

Article

Rising India and Its Global Governance Imperatives

Harsh V. Pant

King's College London and Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

harsh.pant@kcl.ac.uk

Introduction

India was one of the most enthusiastic players when the edifice of global governance was laid in the post-World War II period (Bhagavan 2013). It participated in key international negotiations aimed at building the post-war international order, which was marked by the bipolarity of the Cold War era. Its vantage point was equally unique with its lack of material power to shape global processes being somewhat compensated by its moral leadership of the then newly decolonized world. While maintaining a strong interest in global institutions, it remained non-aligned to the two major power blocks in global politics.

Even though India aspired global leadership through Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to redefine global governance agenda, the intensity of Cold War politics and India's lack of economic strength, realistically reduced it to a regional player in South Asia. For most of the Cold War period, India practiced what can be called the "universalism of the weak" evident in its stand on the Korean crisis, the Non-proliferation Treaty and New International Economic Order to name a few (Mohan 2010). Principles trumped pragmatism often leading to India's marginalization from global processes of norm making. As a result, India was largely confined to being a rule-taker than rule-maker in global governance (Sidhu et al. 2013, p. 6).

Major changes took place in India's profile and its conception of national interests in the post-Cold War international politics. Disintegration of the former Soviet Union created a New World Order where Indian interests demanded a more proactive engagement with global institutions not merely as a dissident but as a positive contributor. This also coincided with economic liberalization in India allowing it to break the shackles of the 'Hindu rate of growth' (Baru 2016). The role India has played in global governance in last quarter of a century –whether in global trade, climate change or nuclear non-proliferation – attests to both its rise and its importance in global governance. The domestic political scene also underwent changes with non-Congress governments coming to power who were less inclined to follow the precepts of non-alignment. In the last quarter of a

century, India has slowly but surely embraced the liberal global order much more emphatically than ever in its history (Mukherji 2014). India's resurgence in the post-Cold War period can largely be attributed to the liberal economic order. The liberal security order on the other hand has welcomed its rise largely because India's democratic credentials gel well with the liberal principles. Not without reason, unlike China, India's rise has been welcomed by the liberal world. This does not however translate into complete abandonment of its past practices. The vestiges of India's resistance to some of the global institutions and norms continue to inform its decision-making. This friction between its principled past and its pragmatic present continues to inform contemporary global governance debates in its domestic politics and shape India's engagement with the wider world.

The Current Turmoil

If the end of the Cold War was a major inflection point in India's approach to global governance, the current turmoil in international politics is another. The post-Second World War global order, to use the words of Henry Kissinger, is now in a state of 'crisis' (Goldberg 2016). The US hegemony, which was primarily responsible for the liberal global order, seems to be in decline. The rise of Chinese power has thrown a challenge to existing norms, rules and institutions which govern global politics (Kagan 2017). Global governance, just like global balance of power, is witnessing the rise of a bipolar system (Xuetong 2011). China's influence on structures of global governance is likely to create immense problems for India's rise. This is because of two reasons. First, if the US hegemony is replaced by a Sino-centric world order, the future of global governance may look drastically different from where it stands as of today. Second, if the US approach to global governance at times appeared benevolent, the same cannot be said for China. Its assertiveness in Asia and beyond signals that China would use its growing influence to the detriment of other rising powers and more so, whom she considers her strategic opponents. From India's perspective, this is already evident in the debate over the expansion of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Lastly, the current disorder in global governance is not entirely driven by systemic factors of power transition. There is growing evidence to suggest a steady rise of internal resistance against globalization (Roach 2016). States, which earlier spearheaded globalization, are now increasingly following neo-mercantilist policies evident in the US President Donald Trump's policies and the United Kingdom's decision to get out of the European Union. The future of the liberal order is now at stake.

This poses a formidable challenge for India. New Delhi has immensely benefited from the present structures of global governance; the liberal global order has been to its advantage. While benefiting from the system, it has repeatedly underlined that the current structures of global governance are not representative enough of

its concerns. Such behavior is typical of all rising powers. India finds these existing institutions both enabling and constraining. They have helped her rise but as she rises in the system she also finds some of them out of sync with the changing shifts in global balance of power. Its principle strategy therefore has been to uphold certain venues of the current global order, while assailing others. The current trend of anti-globalization is therefore particularly troublesome. For the liberal order to sustain, India may have to now offer its leadership rather than mere participation (Pant 2017). This would require further commitments and resources on New Delhi's part. Rather than simply being a beneficiary of global public goods, it will now have to actively generate, sustain and secure them.

This is also reflected in the desire of Indian policy-makers to make India a "leading power." While delivering the Fullerton lecture in 2015 at the International Institute for Strategic Studies on 'India, the United States and China', Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar said, "India looks to transforming itself from a balancing power to a leading power" (Jaishankar 2015). After keeping a low profile in the international system for long, India now wants to pro-actively shape global outcomes as there are now growing demands on India to make more contributions to the maintenance of the global order. The shifts in Indian foreign policy in last quarter of a decade have been momentous. From 'looking east' to 'acting east', India has shed some of its traditional reservations and is increasingly embracing the logic of expanding its influence beyond South Asia. Indian armed forces are now actively engaged globally in defence diplomacy. India is now a major voice on global trade and climate change debates. However, doubts galore over its capability to shoulder this responsibility. Notwithstanding India's economic strides, poverty remains a major challenge. A substantial proportion of its population still remains unaffected from the growth trajectory it has experienced in the post-Cold War period. Its military focus is still very much defined by the traditional threats posed on its land frontiers by its hostile neighbors. It also lacks the appropriate institutional and bureaucratic apparatus to further its influence across its immediate frontiers. More importantly, it is its willingness to be engaged and contribute to global peace, security and governance which is a topic of major speculation among strategists and political commentators, both in India and abroad.

It is therefore important to understand India's role and views on the current flux in global governance and its own intentions and motives regarding its future shape. This special edition of *Rising Powers Quarterly*, titled *Rising India and Its Global Governance Imperatives*, seeks to understand India's reaction to the current crisis in global governance, its stake in a liberal world order, its interest in ushering change in existing structures, and its capacity to influence and shape the future of global governance.

Challenges of Global Governance Confronting a Rising India

The present structure of global governance emerged out of a particular mix of power, interests and ideology in the post-Second World War era (Ruggie 2004; Ikenberry 2005). Western hegemony shaped international institutions in its own light. They were first a result of the US military and economic preponderance, with Bretton Woods institutions and global economic governance its most emphatic manifestation. The liberal economic order was a public good only the US could engender and sustain through its economic and military power. If power was one criteria, interests was another. Where one superpower could not do it alone, their complementarity of interests paved way for new norms and rules. Great power consensus therefore was equally responsible for the current structures of global governance. Soviet and American interests in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons were largely responsible for the NPT regime in the post-World War period (Krauss 2007: 296). While, on one hand, power was instrumental in creating new norms and rules, on the other, norms and rules were critical for the balance of power to remain concentrated in the hands of the great powers (Mearshiemer 1994: 13). Global governance is thus not only an off-shoot of a particular constellation of power but also an agent to sustain the same. Once created, it helps in preserving the system by making others converge their behavior along pre-defined norms and rules. These norms and rules gain additional legitimacy if they serve the interests of those they seek to govern. It is through this process of internalization of norms and rules that global governance attains its over-arching influence upon state behavior.

For most of the post-Second World War period, two great powers defined the international system and also structures of global governance. For a considerable time after the end of the Cold War, American unipolarity replaced that bipolar distribution of power. Its impact on global governance was palpable in so far as it came to represent closely the neoliberal outlook of successive US administrations. The liberal global order attained its climax in the first decade of US hegemony (Blyth 2007). In last quarter of a century, however, the US unipolarity has paved way for a multipolar global order whose principal agents are a number of rising powers (Kahler 2013). Foundations of this emerging multipolarity lay in the shift of economic power from West to the East (Posen 2009). The engine of global growth has now located itself in Asia, with China and India as the new destinations. Their rising economic prowess has also contributed to their military strength. Their rise however is not restricted to their increasing resource base and capabilities; their presence is also equally consequential for any solution to the world's most important predicaments (Kliengibiel 2016). From restructuring of global economy to climate change and trade negotiations, these rising powers are both part of the problem and its solution.

This rise of new powers, therefore, poses new challenges to the existing structures of global governance which is largely a vestige of the post-Second World War global distribution of power. From the United Nations Security Council to the International Monetary Fund, global institutions are struggling to accommodate this change in power equation. Rising powers are not only clamoring for a greater role but also aiming for a restructuring these norms, rules and institutions. In other words, these rising powers are transitioning from rule-takers to rule-makers. India's bid for a permanent seat at the UNSC, its drive to become a 'normal' nuclear power and its pursuit of greater influence in global economic governance – all these are cases in point. India's intent is not to change the entire edifice of these institutions but only to seek greater participation. Accommodation rather than revolutionary change is its objective (Press Trust of India 2016). Its increasing power base has only made this quest realistic. This in essence makes India both a stakeholder and challenger to the existing structures of global governance.

Yet, there are certain avenues of the liberal global order which invite India's strong reservations, if not its vehement opposition. India's transition from the "universalism of the weak" to 'exceptionalism of the strong' is yet not fully over (Mohan 2010; Sidhu et al. 2013). Multiple reasons explain India's reluctance to fully embrace and internalize all of the liberal global governance agenda including that of democracy promotion, the responsibility to protect and neoliberal global trading regimes. For one, India is yet to overcome the stranglehold of its ideological past. Ideas such as sovereignty, non-intervention and strategic autonomy are rooted in its strategic culture but also possess certain domestic political value. Second, even when New Delhi has seen a great transformation in its economic and military prowess in last quarter of a century, the willingness to use its power beyond its immediate neighborhood is yet to be internalized by its political decision-makers. When it comes to the use of military power, India remains extremely conservative. Lastly, Indian decision-makers are acutely sensitive about India's vital interests because of its unique challenges. Unlike great powers in the past, India's focus largely remains inward. The contradiction of India's rise is apparent in its impressive economic growth on one hand and its multitude of poor on the other. India's engagement with the liberal global order therefore varies from issue to issue. Where its ideology, interests and resources dictate otherwise, India is willing to be an outlier notwithstanding increasing global expectations.

Yet, rising powers like India cannot merely be challengers or stakeholders in global governance; they also need to contribute. Legitimacy of their growing power rests on suggesting, devising and implementing new structures of global governance. Given their limited capacities and priorities, their most important contribution for visible future may reside in their own regions. More so, because India's global ambitions can only be realized once it shows leadership in its own backyard

(Dash 2012). For India, its natural habitat remains South Asia. How India is able to transform the region will be a critical test for its global ambitions. Its increasing footprint in the Indo-Pacific and especially Indian Ocean's maritime space is another venue where its contributions will be keenly witnessed. Despite challenges, India is now attempting to shape the South Asian regional architecture in various domains. It is also actively contributing to maritime governance in the Indian Ocean region. Only by setting an example regionally can India hope to contribute globally.

Both India and the international system are undergoing profound changes, complicating the interplay between India and the international system. With India's rise, there are new demands on India to play a larger role in regional and global governance. While traditionally India always tried to be cautious in carving out a role for itself on issues of global governance, on regional security issues India has, more often than not, been an assertive player (Pant 2016: 197-211). Notwithstanding the challenge posed by China and Pakistan, India is now keen to take the lead in shaping regional governance structures and give its global credentials greater credibility. At a time when the US is seemingly retreating from its global commitments and China's rise is putting pressure on extant institutions and norms, India's leadership role becomes even more crucial.

It is these concerns regarding India's rise and its engagement with global governance that forms the backdrop of this special edition. It addresses India's unique position as a rising power in the contemporary global governance debate by exploring its three dimensions.

Between a Challenger and a Stakeholder

This section explores those avenues in global governance where India has increasingly become a mainstream participant from being at the periphery. The second article in this volume examines India's bid to become a full member of the NSG, a process which began with the landmark US-India civil nuclear cooperation pact and underscores "India's transformative position from a nuclear outlier to be a major stakeholder in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime." Ji Yeon-jung argues that the incremental approach that India has adopted in its NSG bid not only accommodates New Delhi's own interest in the multilateral nuclear export control regime but is also a manifestation of its rise in the global nuclear order. She suggests that "as a veto player has significant authority to influence policy change, India attempts to establish an adequate agenda and effective coalition-building to ensure its entry into the NSG."

The following article analyses "the evolution of India's climate policy over the years through the prism of its broader foreign policy strategy, arguing that only by locating Indian climate policy as a subset of its foreign policy agenda, can India's

engagement with global climate politics be fully explained.” Aniruddh Mohan argues that “shifts in India’s engagement with global climate politics have been but a part of its overall foreign policy adjustments in favour of greater responsibility in management of the global commons.” Changes in Indian foreign policy goals and objectives in recent years towards greater pragmatism and reimagining India’s global role are therefore critical to understanding the changes in India’s climate policy as well.

The fourth article examines the trajectory of Indian diplomacy to seek a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council by mapping its historical association, its interests, its perspectives, and its strategies. In many ways, UNSC reforms are viewed as key indicators of the accommodation of rising powers in the international system. Manish S Dabhade argues that “the case of India provides one of the best examples of a rising power coming to terms with its increased power, role and expectations of itself and of other powers, great and small, in negotiating its place in the reformed Council.” He goes on to suggest that “only a pragmatic, realpolitik approach that involves hard power bargaining would lead India to achieve its decades old aspiration to sit at the global high table.”

India and the Liberal Global Order

This section underlines India’s engagement with those aspects of current global governance it is uncomfortable with and its attempts at managing those differences. Despite being one of the world’s largest democracies, New Delhi’s relationship with democracy promotion has been tentative at best, shaped by its long-standing commitments to non-intervention and non-interference, reinforced by the seemingly negative consequences of western democracy promotion agenda in the post-Cold War period. Ian Hall in his article suggests that “India has come to democracy promotion relatively late and in a context in which its involvement in this area is linked to wider strategic objectives, notably building a more robust partnership with the United States and managing Chinese influence in its own region, in particular.” He argues that “India has chosen to tread softly in this area in order to further its interests and minimise its exposure to potentially negative consequences that could arise from moving beyond carefully calibrated democracy assistance.”

The next article by Kartik Bommakanti focuses on India’s paradoxical attitude towards humanitarian interventions and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. Bommakanti underscores this paradox by suggesting that “New Delhi’s interventions within its neighbourhood have been rationalized, by invoking the principle of humanitarianism and altruism, at least partially, without an appeal to formal institutional legitimacy” whereas “the opposite tends to be equally true in New Delhi’s conduct toward humanitarian situations extra-regionally, which it

seeks to legitimize through the formal institutional mechanism of the UNSC.” He argues that India’s support for R2P is likely to be limited at the extra-regional level which has consequences for India’s role in global governance as it restricts the extent to which it would be able to contribute.” Bommakanti concludes that India will look to the UN peacekeeping operations to contribute to global governance even as a rising power.

Analyzing shifts and consistencies in India’s positions at various ministerial conferences of the World Trade Organization during the Doha Round, Mihir Sharma and Preeti Bhogal seek to examine if Indian concerns were “motivated primarily by Indian domestic interests or by the common stated concerns of the G-33 group of developing countries.” They suggest that at each stage of the negotiating process, Indian policy-makers gave primacy to “Indian national interests and political compulsions as much as to its broader rhetorical positioning on North-South issues.” They go on to argue that given the new political climate in the West which is less enthusiastic about the benefits of globalisation, India will have to “re-define its national interest more broadly, and take up a similar coalition-building role in global trade governance that it has begun to espouse in other international fora.”

Shaping New Structures of Global Governance

This section focuses upon India’s efforts to enunciate alternatives to the current structure of global governance through new institutions. The article by K Yhome and Tridivesh Singh Maini assesses India’s changing approach towards regionalism and argues that “unlike the Nehruvian approach that overlooked South Asia in region building efforts, the new regional approach gives equal emphasis to South Asia regionalism and the wider Indo-Pacific regionalism.” The authors argue that India’s new leadership role in region building stems from its own self-interest as well as the interests of the wider region. This implies that as India actively contributes to shaping the regional order, “India’s regionalism and sub-regionalism efforts have paid dividends primarily a result of improvements in bilateral relations with some neighbouring countries.”

Sachin Chaturvedi and Sabyasachi Saha examine India’s role in creating new institutional mechanisms within the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) initiative, thereby strengthening governance architecture on global trade, capital and investment. They argue that India’s support for such new institutions was to “collectively influence global financial architecture, create alternate financial institutions based on principles of greater equality, create sector specific collaboration platforms on development and security, and to use such platforms to leverage the BRICS advantage for domestic economic growth.” They go on to suggest that “with collective partnerships, BRICS may clearly be delivering

in terms of consensus on economic, trade and investment issues that may foster growth across economies.”

The final article by Prem Mahadevan casts a critical eye on India’s engagement with the global discourse on terrorism. He asserts that “reliance on foreign policy activism to rally moral outrage against a rogue state like Pakistan fails when that state has nuclear weapons, a clear propaganda line that terrorism is a byproduct of territorial disputes, and an economic and military patron in China.” Mahadevan calls for a new approach by New Delhi if a sustainable discourse on marginalizing Pakistani support for terrorism is to be evolved. He suggests that “the thrust of Indian diplomacy, both at the level of government officials interacting with foreign counterparts, and professional groups such as academic and journalistic networks, must be to investigate and expose Pakistan as a rogue state that sponsors cross border terrorism to externalize its domestic failures.”

Together, these articles present an interesting portrait of India’s role in the global governance architecture. With a rise in Indian capabilities, there is not only an expectation from its external interlocutors that New Delhi ought to play a larger global role but Indian policy-makers too are re-defining their engagements in the global policy matrix. In the global nuclear order, environmental debates and at the United Nations, India now views itself at the centre of the emerging dynamic while in areas such as democracy promotion, responsibility to protect discourse and global trade, its approach remains a cautious one even as it is actively seeking to manage its differences with the established powers. More ambitiously, India is also trying to build new structures in certain other areas such as regional governance and engagement with other emerging powers in platforms such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) grouping. In many ways, a rising India’s engagement in global governance has only just begun and it will be some time before its full consequences are revealed. Whatever shape it may take, India’s future in global governance is likely to be significantly different from its past.

Bio

Harsh V. Pant holds a joint appointment as Professor of International Relations in Defence Studies Department and the India Institute at King’s College London. He is Distinguished Fellow and Head of Strategic Studies at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. He is also a Non-Resident Fellow with the Wadhvani Chair in US-India Policy Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC. He has been a Visiting Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore; a Visiting Fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania; a Visiting Scholar at the Center for International Peace and Security Studies, McGill University; and an Emerging

Leaders Fellow at the Australia-India Institute, University of Melbourne. His current research is focused on Asian security issues. His most recent books include *The US Pivot and Indian Foreign Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan), *Handbook of Indian Defence Policy* (Routledge), and *The US-India Nuclear Pact: Policy, Process and Great Power Politics* (Oxford University Press). Pant is a columnist for the Diplomat and writes regularly for various media outlets including the Japan Times, the Wall Street Journal, the National (UAE), and the Hindustan Times.

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