

INDIA: REASSESSING OUR POSITION IN THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK

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Introduction: Legitimate division or fooling?

The topic of the division of the world into two broad geopolitical categories namely- the Global North and the Global South has been a long-talked-about issue. The division of the two during the Cold War era was the main reason why the division was popularized. The two categories were mainly based on economic development, political influence, and historical colonial ties. Nations in the Global North were the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, which were viewed as affluent, industrialized countries with sophisticated infrastructure and international prestige. On the other hand, the Global South, in areas such as Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia, was associated with low-income levels, developing economies, and a history of colonization.

This classification was formalized by international organizations like the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which was among the first to do so. UNCTAD was the tough institution that brought about the Global South and Global North terminology as the focal point of the organization. The careful analysis of the Global South was accomplished through reports and initiatives of the UNCTAD, which advocated a fairer global economic system, by reflecting the economic disparities between the Global South and other developing countries.

Historically, the Global North-Global South divide was known for highlighting the disparity in wealth, technology, and geopolitical power between the two. Nevertheless, this binary structure is not as relevant anymore as it was earlier since countries like India have now risen to

prominence in the global arena. India, one of the countries that is usually associated with the Global South, has made remarkable progress in technology, healthcare, space exploration, and economic growth, thus shaking the traditional categorization.

India vs. Global North: Breaching Historical Quota

The United Nations including Global North have been holding the global flag of development for a long time, therefore departures are taking place in several sectors. However, India with its advances in various sectors can compete and even beat the Global North countries.

1. United States vs. India: Technological and Digital Advancement

It has been a common characteristic of American society that the US is the center of technological progress. On the other hand, India's digital economy has developed successively with the country now growing into a large hub for IT services and software products across the world. India's Aadhaar system, arguably the largest of its kind, approaches the reach of 1 billion citizens. It is undisputedly the mainstay of the digital identity project which the US cannot do as such by comparison.

2. UK vs. India: Healthcare & Pharmaceutical Industry

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) is the most famous in the world. Nevertheless, the Indian pharmaceuticals sector has emerged as a world leader in making cheap and good quality generic drugs. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, India contributed vaccines and medicines to more than 150 countries hence having

the capacity to become the biggest pharmacy of the world, something that the UK couldn't do on a large scale.

3. Germany vs. India: Renewable Energy

Germany has been an undisputed leader in renewable energy for a long time, especially solar power. Furthermore, India is catching up with great speed in this line through huge expenses on solar energy and new mega projects like the International Solar Alliance. India aims to generate 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030, which would soon rival Germany's renewable capacity.

4. Japan vs. India: Space Technology

Japanese people are very good in technology and thus, space technology is also one of their strengths. However, India's space program handled by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) could achieve great heights. The Mars Orbiter Mission of India which is popularly called Mangalyaan, made India become the first country to be able to reach Mars with the least effort and cost of many other missions by NASA and JAXA, the Japanese space agency, respectively.

5. France vs. India: Military Industry and Defense

France's military industry is rather well-known, but India's military industry is gaining ground quickly. The initiatives including the 'Make in India' scheme and the defense agreements with the world powers have helped India become a major producer in the defense manufacturing sector. The advancement of native missiles like BrahMos and the production of super fighter jets explain India's rising self-dependency and skill in this area.

India vs. Global South: A Boundless Difference

Despite India being a part of the Global South, its success and development from the rest of the developing countries in the region shows why it is a major omission to put it in the same basket as others.

1. India vs. Pakistan: Econom-

ic Growth and Stability: Pakistan, a neighboring country, faces the uncertainty of economic, political unrest, and security issues. Unlike Pakistan, India has been a thriving democracy, is strong in the economy, and is the hub of the growing middle class. Notably, India's economic measures such as GDP growth, are in different categories with Pakistan which has always been a part of India thereby portraying India's superiority in the region's development.

2. India vs. Bangladesh: Industrial & Technological Development

Bangladesh has been excellent in garment production and has recently been having accelerated economic growth. However, India's industrial sector is much more diversified, including Information Technology, Pharmaceuticals, and Automotive Manufacturing. Bangalore has more advanced technology such as digital infrastructure and space technology than Bangladesh.

3. India vs. Sub-Saharan Africa: Economic Growth & Global Influence

While the Sub-Saharan African nations are facing economic hurdles and political instability, India has become one of the world's fastest-growing economic forces. India's GDP growth and its status as a ringleader in international forums such as G20 and BRICS ascertain its widespread impact and difference from many Global South countries.

4. India vs. Southeast Asia : Political & Diplomatic Influence

Southeast Asian nations including Vietnam and Indonesia have undergone rapid economic growth, however, the political and diplomatic clout that they do not possess is the one that India wields. The strategic alliances India has formed with other major powers, its leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement, and its growing role in international diplomacy make it a country that is highly influential on the global scene, which in turn distinguishes it from its Southeast Asian neighbors.

5. India vs. Sri Lanka: Infrastructure & Human Development

The challenge has been significant for Sri Lanka in recent years, especially with the economic and political issues. India, instead, has concentrated on infrastructure, human development, and poverty eradication, thus achieving much progress. The two countries have a common colonial past. However, India's success makes it a more developed and stable country.

Case Study: Halfway to Global North

India has a history of being associated with the Global South as it shares the same historical, economic, and political conditions. The country's phenomenal success in various fields has made India to be on the verge of entering the Global North. This case study focuses on the main sectors where India has made remarkable progress and also highlights the improvements required for India to become one of the developed nations of the world. The information presented is based on various reports and studies obtained from reliable organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

1. Economic Growth and Stability Research Insight

The World Bank reported that India's GDP growth rate has been consistently higher than that of many of the Global North countries for the last decade. With an average growth rate of 7% between 2010 and 2020, India is now the fifth-largest economy in the world by nominal GDP.

1.1 Analysis

India has shown remarkable economic resilience, especially during the global financial crises and the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of structural reforms like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has also improved the business environment by increasing the inflow of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and making the economy more stable. Nevertheless, India still needs to overcome

challenges related to income inequality, unemployment, and the informal sector which accounts for a sizeable part of the economy in order to fully make the transition into the Global North.

1.2 Recommendation for Growth

- (a) Focus on making business easier while at the same time reforming the labour market and simplifying regulations.
- (b) Broaden social safeguards and expand financial inclusion to make income distribution fairer.
- (c) Spending more money on skill development and vocational training to provide the informal sector personnel with a different life.

2. Technological Innovation and Digital Economy Research Insight

The spending made on digital technologies by the Indian industry is expected to grow to \$1 trillion by 2025 through mobile internet, digital payments, and E-governance initiatives.

2.1 Analysis

India has technologically advanced a lot, especially in the fields of fintech, online shopping, and digital infrastructure. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI), a real-time payment system, has proven to be another groundbreaking technology, outstripping the transaction volume in most developed nations. The Digital India initiative succeeded in providing Internet access to 700 million people and reducing the digital gap, which in turn, stimulated economic opportunities.

2.2 Recommendations for Growth

- (a) Fund research on 5G, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and distributed ledger technology to stay competitive at the global level.
- (b) Bring digital literacy programs to rural areas to ensure that everybody in society is involved in the digital economy.
- (c) Tighten cybersecurity to avoid the increasing cyber threats even though these digital economic activities are growing.

3. Healthcare and Public Health

Systems Research Insight

India's pharmaceutical industry is among the largest in the world, accounting for 20% of the global supply of generic medicines. During the COVID-19 pandemic, India played a crucial role in vaccine production and distribution through the COVAX initiative.

3.1 Analysis

India's healthcare sector has seen significant improvements in recent years, particularly in terms of pharmaceutical manufacturing and public health initiatives like the Ayushman Bharat scheme, which aims to provide health insurance to over 500 million people. However, challenges remain, such as uneven access to healthcare, underfunded public health infrastructure, and a high burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

3.2 Recommendations for Growth

- (a) Increase public healthcare spending to at least 3% of the overall GDP to enhance infrastructure and service delivery.
- (b) Strengthen primary healthcare systems in the rural areas to improve access and reduce disparities.

- (c) Encourage public - private partnerships in healthcare to leverage private sector efficiency and innovation.

Conclusion- Redefining Global Leadership

India's journey from being a part of the Global South to challenging the status quo of the global power dynamics is a testament to

its resilience, innovation, and strategic foresight. As India continues to grow and assert its influence, it not only redefines its place in the world but also reshapes the narrative around what it means to be a global leader. The world is witnessing a shift where the old divisions between North and South are blurring, and India stands at the forefront of this new global order. The World Bank reported that India's GDP growth rate has been consistently higher than that of many Global North countries for the last decade. With an average growth rate of 7% between 2010 and 2020, India is now the fifth-largest economy in the world by nominal GDP.

