (permanent and non-permanent membership) has any such criteria in effect. Whereas, the word “democracy” does not quite fit into the current governance system and societal norms in India - lack of true democratic principles, rampant human rights violations, ethno-religious intolerance and social deprivations etc. are definitely not aligned with the globally established norms of democratic nations. The economy of India might be cosmetically called as rapidly growing, but the dismal levels of poverty and social backwardness keep it at a very low level of human development index. There is a huge gap in availability and access to basic everyday facilities between rural and urban centers.

The regional and global influence of India in reference to military might, geopolitics and economy is almost negligible and has not provided it any worthwhile leverage in the international arena or dispute resolution. On the scale of financial and material contributions to the UN cause for maintenance of international peace, India can be considered as a small contributor in comparison with developed as well as developing nations and hence, does not provide it with a prominent relative ranking status. It can well be argued that the Indian standpoint in the quest for a permanent seat in the UNSC, is objectively weak and does not provide it any worthwhile leverage except for promoting a perceptive or superficial argument.

Suggested Way Forward for the UN

There is definitely a broader agreement among member states about the perceived obsolescence of the current structure of UN Security Council. However, reform proposals and their diversity, each time, leave few claimants isolated while benefiting the others. Whereas, remaining within the scope of the subject of this article, the following is suggested to the wider audience at the UN and the international community: -

- a. UN member states generally support the reforms and expansion in UNSC. However, any attempt to increase the strength (number) of Permanent members (with veto powers) in the council will aggravate the problems rather than solve the issue of the undemocratic outlook it currently holds in the shape of P-5. Therefore, any increase in the number of permanent members of UNSC (having veto powers) should not even be considered by the UN.
- b. Proposal as set forth by the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) about increasing the membership in the non-permanent category, with improved regional balance seems quite logical and readily acceptable by P-5 and needs to be further promoted.
- c. Arguments of G-4 group canvassing for permanent seats with veto power seem too ambitious and appalling. It may be systemically annulled through wider consultation amongst the UN member states, as in reality, this proposal is the major Achilles heel and stalling the overall UNSC reforms initiative.
- d. Objective scrutiny and neutral analysis of the standpoints projected by the claimants of permanent seats in UNSC, including India, can be conducted at the UN Inter-Government Negotiations (IGNs). The analysis should be above individual country biases, compulsions and cosmetic beliefs.
- e. The Indian government may be asked to improve upon and practically demonstrate the main democratic principles of human rights, societal justice, social reforms and poverty alleviation.
- f. UN may urge India to contribute positively towards the UN Peacekeeping efforts, through the provision of financial and material support relative to its economic and military size and not just compete with numbers as provided by much smaller countries in the contributors list.
- g. World is aware of the sensitivity of the Kashmir issue, both in terms of regional security as well as gross human rights violations committed by India. It is also realized by the UN in general and Western powers in particular that the solution to this dispute is inevitable to promote regional peace and security in South Asia. UN, through various IGNs and UNSC, should urge India to resolve the bilateral disputes before being considered for any higher role in the global peace and security efforts.

CONCLUSION

The proposed reform of the UN, including expansion in the UNSC, is likely to take some time to materialize. Few proponents of expansion in UNSC, call for the addition of permanent members, while others advocate a new category of semi-permanent members having the option of re-election. While new aspirants for the UNSC would continue to strive for their inclusion in the coveted club, smaller nations would oppose the development of new power centers. Nevertheless, it is clearly evident that P5 will not forego their special status of veto and are likely to oppose any addition to this group. Geo-economics, increased globalization and the ambition of gaining exclusive control of world energy resources has profoundly influenced the strategic formulation of the US and its allies. India, being an attractive

market for the West and a potential counterweight against China, will benefit from the emerging order and will seek to achieve added recognition from the Global West. India's bid to get a permanent seat at UNSC might garner tacit support by the P-5, except China. However, the US and China has shown no inclination to support a new permanent member with Veto power. In the current scenario, during any future expansion of the UNSC, India may be considered for a more prominent role in the organization; however, the prospects of India receiving a permanent seat with veto power in the UNSC are remote. Nevertheless, in any such event, India sitting at the UNSC as a permanent member, shall adversely impact the global as well as regional order. On one hand, it might serve the cause of the West to act as the counterweight against China, while on the other, it would use the leverage to further its national interests in the region. Therefore, smaller nations will have to seek the support of the major players such as China, EU and the OIC and resist any expansion of the UNSC permanent membership category.

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