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BRICS: IT'S ROLE IN WORLD POLITICS

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ABSTRACT:

BRICS has evolved from a condense format into a influential forum in the international arena. It is a condensation for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC", later South Africa joined in 2010. This platform aims to promote peace, security, prosperity and development in multipolar, interconnected and globalized world. The main objective of BRICS is to deepen, broaden and intensify cooperation within the grouping and among the individual countries for more sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial development. Later BRICS is emerging as a new and promising political-diplomatic entity with diverse objectives, far beyond the original objective of reforming global financial institution. Therefore an attempt have been made to understand the role of BRICS in the global politics, analyse prospects and challenges to the expansion of such a role and assess the possible implications for the international relation at global and regional levels.

Introduction:

BRICS has evolved from a condense format into a influential forum in the international arena. It is a condensation for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC", later South Africa joined in 2010. Four out of five members are among world's ten largest countries by population and by area except South Africa. The term "BRICS" was coined in 2001 by then chairmen of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, Jim O'Neil, in his publication Building Better Global Economy BRICs. BRICS is a dialogue and cooperation platform among Member State which together account for 30% of global and 43% global population and 21% world gross domestic product, 17.3% of global merchandise trade, 12.7% of agriculture production. This platform aims

to promote peace, security, prosperity and development in multipolar, interconnected and globalized world. The BRICS countries represent Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, which gives their cooperation a transcontinental dimension making it especially valuable and significant. The main objective of BRICS is to deepen, broaden and intensify cooperation within the grouping and among the individual countries for more sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial development. Later BRICS is emerging as a new and promising political-diplomatic entity with diverse objectives, far beyond the original objective of reforming global financial institution.

Importance of Study:

The phenomenon of BRICS group became a highly controversial issue in the expert society. One general approach tends to see BRICS as just a group of states united superficially in the analysis of the international relation on the basis of their economic indicators. Consequently, according to this view there is no real reason for the co-ordinated actions of these states on the global arena. On the contrary, another view stresses the potential of BRICS to become a new mechanism of global governance, despite the disparity in the development modals each state in this group raising economic profile and influential positions in the respective regions.

Therefore an attempt have been made understand the role of BRICS in the global politics, analyse prospect and challenges to the expansion of such a role and assess the possible implication for the international relation at global and regional levels.

Role of BRICS in Global Politics:

In the recent decade there have been numerous debates among the expert about the contemporary world and current world order. Some experts believe that although the US power is declining, the world order remains the same since the international order is a liberal one and is based on the US leadership which is still working well. It can assimilate the raising powers, such as China, India and Brazil. Thus the struggle among the existing and newly-raising powers is not for its fundamental principle but for more leadership advantages within its framework. Professor from Princeton John Ikenberry, one of the leading strategies in the West, is one of major supporter of this idea. (Kolesnichenko, Rozanov, Debi, 2016,P-278)

On the other hand some believe that the world is in chaos and anarchy is coming to Eurasia. Thus, Robert D. Kaplan, a leading figure of geopolitics in the USA, published the paper where he advised the USA and the West to get tough on China and Russia and to prepare to engage anarchy in Eurasia. Robert D. Kaplan believes that both China and Russia are revisionist powers, and they show their

power not because they are powerful but because they are weak. At the same time the social situation in Central Asia may bring a kind of a Arabic Spring in the near future. Thus the Eurasia continent is in danger. (Kaplan, 2016.p-3-4)

Despite all the criticism and negative prognosis for this platform from expert (mostly western), BRICS exists. Moreover it is developing and step by step making progress. From discussion on economic and trade issues the countries moved on to focusing also on global politics and security problems that embrace a number of economic, energy, development, financial issues, as well as such challenges that is terrorism, conflicts, territorial disputes, use military power, nuclear proliferation, organised crimes, cyber crimes, poverty, demographic problems, climate change etc.

Though the five BRICS nations are essentially different and this fact must be taken into account before making an attempt to converge. The five countries represent largely different political systems-----China is a one party state; Russia's governance is highly centralised; Brazil, India and South Africa are democracies with significant corruption level or ethnic conflict still to deal with. Furthermore the member states differ in terms of available resources, absolute consumption, energy intensity and have different demographic trends. Brazil has predominantly urban population, while India is still largely rural. Yet, in general, the five nations will greatly contribute to the growth of the world's middle class. BRICS member have essentially different status within the current global order. Thus, Russia and China are established global powers and have permanent membership on the UN Security Council, while India, Brazil and South Africa only aspire to global influence and are qualified as regional power.

With account of different power and national interest, a certain geopolitical divergence in a number of issues is not surprising. Thus member of BRICS has not translated into a uniform position regarding the principle of non-interference on many international issues. For example, Russia and China opposed external intervention in Syria. On the other hand Brazil and India have taken more nuanced positions including voting to condemn the government's violent crackdowns on protesters. (Kolesnichenko, Rozanov, Debi, 2016, p-279)

BRICS role in global security:

International Security is one of the main topic of discussion within the leading organisation of the world. BRICS is not an exception. It is clear that the system of international security today does not work properly because the main institution that are responsible for maintaining peace and security do not correspond to the realities of the modern world. The main point here is that most countries can not or do not want to change this order. They can not because of a lack of global influence. Here main feature of BRICS is that these countries together have enough power and will to change the world. (Slonskaya,2015). The BRICS nations support the central role of the United Nations in maintaining and promoting peace and security all around the world. They declare that all peacekeeping and peacemaking activities should be taken on the basis and in

accordance with the UN charter and universally recognised norms of international law. The BRICS countries advocate the adherence to such universal principles as respect for sovereignty, unity, independence, territorial integrity, non-aggression and equality. The group also emphasize the necessity of the comprehensive reform of the UNO, including UN Security Council. With China and Russia permanent members of UN Security Council, it is also an issue in the “advancement of the restructuring of the global political architecture” which has been strongly pursued. (Goodrich,2018). The BRICS members are active as UN Peace keeper. They contribute to the UN peace keeping activity by promoting troops and devoting more attention to training the personal. India is the third largest provider of contingents. From 2004 to 2012 this country has supplied the UN with more then 100000 people; peace keeping is an integral part of Brazilian foreign policy, while South Africa is one of the key participants of the operations. China has become an active donor (in terms of financial resources military personnel) for peacekeeping activities. As for Russia it is an obvious underachiever in this very sphere; however, it dominates in the supply of planes and helicopters for the UN operations. (Slonskaya, 2015). Even the concept of “Responsibility to Protect” that was adopted by the UN in 2005 and used in practice in 2011 during the crisis in Libya was perceived with great caution by BRICS members. (Slonskaya, 2015).

Role of BRICS in Global Economy:

In recent years, the BRICS countries have taken an ever-increasing share of global economic growth. According to estimate by the IMF, the contribution of the BRICS countries to global economic was about 60% in 2016. In 2017 emerging economies and developing countries contributed more than three quarters of global economic growth. And in the few years, the contribution of these economies will still account for about 70% of global economic growth. They have also been successful in promoting the growth of international trade. According to the estimate by the world WTO from 200 to 2015, imports from developing countries increase from 21% of world trade to 41%, and exports increase from 30% to 43%. In 2005 developing countries contributed 24% of global service exports. In 2015 this figure was 39.4%. (Yifan, 2018).

The BRICS countries have created new co-operation mechanism, like the new development bank and emergency mutual aid provisions. This has created a new base of co-operation among emerging countries based on equality. In this new mechanism there is no room for intimidation or vetoes; equality prevails with each country entitled to one vote. It is a model of consultative co-operation.

In the new version of the report “The World in 2050” published by the Price Waterhouse Coopers, the GDP of seven new emerging economies (Brazil, china, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia and Turkey) already equal that of the former G7 in 2015, based on perching power parity. By 2040 the seven emerging economies will be twice as large as the former G7. In 2050, the EU’s GDP will fall below

10% of the global economy, while the United States will fall to 12%. (Yifan, 2018). The BRICS also face significant challenges. If they can overcome this challenges the future development of these countries would be even brighter.

BRICS Role on Condemnation of Terrorism:

The BRICS countries affirm the condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They stand for the adoption of a Convention on International Terrorism by the UN, which will help to promote cooperation and strengthen counter terrorist activities. These states are also deeply concerned with the nuclear proliferation and interested in strengthening the mechanisms of controlling nuclear weapons, technologies and materials (and other weapons of massive destruction). Among the aspects raising serious fears are the Korean Peninsula problems, Iran's atomic programme etc. What is more, India being a de-facto nuclear power, is not the signatory of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is becoming a factor of instability and a security threat, particularly, in the context of Indo-Pakistani conflict. There are great prospects for the cooperation in this area, developing joint projects and technologies included, not to mention the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty which, being ratified till now by only two BRICS members (Russia and China), could become an important mechanism of arms control if enters into force. Moreover, the BRICS members are discussing the creation of more effective system of international information security and countering cybercrime. They are providing assistance to the less-developed countries to help them fight against poverty, hunger, natural disasters, and a lack of clean water or energy resources.

BRICS Role in Global Environment:

The BRICS states are responsible to global environmental challenges. The First Environmental Working Group Meeting of the BRICS States took place in April in St Petersburg, Russia, addressing urgent environmental issues. The discussion on water resources ecology resulted in the adoption of the "Clean Rivers of BRICS" programme. The 'BRICS Green Technology Platform' will be launched aiming to bridge the efforts of the public and private sectors to address the environmental challenges. IUCN State Member Russia, included environmental protection on the BRICS Agenda preparing the ground for the first ever meeting of the BRICS Environment Ministers that took place in 2015. It evolved around a green economy strategy for the sustainability and competitiveness of the BRICS countries as well as tackling the climate change. Ministers agreed that progress towards an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future is important for natural resources protection and control, and this was reiterated during the Environmental Working Group meeting in April.

Challenges of BRICS:

BRICS receives both praise and criticism from various commentators. The bilateral relations among the BRICS nations have mainly been conducted on the basis of non-interference, equality, and mutual benefit. The development trends of the BRICS nations are not very similar, as there is a huge difference in the economic structure of the member countries. Therefore, it is inevitable that there will be economic competition and even conflicts also.

Keeping in view the larger perspective, competing with the US supremacy and developing alternative to the World Bank and IMF are the main ideas behind the BRICS formation, along with the promotion of regional cooperation. But all the member countries have their own potential challenges with respect to political differences, economic instabilities, territorial issues, etc. The members also have differences over the UN Security Council (UNSC) reforms. In these circumstances, it will be tough for the member countries to make a consensus on contemporary global issues.

Another challenge of BRICS nations is that China is continuously striving to deepen the cooperation more in the market-driven digital economy, green technology, advance innovation, sustainable and accessible infrastructure on every BRICS forum, whereas strengthening regional cooperation, domestic issues, social responsibility and issues relating to people's well-being are more important for other member countries. South Africa is experiencing an all-time low economy. India has also its internal challenges like terrorism. Brazil has domestic concerns like poverty alleviation and health care etc. In this situation, talking about mutual understanding is more important than talking about emerging markets and profit-making economy.

For an alternative for the financial back up to the world, BRICS came up with the idea of financial architecture and conceived the idea of a financial institution, i.e. New Development Bank or NDB. But, there are a lot of challenges before the NDB to integrate the members economically. The burden of the NDB cannot be shared equally, as the size of the economy of each member varies with great magnitude. Every member has great differences in GDP also. In view of this, it is inevitable that the disputes will arise in sharing the burden of NDB.

BRICS can face bigger challenges in the coming future. One of the biggest challenges that it faces the rapid change in the global order that has made the BRICS members, particularly Russia, China and India, prominent actors in regional and global affairs. This has happened due to the inability of the US to stay constructively engaged in various global and regional issues and also due to the BRICS members gaining in geo-economic and political significance over time.

Engagement of BRICS nations in a group at the highest level for consultation, coordination and cooperation on contemporary global issues of mutual interest and promoting mutual understanding is a big challenge.

In this article we highlight the issues addressed by various stakeholders within an outside BRICS. This, in turn, will feed the overarching aim of creating a stable operating framework for BRICS for the coming decades and simultaneously lead to expected co-operation and collaboration which can be developed with BRICS framework. These are as –

- ***Institutional flexibility***

While the BRICS nations may have different visions of the group's role and what it may mean to each of them, it stands to reason that any agreed upon agenda can best be realized if BRICS develops a coherent and sustained framework for continuous engagement. At the same time, the mechanisms of policy formulation should be dynamic and inclusive. It is crucial that flexibility should be maintained and kept central to the very idea of BRICS. The role of nodal research organizations and think tanks is essential in this respect.

- ***Reviving traditional knowledge systems and practices***

Quite too often, the terms ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ are torn out of their strictly economic context and given an unjustifiably broad connotation. This bias is symptomatic of a larger gap between Western knowledge and cognitive systems and the complex realities of the developing world. It is critical for BRICS to focus on reviving indigenous knowledge and practices in a range of domains – such as traditional medicines, healthcare, agriculture and water management, and design and construction practices.

- ***Sharing developmental knowledge and experience***

The knowledge and experience that BRICS accumulates in individual development journeys can be consolidated and better leveraged if actively shared and adapted throughout the whole grouping. Formal knowledge sharing institutions could be put in place. This could occur through structured knowledge banks or mutual scholarships and training programs. More pervasive channels of communication at all levels should be developed.

- ***Sharing technologies and innovations***

BRICS should be more proactive in bolstering research and in, funding innovations and technology. Exchanging information on scientific and technological policies and programs, and formulating joint long-term problem oriented cooperation projects could be the first useful steps here. Joint research provide substantial opportunities in such priority fields as aeronautics and outer space research, high-speed vehicles, microelectronics and information technology, nanotechnologies, food security and sustainable agriculture, biotechnologies, medicine, finance and insurance for hedging risks, exploration of mineral resources, remote sensing, climate change, water resources and water purification technologies. The BRICS nations must collaborate in order to accelerate cross-border technology sharing and transfer. In addition to private R&D and

innovation, BRICS nations can also share experiences of building links between industry and universities. They should exchange information regarding intellectual property laws, which protect IP and at the same time encourage the adoption and diffusion of new technologies. Apart from the economic benefits of such actions, BRICS can also leverage collaborative understanding and strength for shaping the TRIPS regime under the auspices of the WTO.

- ***Relevant and bias-free benchmarks***

The BRICS nations need to contextualize the dominant benchmarking and ratings systems/agencies, which are Western in origin. These systems are geared towards products and services emanating from a particular context. The grouping needs to develop and popularize BRICS rating systems and benchmarks ranging from corporate governance performance assessments to capital market standards. Such benchmarks and normative guidelines could also be applied in other spheres – such as agricultural production, pharmaceuticals and corporate governance – in the context of developing economies.

- ***Regional frameworks***

The BRICS nations are leaders within their own regions and surrounded by a cluster of smaller neighbours. At the geopolitical level, this discrepancy can sometimes lead to regional tensions. However, this also provides significant opportunities for the smaller neighbours to benefit from external growth and development. Synergistic regional economic and developmental frameworks should be developed, which accommodate sovereignty within a broader growth paradigm.

- ***Cultural exchange***

It is now widely accepted that BRICS needs to move beyond an annual leaders meeting. This can be achieved by instituting a variety of events and people-to-people exchanges. These can be in the sphere of cultural exchanges and conducted either at the BRICS platform or on larger international platforms, like UNESCO. In the slightly longer term, the BRICS nations need to collectively work towards a degree of standardization in educational programs and, if possible, to explore issues surrounding mutual recognition of each other's accreditation. The enhanced cooperation in sports could also provide avenues for improving cultural understanding. Formal engagement should be instituted with already existing leadership programs and bodies, like youth leadership programs and parliamentary teams. BRICS must support multilateral projects of member states' youth organizations and attempt to establish a Young Leaders Forum with regular exchanges between parliamentarians. A similar forum for media professionals and journalists could also be envisaged. Attention should be paid to travel and tourism between the member countries. Visa and travel processes could be made easier and quicker. Over time, such actions could build 'soft' links between the BRICS nations that will help bolster cooperation and collective attainment of the long-term vision.

Conclusion:

To sum up, today BRICS plays a very important role in the system of international security. It works as an accelerator of those changes which are on the way now. The group due to its rising economic and political heft, expanding economic size, increasing financial opportunities and active foreign policy are gaining influence over decision-making process in this very sphere. The main feature and at the same time the brightest opportunity for the BRICS members is their diversity. Representing almost the half of the world population, the most ancient civilizations and the richest cultures, the BRICS states naturally complement and complete one another. Therefore, the most criticized aspect of this group may be the most useful one. A collective approach is vital here, and BRICS has demonstrated its adherence to it so far. It is necessary to remember that there are too many promises given by various politicians, countries, international organizations of the modern world. These promises are often left without any consequences. The task of the BRICS leaders is not to forget that there should be something more than just ordinary words. The result is needed and the success of BRICS is highly dependent on whether the declarations and vows will lead to real actions.

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