

Post Covid-19 world order: An Analytical study

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Abstract

The World is going through its most challenging crisis since world war second. The COVID-19 epidemic is one of the most challenging disasters that humanity has faced in the twenty-first century, with no end in sight. Despite the fact that governments are busy treating corona-affected people and attempting to find a means to end this calamity, the worldwide impacts of this present pandemic are still being felt. The impacts of this pandemic are very significant for the existing political and economic leadership. In all aspects, COVID-19 will be a step towards the new world order. The present paper tries to understand how the current pandemic has affected the contemporary world order and what are the key factors that will determine the new world order post COVID-19. Further, it also looks at the uncertainties that lie ahead and how India can contribute in shaping the new world order. To achieve these objectives the analysis will be conducted following the qualitative methods, specifically-analytical, descriptive and evaluative methods.

Keywords: World order, Covid-19, Disasters, Leadership, Pandemic.

Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has been described to be the most disruptive global event since the Great Depression and the Second World War. Since its rise, the pandemic has impacted the world in many ways. For instance, its impact on global economy has been disastrous so much so that to get the economy back on track will be an arduous task. Additionally, the global politics have also been shaken up by the outbreak of the disease and has raised concerns about the future of the contemporary world order. The liberal world order that has been in place since the end of the Second World War was already losing its ground even before the rise of the pandemic because of several reasons. The COVID crisis has exacerbated the issues that have dominated the existing U.S. led world order. In fact, the crisis can be attributed as the 'tipping point' as it is likely to change or alter the rules-based liberal world order. Several factors are becoming a part of the discourse which would most likely to dominate the shaping of the new world order which is likely to emerge post the crisis. India, too, is expected to play an important role in shaping the order of the world once the crisis is over. Over all, the corona virus pandemic seems to be a game changer for the global politics

It is in the wake of the Second World War; the United States established a liberal world order with the support of other Western democratic countries especially the United Kingdom. The order was supposed to be the one which would be open and based on a set of norms, rules, and institutions and values such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries, and the protection of human rights. It was based on maintaining peace, prosperity, and stability around the world. In this regard, institutions like the United Nations, World Bank, and the World Trade Organization were built to promote peace, economic development, and trade and investments. Apart from establishing institutions, the United States also formed alliances and developed relationships with other countries. It is argued that the liberal order expanded and evolved further after the end of the Cold War. For example, the NATO was expanded, the G20 took center stage, and

there was also an establishment of U.S. led security arrangements. Additionally, the United States took in its hands to spread democracy and other liberal values as far as possible. Thus, with the end of bipolarity, the West assumed that the liberal order was now global. One of the biggest achievements of the liberal order has been that since its creation no other World War has been fought. It is also believed that the world has made great progress especially under the banner Post Covid-19 World Order: An Overview of globalization, which is one of the most important elements of the liberal economic order. The order is also said to have lifted many people out of poverty all across the globe. However, just like the saying goes 'not everything is perfect', the liberal order too has its shortcomings which seem to have been building up since a long time now. For years, the liberal order has been criticized by both China and Russia for being extremely 'west-centric'. Both autocratic powers have time and again challenged the basic tenets of the order. In China's view, the U.S. led world order is 'unfair' and 'unreasonable' as it perpetuates western dominance while keeping China's influence down and it is incapable of solving and sometimes even adds to world's most serious problems. Russia, on the other hand, advocates a Westphalian world system which is tolerant of pluralism among nations. Additionally, the United States, since 2016 seems to have become disinterested in leading the world and is drifting itself away from the rules and values which were once established by it. Similarly, the West also seems to have moved in the same direction by showing less interest in maintaining the world order alongside the US and moving away from the basic principles of the order. Another issue concerning the liberal order is the rise of new authoritarianism in countries such as Poland and Hungary of Eastern Europe. Along with these factors, the pandemic seems to have added to the chaos impacting the liberal order. It is being argued that the COVID-19 pandemic might be the first global crisis with a complete absence of the U.S. leadership. It is an event where there has been no sign of global cooperation and even the international organizations seem to have failed to deal with this catastrophic situation.

New World Order and Covid-19

World order is a politico-philosophical concept related to the nature and objectives of human life, which is observed and analysed in the context of international relations. It focuses on issues of human society and seeks solutions to problems like war and violence, unequal distribution and concentration of economic wealth, social injustice, environmental imbalance and alienation of human being from themselves, society and mankind. As defined by Baylis and Smith, the concept of world order not only deals with the issues of international relations i.e., relations among the nation states but also among the transnational institutions, governments and international organisations and thus can also alternatively be used with the term 'Global Order'. World Order is different from international order in the sense that the basic unit of study under international order is the nation state whereas world order focuses on the ideas and ideologies governing human life. International order focuses on study of activities, distribution of power, structures, functioning and nature of international political system from political and military perspective, whereas world order focuses on political as well as economic, social, cultural and other aspects of human activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most dangerous disasters to the humankind in the 21st century so far as the depth of this calamity cannot be measured. Though the countries are busy treating the corona affected people and trying to find out the way to get rid of this disaster, the consequences of this current pandemic in the global level are also needed to be focused, particularly, the growing competition between the two giant, United States of America (USA) and China, and the future of global politics in the post-COVID-19 era. Besides the disaster of the global health sector, the current pandemic has also raised a few questions in the international political arena. First, the COVID-19 has led to the reminder of changing global power from the UK to the USA in 1956 following the 'Suez moment' where the crisis had long established the UK's increasing dependency over the USA. It also put a big question mark over the present global order where the USA plays a key role. Second, the neoliberal policy of many Western countries is under criticism due to the increases in inequalities across the world. The whole world has started renationalization thinking by giving up the

neoliberal policies, states have provided aid for the business and workers, countries are implementing shut down and imposing sanction over free movement within or outside the country amid the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of these types of war, where there are no seen enemies, leadership now depends on who responds better. One of the bases of mastering the world by the USA for the last few decades is her quick global response to any crisis across the world, either through donating wealth or exercising its military power. But the COVID-19 shows a clear failure of such a quick response from the USA. Instead, China is following the same path of helping the coronavirus affected countries as a quick global response due to the absence of the USA or any other global power.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 will bring impact over the world economies — may be more than the great depression of the 1930's or financial crisis of 2008. Generally, such a financial crisis has a significant impact on the global power politics. The current crisis has already shaken the world economies, which is certainly going to change the international politics or balance of power — either the emergence of new global power or revising the existing system. Considering these issues, the policymakers now predict that the spread of coronavirus and its consequence could help to shift global power from the USA to other — China in this case due to her engagement to other states where any assistance is needed. As the COVID-19 spreads across the world, many countries find themselves in a very difficult situation and ask for assistance from the developed countries. But no countries except China have come forward to help the others by providing medical assistance for fighting against this pandemic. Such increasing engagement with the corona affected countries is seen as China's sharing of the global responsibility — a basic feature to be the global leader. Now, it is important to justify how China emerges as a trusted responsible power and how they share the global responsibility amid the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this paper tries to answer the question of whether COVID-19 could reshape the global order and to what extent global order could turn toward a new global leader.

Factors determine Post COVID-19 world Order

Geo-economics: It looks at the effect of COVID-19 on globalisation, supply chains, trade and economic relations. If this reversal of globalisation becomes permanent, it may create more inward-looking national economies—a sharp contrast from the interconnected world that was, until recently, the natural state of affairs. Further, a new form of ‘gated globalisation’ could emerge, one that is less free and less open as the countries around the world become more cautious and selective while trading. This will impact not only advanced economies, but emerging economies as well. For instance, the pandemic has drawn attention to the risks faced by emerging economies due to massive capital outflow and shortage of dollar liquidity in the region. This would require countries like India to overhaul fiscal policies and growth strategies to adapt to a less interconnected world.

Geo-politics: It examines both the theories and determinants that will contribute to shaping the new world order. The biggest perceptible challenge—exacerbated by the novel coronavirus—comes to the Western-led liberal order. Much of the predominant narrative focuses on binaries of either arriving at a China-led global order or going back to a US-led one. The pandemic has shown that states with decisive leadership and state capacity can play a large role in the emerging world order irrespective of the nature of the regime (be it democratic, autocratic or semi-democratic).

Resurgence of aid diplomacy: It utilises competitiveness in local industries to meet global demands for medical supplies, medical equipment and essential goods. The biggest perceptible challenge—exacerbated by the novel coronavirus—comes to the Western-led liberal order. Much of the predominant narrative focuses on binaries of either arriving at a China-led global order or going back to a US-led one. The pandemic has shown that states with decisive leadership and state capacity can play a large role in the emerging world order irrespective of the nature of the regime (be it democratic, autocratic or semi-democratic). If this forges new partnerships between countries and organisations, it may reorient foreign policy imperatives towards nations that are ready and willing to meet these demands. For example, China’s ‘mask diplomacy’ or India’s

potential to manufacture generic drugs on a large scale throws open the possibility of their improved global standing in a post-COVID-19 world order.

Multilateralism: It delves into the possible demise of the post- World War II global order. A global disease outbreak indeed requires a coordinated global response. Thus, the recent developments surrounding the weakening of global institutions puts forth a collective choice for nations- either to strengthen the underlying foundations of the global governance architecture or abandon these institutions altogether. The crisis has galvanised regional efforts in some pockets, such as India's efforts to resurrect the SAARC, which provides a potential direction to all nations for continued support towards intergovernmental platforms and global institutions and its manifestation affecting the new world order

Geo-technology: It considers the use of advanced and emerging technologies to combat COVID-19, and how increasing their use interfaces with geopolitical processes. Countries across the world have deployed mass surveillance applications—arguably, at the cost of privacy and data protection—to trace, track, detect and diagnose fresh infections before they spread further. It may be useful to explore what the boost in demand for such technology could mean for future norms on individual rights and cyberspace, which is currently the new plane of existence for mankind

Possible spike in different forms of discrimination: Another undesirable outcome of the pandemic could be what is being referred to as new-age racism. Globally, societies could become more self-seeking and inward-looking leading to further pushback against liberal policies regarding migration and refugees. New questions are likely to be asked about the source of goods. More stringent imposition of phytosanitary measures by advanced states on products emanating from the less developed countries might become the new normal. Lockdowns and travel restrictions could potentially legitimise the rhetoric around border walls in more conservative countries.

Environmental protection: The pandemic may inspire future behavioural changes with positive environmental outcomes and may also create a negative perception of physical global interactions and travel among people. If this happens, it may

alter the work culture across the globe with increased preference for remote working. However, as the dramatic actions taken during the pandemic cannot be completely emulated in non-pandemic times to achieve the positive benefits, it remains to be seen to what extent the changes brought on by the pandemic, such as increases in telecommuting and reduced travel, will remain once the immediate threat has passed.

India in the Post-Covid-19 World order

India in the Post Covid-19 World Order India's rapid response in order to control the virus has been lauded by many. India led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has guided many countries, regional forums like SAARC, and even initiated a virtual meeting with the G-20 countries to discuss the challenges posed by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and to forge a global coordinated response. In addition, India has also shown compassion, togetherness, bonhomie collective Post Covid-19 World Order: An Overview security, and humanitarian cooperation by sharing with the world the drug hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) on humanitarian grounds. Moreover, India has mobilized forces for disaster management drills, organized digital trainings to share its medical expertise with other affected countries, and has actively partnered on global efforts to develop remedies and vaccines against the virus. In early June, India accepted the invitation from US President Donald Trump to attend the next Group of Seven (G7) summit that is to be held in the United States later this year. Moreover, India was elected a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term. On 22nd May 2020, Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, of India was elected as the Chair of World Health Organization's Executive Board. Domestically, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan' also known as 'self-reliant'. India which is about resilience and decentralization and not isolationism. The Prime Minister announced a Rupees 20 lakh crore economic package under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan, to aid the nation out of the COVID crisis. While these are some major developments that have taken place since the outbreak of the pandemic at the global as well as the national level; at the regional level India seems to have been dragged into a territorial dispute with its giant neighbour, China. Tensions

between India and China began in early May when there were reports of skirmishes in Eastern Ladakh's Pangong Lake region. It escalated and took a violent turn when troops from both sides clashed in the Galwan Valley in Eastern Ladakh and India lost around 20 soldiers, including a commanding officer on 15th June. Following this incident, there has been a wide-ranging anti-Chinese sentiment across the country especially for boycotting Chinese goods and services from traders' community as well as the civil society. New Delhi also banned 59 Chinese mobile applications Heena Samant 23 citing that these applications posed serious threat to the country's sovereignty and security. India, in April, imposed restrictions on Chinese financial investments into India from cheaply buying stakes in Indian firms by the cash-rich Chinese companies. The situation at the moment is still very critical as there is a continuous manifestation of aggression from the Chinese troops at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

India's Role in Shaping the Post-COVID 19 World Order

India did not have any role to play in shaping the contemporary world order as at that time it was, in no position to do so, either geopolitically or militarily. A lot has changed since then and the COVID crisis gives India with a historic and unique opportunity to play an important role in shaping the world order which is likely to emerge post the crisis and New Delhi is most likely to do so. India before its independence was known to be an exporter of its ideas and thoughts, however, in the contemporary world India has been an importer and consumer of ideas. This pandemic does provide India the context and ecosystem to regain its position as a contributor of ideas to the world. India today is home to one-sixth of humanity which makes it highly unlikely to not occupy a space in a post-COVID 19 world order. However, this reasoning is based on certain pre-conditions, which is, that India's position will depend on how it deals with the crisis domestically and how it emerges from it. India has been able to enhance its position globally in the past few years especially under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has also been appreciated for the way it has handled the situation of coronavirus so far. This will definitely give India a leverage to play an important role in a post-COVID 19 world order. However, one of the most attractive assets of India is its vibrant democracy which is different from Post Covid-19 World Order: An

Overview 24 the liberal democracy. Time and again, India has demonstrated itself to be a nation of democracy in diversity and a capacity to produce a stable government. Hence, among many factors that are likely to shape the post-COVID 19 world order, one of them is that there is a possibility of an alliance of democracies with India as a critical component of it. The post-COVID world is likely to see the rise of India to an apex level global eminence. New Delhi's relation with Beijing will however, continue to be on the edge. It is quite possible that in a post-COVID 19 world India's rises will be countered by China aided by Pakistan to defocus it from development. However, in the long run, on the one hand, both India and China will remain cautious and suspicious of each other and on the other hand, one might expect a reduced but subsisting antagonism between the two giant Asia neighbours. In his speech at the UNGA's 75th session, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, called for a larger share of India's representation at the United Nations. He also added that the vision of self-reliant India will act as a force multiplier for global economy. This clearly indicates that India wants to enhance its position on the world stage and the COVID-19 crisis provides India with an opportunity to do so. New Delhi should make the best out of this moment.

Conclusion

The World is going through its most challenging crisis since WWII. In all aspects, COVID-19 will be a step towards the new global order. However, at present, it is difficult to discern the shape, form or substance of the post COVID-19 world order but it will certainly depend on the scale and intensity of pandemic and the capability of nations preventing it. Strong multilateral cooperation will continue to be critical in our collective fight against the pandemic as also for a global economic recovery and to ensure that the economic fallouts of the pandemic are evenly distributed, so that no one country has to bear a disproportionate amount of economic recession triggered by the global pandemic. India is also expeditiously moving forward on its energy transition journey. The government's plan to establish a National Hydrogen Mission is a step in the right direction. India also has a unique opportunity, and an important role, in fostering regional co-operation in South Asia, thus creating new opportunities for growth and prosperity. Amid the ongoing volatility and change, India has a rare opportunity to

undertake several policy changes to not only address the short-term public health challenges but also to become an important axis of power and influence in the post-COVID world. The World Economic Forum stands with India in its efforts to assume new leadership roles and to help propel the world into a better, brighter, and more sustainable future for all.

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