



Original Article

A New Era of Indo-Russian Relations in Navigating Global Challenges Together

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Manuscript ID:

IBMIIRJ -2025-020424

Submitted: 05 Mar 2025

Revised: 20 Mar 2025

Accepted: 10 Apr 2025

Published: 30 Apr 2025

ISSN: 3065-7857

Volume-2

Issue-4

Pp. 124-127

April 2025

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Quick Response Code:



Web: <https://ibrj.us>



DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17365665

DOI Link:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17365665>



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Abstract

The international affairs have become more dynamic as the world is undergoing through rapid changes. The partnership between India and Russia over the diverse areas addresses multiple global challenges, such as protection of human rights, combating terrorism together, promoting the creation of multipolar world order, dealing with the threat of cyber security, conservation of environment etc. As both the nations are cooperating with each other on such diverse areas, the relationship is also strengthened. The significance of Indo-Russian relationship can be reviewed in navigating the complex global challenges together through multilateral platforms, such as BRICS, SCO, and United Nations. They demonstrate their strong bond for adapting to the global geo political shifts. Their role in addressing the global challenges significantly influenced the several nations to adopt multiple measures. Cooperating over such issues have open up the new vista of opportunity and new era in Indo Russian relations. Certainly both the nations will continue to foster their relationship with such collaborative measures in the upcoming future as well.

Keywords: Relations, Peace, Challenge, Cooperation

Introduction

Historical Path of the Journey

The contemporary world is marked by rapid change, encompassing both international cooperation and conflict. The geopolitical landscape of the world has becoming very dynamic. As international relations are dominated by both conflict and cooperation, it is visible that the persistent efforts have been taken by the various multilateral organisation for maintenance of peace, protection of human rights. Nations in the world are striving for the social, economic and political progress. Major economies in the world are facing challenges. Degradation of the environment is increasing the vulnerabilities, confronting the humanity, as well as raising the security challenges to the overall humankind.

In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, the Republic of India and the Russian Federation continue to share a deep-rooted and time-tested, strategic partnership. Over the decades, their relationship has undergone a significant transformation, shaped by political, economic, and strategic engagements at the highest levels of leadership. The relationship is not only limited to the head of states at its official level, but also the relationship has won the hearts of the people. The close ties between people to people have enhanced the relations between these two nations. This partnership, which originally emerged during the Soviet era, has successfully transitioned into a modern strategic alliance, adapting to shifting geopolitical dynamics and mutual national interests.

The historical foundations of Indo-Russian relations can be traced back to early cultural and intellectual exchanges, which played a crucial role in shaping diplomatic ties. One of the earliest recorded interactions dates to the 15th century, when Russian traveller and a merchant from Tver Afanasy Nikitin visited India. His travel accounts provided valuable insights into Indian society and laid the groundwork for future engagements between the two nations.

During the pre-independence period, intellectual and ideological connections further strengthened Indo-Russian relations. A notable example is the relationship between famous Russian writer Leo Tolstoy and Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi.

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How to cite this article:

Raut, R. (2025). A New Era of Indo-Russian Relations in Navigating Global Challenges Together. *InSight Bulletin: A Multidisciplinary Interlink International Research Journal*, 2(4), 124–127. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17365665>

Tolstoy's philosophy of non-violence, self-reliance, simple living and moral resilience deeply influenced Gandhi's thoughts and approach to India's freedom movement. This ideological exchange not only connected the two nations but also laid the moral foundation for their diplomatic relations in the post-independence era. Prior to independence the visit of our Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been prominent in strengthening the relations. "Pravda also gave an account of the activities of Jawaharlal Nehru in his capacity as an official representative of the Indian National Congress at the first conference of the Anti-imperialist League, held in Brussels in February 1927." In the post-independence period deeply influenced by the Soviet Model of the social development our constitution also inculcate the ideal of socialism. The major milestone in Indo-Russian relations has come with the treaty of peace, friendship, and cooperation, which was signed on 9 August 1971. There are several key aspects and importance of the treaty from the India, strategic military and political perspective. "It further provides a credible assurance that in the event of an attack or a threat thereof, the high contracting parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such a threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries."

Over time, these historical interactions and ideological exchanges have evolved into a multifaceted strategic partnership, encompassing cooperation in defense, trade, energy, space technology, and global diplomacy. Today, India and Russia continue to collaborate on key international issues, reinforcing their shared vision for a multipolar world order and a stable global governance framework.

There are various global challenges for which India and Russia are commonly facing and cooperating. As both the nations have been standing together for the long time by sharing their strategic partnership, both of them encompasses multiple sectors, where cooperation has been made. The Indo Russian relationship has evolved since ancient period till Cold War era and it has transformed into an alliance in the modern period by addressing the contemporary global challenges.

Objectives

Since both India and Russia are the great players on the international platforms, it becomes pivotal to understand the growth of their relationship through this paper. Following are the objectives of this paper.

- To review the new chapter in the relationship of India - Russia
- To study the global challenges, commonly shared by both India and Russia
- To examine the key areas of corporation
- To identify the measures taken by both the nations.

Methodology

The scholar has used descriptive and analytical methodology for writing this paper to understand the historical background.

Navigating Together the Global Challenges

Reducing Dominance of the West

The cold period in the international relation has created a bipolar system. The end of the Cold War has given the rise for the unipolar system where the dominance of the western countries specifically of the United States on the international relations can be seen. India and Russia are both actively working to reduce the western dominance on the global affairs. "Trends in geo-economics, in demography, and many other factors besides—all contribute to a rebalanced world, in which the West remains ever-present but ever-less united behind the US, and no longer singularly dominant." Both India and Russia are working together to challenge the western lead global financial system, security framework.

The efforts of both the countries can be seen in the promotion of the trade in the local currency, such as rupees and rubles with bypassing the US dollar. Russia is trying to promote its energy sales to the multiple countries. Also, they have developed an alternative payment systems to facilitate the direct transactions through means such as India's UPI and Russia's SPFS (Sistema peredachi finansovykh soobscheniy) Trade between India and Russia has been one of the important factor which is reducing the western dominance. Irrespective of the western sanctions, Russia has continued its exports. It has been constantly stated by the foreign Minister of India that India will continue to purchase oil, gas and defence imports from Russia as per its need. Boosting trade relations between both the countries has been one of the crucial factor in creating the non-western trade networks. The contribution of the international North South transport corridor can also be taken into consideration where the trade route is linking India, Russia, Iran, and Central Asia. "On September 12, 2000, India, Iran, and Russia signed the inter-governmental agreement on the INSTC at the second international Euro-Asian Conference on Transport in St. Petersburg; the agreement was ratified in 2002."

India Russia Promoting Multipolar World Order

In order to reduce the western dominance and the influence of western countries both India and Russia are trying to strengthen the multipolar world order. Both the nations are advocating for a multipolar world order through actively performing in the various multilateral organisation such as BRICS, G20, and SCO. More prominent role is being played by the bricks nations where both India and Russia are trying to expanding the organisation to include more and more developing nations.

Multilateral organisations like BRICS is strengthening South-South Co-operation. Being representing a substantial portion of the global GDP, BRICS, countries are successfully diversify the global trade and financial flow for the promotion of multipolar world. Expansion of the bricks nations into their fold, five new members, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates is setting the journey towards highlighting the interest of the multipolar world.

Dealing with the Threat of Cyber Security

With the advancement of technology, there has been rapid increasing in the cybercrime. Both India and Russia share a strong cyber security partnership, which focuses on cybercrime prevention. It also emphasise upon enhancing cyber security framework through which the nations can avoid and counter cyber threats. In cybercrime, role of state as well as non-state actors is very crucial.

"Russia-India interest in establishing a formal cyber cooperation relationship started in 2016 when both governments signed a "Memorandum of Understanding on Information Security" agreement during a BRICS summit." Both the countries are cooperating with each other in securing the critical infrastructure, such as banking system, defence network, and communication infrastructure from cyber-attacks. Specially, Russia provides high-tech mechanism for the protection of the sensitive data of the government. India and Russia have signed the following agreements,

- India, Russia Cybersecurity Cooperation Agreement in 2016
- Strategic Partnership on Digital Security, 2021

Combating Terrorism

Both India and Russia are the victims of terrorism. Most of the time these attacks have been conducted by the neighbouring states. Both India and Russia are highly condemning such attacks. Regular practises have been taken for curbing the attacks. India – Russia joint military drill, INDRA and also there has been various training programs organised between India and Russia for counter terrorism measures.

Steps have been always taken to condemn terrorism and violent extremism in its all form. India and Russia are suffering from the cross border terrorist. "They called for zero tolerance for terrorism and expeditious finalization and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the UN framework as well as implementation of the UNGA and the UNSC resolutions on countering terrorism and violent extremism, conducive to terrorism." Terrorism has been one of the greatest challenge faced by multiple countries in the world. Hence it becomes very necessary to combat terrorism at the multilateral level. Indian and Russia are addressing issue by dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism on various platform such as United Nations, BRICS, SCO etc. two sides have further agreed to strengthen their coordination for fighting against the terrorism under their special and privilege strategic partnership.

Cooperation over Environmental Challenges

Today's world is facing unprecedented environmental challenges which are often interconnected with the countries in the world. Multilateral efforts for the protection of the environment is a need of the time. Both natural disaster and human made calamities are degrading the environment. "Human health issues that result from drought, flooding, and other weather conditions increase the death rate, change food availability, and limit how much a worker can get done, and ultimately the productivity of our economy." India, Russia are cooperating over the framework of renewable energy and green technologies through bilateral ties. They have established bilateral working group on environment and climate change which takes care and focuses the issues of ecological conservation, waste management. Both the nations are aiming to reduce their carbon consumption for contributing towards the clean environment.

For the protection of the environment using renewable energy sources is going to be the important step. The international solar alliance is one such projects where Russia supports India's motive. International solar association is jointly conceptualise by India and France on the side-lines of COP21 in Paris, 2015. "Following a 2020 amendment to its Framework Agreement, all UN member states are now eligible to join the Alliance. Currently, 100+ countries are signatories, with 90+ countries having ratified to become full members." Measures have been taken for sustainable forestry, management, protection of wildlife and ecosystem, conservation of the distinctive species in the Arctic and Himalyan regions of Russia and India.

"The World Bank has been supporting the government's efforts since 2011 through the ongoing National Ganga River Basin Project, which helped set up the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) as the nodal agency to manage the river, and financed sewage treatment infrastructure in several riverside towns and cities." For the environmental conservation India and Russia both agrees to fair climate finance for the developing countries.

Efforts for Reducing the Arms Race

Irrespective of having the strong defence partnership, India and Russia collaborate on arms control. As India is committed to the principal of non-proliferation of the nuclear weapon, Russia supports the entry of India into Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). They also prevent the space weaponization by abiding the international disarmament treaties. Military trade between the two nations highlight responsible arms trade. They promote the regional stability.

Conclusion

The relationship of India and Russia has evolved very strongly over a period of time. Over the decades, it signifies strategic alignment with strong bond of partnership. With the common aim, both the countries are addressing the global challenges commonly faced by both of them. The region of creation of the multipolar world order is commonly shared by both to which they are committed. The long-standing political relations have nurtured and reshaped the global affairs.

There are multiple opportunities where both the countries have wider scope to cooperate with each other. India and Russia continued to engage with each other energetically on the various multilateral forums in order to achieve their foreign policy objectives. Both India and Russia are impressing, a forward-looking multifaceted engagement. A new Era in the relationship has already began where both the nations are navigating. Various global challenges together their ability to adopt innovate and collaborate in diverse field will certainly enhance not only the bilateral relationship, but also to contribute, a stable world order.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my institution, Sonopant Dandekar College, Palghar, for providing the necessary support and encouragement to carry out this research.

I am deeply thankful to my colleagues and peers for their valuable insights, constructive suggestions, and constant motivation throughout the process of developing this paper.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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