

The G20 Presidency and India: The Priorities and Barriers

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ABSTRACT

This study makes an effort to evaluate the goals and challenges of India's G20 Presidency, as well as the potential impact of India's G20 Presidency on global economic and financial issues. The study's evaluation of the aims and challenges of India's G20 Presidency was grounded in a descriptive research strategy informed by a survey of the relevant literature. This review of the G20 and India's membership in it relied on secondary sources such as news reports, scholarly journal articles, and official government papers. The study concluded that during India's G20 Presidency, the country prioritised issues like women's empowerment, technological innovation, multilateral institutions fit for the twenty-first century, and public health. China's aggression towards Taiwan, the escalating food and energy crises brought on by the conflict in the Ukraine and Russia, North Korea's continued hostility, the emergence of trade threats in the Indo-Pacific region, the global economic slowdown, and growing environmental concerns were all identified as potential roadblocks to India's G20 presidency.

KEYWORDS G20, Presidency, India, Priorities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Members of the Group of Twenty, or G20, include the world's most important developed and emerging economies. Members include the European Union (EU), Mexico, Argentina, the Republic of Korea, Germany, Russia, Canada, Australia, China, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, South Africa, France, Italy, and the United States (Cooper, 2013).

The G20 members collectively represent almost two-thirds of the world's population. In addition, they are responsible for more than 85% of global GDP and 75% of international trade. The G20 (Year 2022). The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier forum for international economic cooperation and a cornerstone of international order. Neither a secretariat nor a staff is maintained full-time for the G20. Instead, a new group of states under a new regional bloc is selected each year to take the reins as G20 President. The 19 countries are organised into five clusters, with no more than four countries in any given cluster. Most classifications are based on regional affiliations, therefore countries that are geographically similar are often placed in the same category. Only the second group, made up of Russia, India, Turkey, and South Africa, and the first group, made up of Australia, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Canada, vary from the aforementioned trend. Group 3 consists of Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina; Group 4 includes France, Italy, the UK, and Germany. Indonesia, China, South Korea, and Japan make up the fifth group. The European Union is the 20th member, however it does not belong to any of the regional groups stated above. Each year, a rotating group of countries takes turns holding the G20 Presidency (G20 Brief Background, 2021). When it is a group's time, however, every member country has an equal chance of holding the Presidency. India, a member of Group 2, is the current G20 President. Following consultation with other participants and in response to shifts in the global economy, the G20 Presidency formulates the G20 agenda. The continuity of the Presidency is supported by a "troika" of nations that have held the position in the past, present, and future. During India's Presidency, the G20 troika consists of Indonesia, India, and Brazil.

Presidency of India.

India has the rotating G20 presidency coming from the first of December in 2022 to the 30th of November 2023. On November 8th, 2022, the Prime Minister of India unveiled a logo and theme for the country's G20 Presidency.



Figure 1: G20 India -Logo and Theme

[Source- “ <https://www.g20.org/en/g20-india-2023/logo-theme/> ”]

Logo- The G20 Logo drew inspiration from the vivid colour scheme of India's national flag, which comprises saffron, white, green, and blue. Planet Earth is compared to the lotus, the national flower of India, which symbolises growth over adversity. (Hindustan Times, 2022)

Theme- As the topic of India's G20 Presidency, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth, One Family, One Future" draws its inspiration from the ancient Sanskrit text the Maha Upanishad. The central argument is in favour of the value of all forms of life on Earth, from humans to bacteria. (Prime Minister of India, 2022)

Together, the logo and theme make a bold statement about India's G20 Presidency and its mission to promote equitable and sustainable growth for all people throughout the world in the face of current global challenges. They represent the G20 Presidency's emphasis on living in harmony with nature, a concept that is uniquely Indian. (Prime Minister of India, 2022)

Working of G20

There are currently two streams within the G20. The terms "Finance Track" and "Sherpa Track" are widely used to refer to the two paths in question. The Finance Track covers a wide variety of topics, including Financial Sector Reforms, Financial Inclusion, Global Macroeconomic Policies, International Financial Architecture, International Taxation, Health Finance, Sustainable Finance, and Infrastructure Financing. There are thirteen separate projects under the Sherpa Track, each focusing on a different set of problems. Health, agriculture, development, digital economy, culture, employment, education, energy transition, environment and climate, anti-corruption, trade and investment, tourism, and disaster risk resilience and reduction (as proposed by India) are just a few of the many topics covered by these work streams.

Civil 20, Urban 20, StartUp 20, Business 20, Parliament 20, Women 20, Supreme Audit Institutions 20, Science 20, Think 20, Youth 20, and Labour 20 (the latter proposed by India) are the eleven engagement groups that have been established to bring together the private sector, civil society, and independent entities.

Invitee IOs and Guest Countries

Organisations on the international stage and individual countries have been extended invitations to attend. It is standard protocol for the G20 Presidency to invite non-Member countries and international organisations to its G20 meetings and Summit in addition to the G20 Members. India invited the World Health Organisation, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation, the World Trade Organisation, the Financial Stability Board, and the International Monetary Fund as part of its G20 Presidency. Not only that, but India has asked a number of other countries to attend as special guests. Egypt, Oman, Singapore, Bangladesh, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, Spain, and Mauritius were among these nations. The International Solar Alliance, the Asian Development Bank, and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure were also invited as guest IOs.

G20 Meetings

The leaders of the world's 20 major economies gather regularly for the G20 meetings. Nearly the course of India's Presidency, nearly 200 meetings of the Group of Twenty will be held in the country. New Delhi will play host to the forthcoming G20 Summit on September 9-10, 2023. (PIB, 2022)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

History

After World War II, many programmes were launched to better coordinate the global economy. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisation were all Bretton Woods institutions. The G20 forum is the latest in a series of initiatives begun after WWII to coordinate economic policies on a worldwide scale. Following its announcement at the G7 conference in Cologne in June 1999 (Cooper & Thakur, 2013), the first G20 met for the first time on September 26, 1999, where its legal constitution was established. Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin and German Finance Minister Hans Eichel held the first meeting on December 15-16, 1999, in Berlin.

The Mexican Peso Crisis of 1994 was followed by the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, and then the Russian Financial Crisis of 1998, all of which had an impact on the United States, as was most evident in the autumn of 1998 with the failure of the prominent hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management. Beginning with the "Mexican Peso Crisis of 1994," a series of increasingly severe debt crises swept through developing countries in the late 1990s. In an increasingly globalised world, the G7, G8, and Bretton Woods institutions have proven inadequate to ensure financial stability, as seen by the aforementioned crises. Therefore, it is now clear that a fresh, broader, and more long-lasting coalition of key global economies is needed to tackle this challenge. The first meetings of central bank governors and finance ministers took place in 1999, as reported by Furman et al. (1998). The Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 solidified the G20's position as the preeminent crisis management and coordination institution worldwide.

When the United States held the G20 presidency in 2008, it upgraded the meeting from one of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to that of Heads of State. Every other year since 2008, heads of state from the Group of Twenty (G20) have met in different cities across the world. More stringent regulations on hedge funds and rating agencies, a blacklist of states to combat tax evasion and avoidance, the establishment of the Financial Stability Board as a dependable supervisor and overseer of the global financial system, the proposal of more stringent regulations for banks that are too big to fail, and the resolution to end tax havens are just some of the significant global reforms that came out of the Washington DC, London, and Pittsburgh Summits. To address issues such as climate change, inequality, employment, social welfare concerns, migration, counterterrorism financing, corruption, disruptive technologies, drug trafficking, food security and nutrition, and the achievement of sustainable development objectives, the G20 has transformed since the advent of Covid-19 in 2020. The G20 summit in Riyadh in October 2020 focused on four main issues: limiting the spread of the pandemic, resolving issues with international commerce, protecting the global economy, and encouraging greater international collaboration (Sachs et al., 2022). Three interrelated pillars were chosen to be the focus of the Italian Presidency in 2021. The presidency has promised to lead the charge in mobilising a worldwide response to the pandemic. The 17th Annual Summit of G20 Heads of State and Government took place in Bali, Indonesia in October 2022. The theme of the 2022 G20 summit, hosted by Indonesia, was "Recover Together, Recover Stronger." The Leaders' Summit is the culmination of a year of work by the G20, including Working Groups, Engagement Groups, and Ministerial Meetings leading up to it. According to a 2022 research by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Global Health Architecture, the Sustainable Energy Transition, and the Digital Transformation are the three main focuses of Indonesia's G20 Presidency. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on different parts of society, combined with the ineffective response of some countries, led to the outbreak. Indonesia aspires to continue its position as a global leader in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development with the support of MSMEs, expanding access to COVID-19 vaccinations, and advancing the digital economy by putting these pillars into practise. But the terrible impacts of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, border tensions between India and China, animosity between Russia and the EU and the United States, and the worsening of U.S.-China ties cannot be overlooked. The G20 forum also faces two major structural challenges. First, there is "No Enforcement Mechanism," which stipulates that the G20 can do anything from exchange information to set a single, measurable target and work together to achieve it. Except for peer review and public accountability, none of them can be done without agreement from all parties involved. Second, decisions are reached by discussion and compromise, which might lead to the development of non-binding statements.

Previous G20 Summits and Outcomes

2008 and 2009: Washington, DC, London, and Pittsburgh The first G20 summit was held in Washington, DC in 2008, where participants agreed to reform global finance and refrain from imposing new trade barriers; the second summit was held in London, UK in 2009, where participants among other things designated the G20 as a significant decision-making entity regarding global economic affairs; blacklisted states

that declined to cooperate in addressing tax evasion and avoidance; and implemented more stringent regulations on hedge funds and rating agencies. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

During the Toronto Summit in 2010, the Seoul Summit in 2011, and the Cannes Summit in 2011, G20 leaders focused on the revision of the global monetary system and established the Agricultural Market Information System, respectively, while also adopting directives to reduce sovereign debt and pledging reductions in budget deficits and external borrowing. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

2012, 2013, & 2014: Los Cabos, St. Petersburg, & Brisbane The goals of the 2012 Los Cabos G20 Summit, the 2013 St. Petersburg G20 Summit, and the 2014 Brisbane G20 Summit were to reduce youth unemployment, combat tax evasion and avoidance, increase collective GDP by two percent, and reduce the gender gap in the workforce. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

The Antalya (Turkey) Summit in 2015 discussed migration, financial sector reforms, climate change, and terrorism; the Hangzhou (China) Summit in 2016 adopted the "G20 Action Plan on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and centred on long-term inclusive growth, connecting social welfare to sustainable growth, and leveraging the digital economy as a growth engine. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

Hamburg, 2017: The G20 Hamburg Summit 2017 endorsed the Paris Agreement, promoted universal access to clean energy, aligned regulations that adhere to the 2030 Agenda for the Development of Sustainability, and launched the G20 Africa Partnership with the goals of shaping an interconnected world and combating terrorism. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

Buenos Aires, 2018: "Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development" was the subject of the G20 summit hosted by Argentina in 2018. Building on the legacy of previous Presidency's across topics, the summit prioritised several critical areas, including the Fourth Industrial Revolution, youth, the future of work, health, sustainable food security, and infrastructure for development. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

Important issues such as investment, trade, and steel overcapacity, digitalization, data flow, anti-corruption measures, climate change, energy, and migration were discussed at the 2019 G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan. During the conference, a statement was issued that focused on stopping people from using the internet to spread hate and violence. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

The 2020 G20 Summit in Saudi Arabia, which was held virtually and focused on the subject "Realising Opportunities of the 21st Century for all," gave top priority to addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 epidemic and coordinating a global response to it. Over USD 5 trillion has been pledged by the G20 to help with pandemic relief efforts. They have also supported the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, which provides aid to countries temporarily suspending their debt payments. In addition, the Private Sector Alliance for Empowerment and EMPOWER were formed, and progress was made towards reforming the global tax system and responding to COVID-19 through the approval of an Action Plan. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

The sixteenth G20 summit, themed "People, Planet, Prosperity," was held in Rome, Italy in October 2021. Four main topics were discussed at the summit: economic resilience, climate change, pandemic recovery, and sustainable development. Notable events included the approval of the Rome Declaration to encourage coordinated action to end the COVID-19 epidemic, the affirmation of a two-pronged strategy to address tax-related issues, and the organisation of an extraordinary summit at which world leaders could discuss the situation in Afghanistan. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

As the G20 president in 2022, Indonesia has made "Recover Together, Recover Stronger" its top priority, with the hope of facilitating a strong and equitable global recovery from the COVID-19 epidemic. Sustainable Energy Transitions, Digital Transformation, and Global Health Architecture are the three key pillars highlighted by the presidency. (Briefing Paper on the G20, 2021)

A Look at India's Participation in the Forum

India has been an active member of the G20 since it joined in 1999. Over time, it has evolved from a silent observer to a forceful participant in global monetary and economic debates. India has had a major impact on the G20's agenda on issues like climate change, sustainable development, and financial inclusion. However, information about India's participation in the G20 was scarce.

OBJECTIVE

The paper's goal is to evaluate India's G20 presidency's priorities and challenges.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive Research design based on existing review of literature was utilized to assess priorities and challenges of India's G20 presidency.

Data source and collection

No primary data was gathered for this study. Academic articles, reports and official documents related to the G20 and India's role in this forum served as data sources for this work and accessed through google scholar and official sites of G20 and Government of India.

Analysis: Thematically analysis of literature was done using a qualitative approach.

Limitations: Current study impose some limitations. These are:

1. Does not include primary data, limited to secondary sources.
2. Study is based on assumption that existing literature is reflecting the challenges and priorities accurately.

OUTCOMES

Priorities

Green development, climate finance, and LiFE are high on India's agenda for the G20 summit. In particular, India is dedicated to combating climate change by supporting technological and financial innovation and by guaranteeing fair energy transitions for poor countries. According to (Gautam, 2022)

➤ Green Development, Climate Finance & LiFE

The LiFE movement is a sustainable initiative that advocates for environmentally-conscious practises. It is founded on India's sustainable traditions.

➤ Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth

The strategy presented here is to prioritise sectors with the potential to bring about structural transformation in order to achieve rapid, inclusive, and resilient growth. Included in this are efforts to aid SMEs in international trade, advance worker rights and welfare, close the global skills gap, and develop agricultural value chains and food systems that are accessible to all.

➤ Accelerating Progress on SDGs

A key goal is to speed up the process of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the COVID-19 pandemic in full swing, it is more important than ever to renew our dedication to achieving the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

➤ Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure

The advancement of technology and digital public infrastructure is a topic of interest. It is advised to have a human-centric perspective while using technology and to improve knowledge exchange in domains such as monetary accessibility, digital infrastructure for the public, and technology-facilitated advancement in sectors such as agriculture and academics

➤ Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century

The contemporary era has witnessed endeavours to restructure multilateralism and establish an international system that is more responsible, comprehensive, and equitable, and that is capable of tackling the challenges of the 21st century.

➤ Women-led Development

The notion of development led by women places considerable emphasis on advancing inclusive growth and development, with a specific emphasis on the empowerment of women and the augmentation of their representation. This approach is aimed at fostering socio-economic development and facilitating the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

➤ **Health priorities**

In accordance with the Honourable Prime Minister's vision, India's G20 health priorities are characterised by inclusivity, ambition, decisiveness, and a focus on actionable measures. The objective of India's Presidency is to achieve concrete results, and as such, the Health Working Group is concentrating on producing tangible outcomes rather than solely engaging in a declaration or diplomatic discourse among G20 nations. The priorities of India were met with significant backing from all member nations and international organisations.

Barriers

The current term of India's presidency is taking place in the midst of a number of global challenges, including the worsening food and energy crises caused by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the global economic slowdown, Chinese aggression towards Taiwan, the ongoing hostility of North Korea, the emergence of trade-related risks in the Indo-Pacific region, and growing environmental apprehensions (Gautam Chikermane, 2022). India faces a formidable obstacle in its pursuit of stability, given the G20's emphasis on geopolitics this year. The summit was notable for the member nations' acknowledgement of the deep multifaceted difficulties at hand and their desire to better grasp the Indian perspective on each of these issues.

India is aware of the potential consequences of a global economic slowdown, a rise in global poverty, and a delay in achieving the "Sustainable Development Goals." The Indian Express (2022). Several world leaders failed to meet their responsibility at the G20 conference and work towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Ukraine. Government officials must address the root causes of the food, fuel, and fertiliser shortages, as well as the Ukraine crisis and related sanctions. An amicable resolution reached by the warring parties rescued the Bali summit, and Indian diplomacy received a boost from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's declaration that we no longer live in a time of war. In order to bring an end to the ongoing conflict, India is currently challenged with taking the lead in mediating conversations between the contending sides.

The G20 countries are committed to achieving sustainable economic growth, which requires constant work to guarantee that all people, especially the poorest and most marginalised, have reliable access to food, fertiliser, and energy. If the Black Sea Grain Initiative to export Ukrainian commodities is fully implemented and maintained, it will be a huge barrier for India to overcome. Regarding climate change, the G20 reaffirmed its commitment to achieving the set goals. (G20 Trade and Investment Measures Report, 28th Edition, 2022).

By the second half of this century, we want to have eliminated all greenhouse gas emissions from the human-caused global climate system. To prevent, prepare for, and respond to future pandemics, the United States has established a special fund called the Pandemics Fund. However, there appear to be certain gaps in the provision of healthcare coordination between the nation's financial and healthcare authorities. By any measure, the foregoing three issues represent a significant problem for the Indian government. Improving digital technology's value across sectors, raising skill levels, and encouraging full-scale manufacturing are all important secondary goals that must be pursued simultaneously, especially in developing countries.

IV. CONCLUSION

In sum, this study aimed to evaluate India's objectives and challenges during its G20 presidency, to determine the steps India can take to achieve its objectives, and to forecast the impact of India's presidency on global economic and financial difficulties. Based on the conclusions of this study, India has laid forth a set of goals that it plans to pursue during its presidency of the G20. These include progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), women-led development, technological and digital public infrastructure, and healthcare priorities; financing for climate action; LiFE; increased, inclusive, and resilient growth; multilateral organisations for the twenty-first century; and SDGs. Along with the benefits of holding the G20 presidency, the research also highlighted the challenges that India faces, such as geopolitical tensions, the global economic crisis, and a lack of cooperation among G20 members. The research highlights the need of India's leadership role in mediating agreements between disputing parties in order to promote sustainable economic development through ensuring everyone has access to food, fertiliser, and energy security.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research presented in this paper provides some recommendations for the upcoming G20 presidencies. First, if the global economy is to prosper in the years ahead, sustainable development, financial regulation, and global economic growth must remain high on the agendas of future presidencies. Second, if we want global governance that is really representative of all nations and peoples, we need to do more to foster

cooperation within the G20 and include more non-G20 nations and international organisations into G20 meetings. Future presidents should similarly prioritise the use of digital technology and innovation to enhance economic growth and development, while also ensuring that adequate legal frameworks are in place to cope with new concerns like cybercrime and intrusions of personal privacy. The next presidency is strongly encouraged to make progress towards gender parity and women's empowerment a primary priority by establishing policies and programmes that increase women's access to training and leadership positions in the economy. These recommendations will help the G20 achieve its long-term mission of fostering sustainable and equitable growth in the global economy.

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