



PRIORITY AREAS OF INDIA AT G20 PRESIDENCY: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to highlight the role of India as the President of G20 Summit in bridging the gap arisen due to COVID, Russia- Ukraine war and the rise of inflation globally. It gives the overview on what India can offer to the world with its success stories like vaccination drives, women-led development, digital platforms etc. The paper also gives insights about the reformation which has to be brought in the governance of G20 and the need to use this platform to encourage the G20 nations to abide to the SDGs and promote initiatives such as Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) and One Solar Alliance

INTRODUCTION

Our Priorities will focus on healing our 'ONE EARTH', creating harmony within our 'ONE FAMILY' and giving hope for our 'ONE FUTURE'

– PM Shri Narendra Modi

The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier intergovernmental forum for international cooperation, established with the objectives to maintain coordination between its members in order to achieve global economic stability, sustainable growth, promote financial regulations

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in order to prevent future financial crises and to facilitate modernization and strengthen global financial architecture. It comprises of 19 nations (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States) and European Union. Both developed and developing countries are the members of G20. The G20 member nations represent around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.¹

India has been a member of the G20 since its inception in 1999 and for the first time India has assumed the chairmanship of the G20 for one year from 01 December 22. The G20 Presidency marks the beginning of “Amritkaal”, the 25-year time period beginning from the 75th anniversary of its independence on 15 August 2022. This presidency is a unique opportunity to showcase India’s progress and developments as well as its rich cultural heritage and diversity. India’s G20 logo draws inspiration from the planet Earth with the lotus (India’s national flower) and the vibrant colours of India’s national flag. The theme is ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ or ‘One Earth-One Family-One Future’.

Priority areas of India’s G20 Presidency:

❖ Health Sector:

With the advent of Covid-19, Health sector has become the converging point of all growth indicators. Pointing out the fact that Covid-19 is not the last one, therefore preparedness is an utmost priority. A pliable healthcare system with early warning and emerging scientific based system is to be formulated, not individually but through the consensus of all. The healthcare system required should comprises of life saving vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics and digital health innovation provided with the universal health coverage.

India has showcased the world its universal health coverage through Ayushman Bharat. Ayushman Bharat – National Health Protection Mission, the world’s largest healthcare insurance scheme providing coverage upto 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries). In addition to this, India has played a major role in the production and availability of Covid-19 vaccinations globally.

India’s presidency aims at promoting and building the resilient health emergencies prevention, preparedness and response with a focus on one health infrastructure. Along with this the emphasis must be on strengthening pharmaceutical sector in order to increase



accessibility, availability and affordability of medical drugs, diagnostic equipments and developing digital medical aid such as e-sanjeevani to ensure timely availability of healthcare even at the time of crisis globally.

❖ **Climate:**

Climate finance, energy security, and food security gain top most position on India's G20 agenda as underlined in the theme Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. In this context, the concept of 'Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE)' was introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP26 in Glasgow on 1st November 2021 advising a "mindful and deliberate utilisation, instead of mindless and destructive consumption" to protect and preserve the environment. This concept complying with the environmental- friendly actions in individuals' lifestyle by changing one action daily for 21 consecutive days and become Pro-planet People.

Another examples set by India such as India's 'Panchamrit' or five major areas of climate action commitments which includes achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2070 and "The One Sun One World One Grid" initiative to switch to renewable sources of energy at a faster rate.

Thus, India's presidency will act as a platform to build a global climate-tech ecosystem, decarbonised global economy and a resilient climate-proofing social system with a safer planet to live in. The focus will be more on actions than words to adopt eco -friendly lifestyle.

❖ **Digital Sector:**

Highlighting the importance of digitalization in Conclave on 'Digital Acceleration' held in Indore addressed on "Technology and digitalisation are going to play a significant role in the shaping of the economies, the trades and the multipolar world of the future", India reflects in its action to play a key role in shaping the technology and digitalization of the world.

India has emerged as the second-fastest digital adopter among seventeen major digital economies and it is estimated that India's digital economy to become 1 trillion USD economy by 2025. With the launch of Digital India programme, India has achieved many significant improvements in digital infrastructure. This sector is full of plethora of achievements including development of broadband highways, universal access to mobile connectivity, public internet access programmes, e-governance to name a few. India has also shared its successful payment platform of BHIM UPI with nations such as France, UAE, UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Nepal, Oman and Bhutan.



Amid Covid-19, the role of internet in education, health, communication, marketplace, businesses, industries, trade and all other sectors has reflected the need for a better developed digital infrastructure. Thus, the pace of digital infrastructure growth needs to be accelerated to make internet available to each and every individual globally. India through its presidency aims to provide and promote a digital ecosystem where private individuals can share the information on internet with the risk through enhanced digital education and accessibility of internet to All.

❖ **Women-led Development:**

Women are the pillars of society and when women are empowered, the whole world is empowered.

Through G20 platform, India can further its efforts to advance women's economic and social empowerment. Women are underpaid in their work, the unemployment rate for women is high, self-employment rate is low and are not treated equally are the few major issues which can to be addressed on the priority basis. Following the Brisbane commitments, Women 20 (W20), a network of transnational women's groups, think tanks, and organizations for female entrepreneurs, was established in 2015 during Turkey's G20 Presidency.

In India, there are 432 million women of working age, and 13.5 to 15.7 million of those businesses are held by women. According to Forbes India, Women make up for 13.76 percent of entrepreneurs in India; own 20.37 percent of MSMEs.

Various initiatives which brought real-change in women entrepreneurship are- Mudra Loan for Women which provides loans to female entrepreneurs, Bharatiya Mahila Bank which provides financial assistance to women to establish MSMEs and Start-up India program which prioritizes women for their start-ups and many more.

India will provide an exchange experience platform to address the issues of Missing Women from the global economy since without the involving women in the economy the problem to stagnant growth as faced by major economies of the world is difficult to solve and the solution lies only by bridging the gap between women participation in the workforce, accessibility of opportunities for women and bringing parity between all genders in the social and economics framework.

❖ **Promote 'Global South':**

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The term 'Global South' loosely refers to those countries that were left out of the industrialisation era. It includes countries that are in Asia, Africa and South America. The voices of the Global South when raised in multilateral organisations mainly led by developed nations are usually left unheard that is why India at G20 has taken a lead to reflect the economic and financial issues of these countries.

India now has a bridge position between developed and developing nations. One side, where it is a member of QUAD and I2U2, on the other side, it is also a member of BRICS and SCO. India has handled the Covid-19 crisis even better than many advanced nations, emerged a pioneer in digital infrastructure and sent humanitarian aid of food, medicines, vaccinations etc. time and again to the developing and LDCs.

So India has a vast experience to assist Global South at varied facets such as health, pharmaceutical, trade, digitalization, IT technology etc. India's view on the world becoming volatile towards these nations has led India to raise the Global South sensitive model at G20 platform to move G20 member nations towards human-centric globalisation, societal transformation and sustainable development cooperation.

Challenges to be faced:

- **Impact of Russia- Ukraine war:** India's presidency came at the time of Russia-Ukraine war which has made the post Covid-19 economic recovery more fragile with disrupted supply chains, rising prices and energy costs and adding more to geopolitical tensions. In such a scenario, India has to make a diplomatic move to bring consensus between the member nations.
- **Global slowdown:** Amid continuous global slowdown and economic distress, India remains among the few countries that has managed to perform better than the global average because of the strong public sector support through policies related to infrastructure development, digitalisation, Start-Up India, IT sector reforms etc. and in turn providing the fertile ground for private sector to flourish. India has to bear the brunt of keeping itself less affected by global slowdown along with devising G20 as a platform to prevent well-being of integrated global economy.
- **High inflation:** Persistent high inflation globally is the cause of concern. Inflation is also contributing to stagnancy, giving rise to another concern i.e. stagflation. The major cause of continuous inflation is shortage of energy and fuel due to unrest in Europe because of Russia-Ukraine war which has led to rise in oil and petrol prices globally, currency fluctuations due to rise in interest rates in US impacting both consumers and businesses, and economic and political uncertainty arisen due to Covid-19 which has disrupted the supply chains, imposition of restricting lockdowns and fall in consumption expenditure of



the population which has caused rise in food prices. This G20 platform has to come up with the short and long term solutions with the central banks and government of the member nations to face the stagflation globally.

- **Need to reform G20 Governance:** A better governance structure and operating framework is needed to revamp to make it more cohesive and representative. Post Covid-19, multilateral institutions such as IMF, World Bank along-with G20 requires reforms which should aligned with more hearing ears to the needs of developing and LDCs. Discussions should be made to reform their structure and organise them such that they are more prepared to face global problems and crisis and helps to resolve economic issues like recession, inflation etc. collectively.
- **Delay in achieving SDGs:** The G20 forum has been divided into two groups – one abiding to the commitments, laws and responsibility towards food, fuel, water, poverty, education, health and other SDGs while the other group involved in postponement of their responsibility and commitments. This gap has to be bridged to achieve the SDGs for a better standard of living and cleaner future for all.

CONCLUSION:

As an established global leader, the aim of India is to promote accelerated, inclusive and resilient growth. India must advocate for “more open, stable, and transparent rules-based commerce” in order to alleviate the world’s supply shortage and strengthen global value chains to prevent inflation protecting the world from economic slowdown.

With the focus on healthcare sector, the G20 nations can better prevent, prepare and respond to the health emergencies by focusing on One Health. Digital health initiative can ensure universal health coverage and strengthen pharmaceutical sector for availability, accessibility and affordability of Right to Health for all.

India at its presidency must ensure to give more voice to the less representative nations at G20 and promote Global South with a special and strong opportunity to channel their inputs into the deliberation and discourse of the G20.

India has already taken a lead in some core areas like digital public infrastructure and its governance, vaccination drive, self-reliance or Atma Nirbhar and on various geopolitical issues. India should also ensure giving emphasis on women-led development by solving gender biased issues and promoting gender parity in the world.



As exhibited in the theme of G20 presidency, the protection of climate is one of the top priority. The concepts like One Solar Alliance and LiFE initiative are the brainstorming of India and the world can harvest these seeds with faster compliance to SDGs.

Thus as stated by Prime Minister Modi “As the mother of democracy, India's national consensus is forged not by diktat, but by blending millions of free voices into one harmonious melody”. Therefore the stage is now set for India to take up its leadership for global peace, action- oriented governance and inclusive- futuristic growth for all on the world canvas.

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