

India's G20 Presidency: A Confluence of Vision, Strategy, and Inclusive Development

By Deep Kalra

The G20 is more than an economic platform; it is a crucible where the future of global governance is shaped. India's ascent to its presidency is emblematic of the country's rapidly evolving role on the world stage. As an active participant in some of the G20 proceedings, I've borne witness to India's transformation into a leader, fostering collaboration and charting pathways to address universal challenges. The government's meticulous planning and inclusive strategy are indeed commendable, setting a new benchmark for future presidencies.

India's chosen themes during its presidency resonate with the pivotal challenges of the modern world. The emphasis on Green Development, Climate Finance, and the inspiring 'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) campaign is a testament to India's commitment to infusing sustainability into modern lifestyles. Drawing from India's ancestral wisdom, the ethos of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' beautifully captures the essence of our shared destinies, interconnected futures, and to the world standing together to make gainful progress towards the tall order ahead of us. The emphasis on Accelerated, Inclusive, and Resilient Growth represents a future-forward vision, addressing the integration of MSMEs, labour welfare, and even the global skills gap. These pursuits align perfectly with the strategic priorities set during previous G20 presidencies and their positive economic implications.

Yet, what truly stands out in India's G20 journey is the holistic approach towards Accelerated, Inclusive, and Resilient Growth. The multifaceted strategy, encompassing the integration of MSMEs, labour rights, global skills development, and inclusive food systems, is a testament to India's comprehensive vision for global progress.

The crossroads of the 2030 Agenda with India's G20 Presidency couldn't be more fortuitous. India's agenda to invigorate global efforts towards SDGs, especially in a world reeling from the pandemic, emphasizes its role as a beacon of hope and resilience.

In an era dominated by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, India's emphasis on a human-centric technological transformation is both ground-breaking and prescient. This approach not only fuels economic growth but ensures that technology remains an enabler, not a disruptor.

A few days ago, some of our leading newspapers carried an image of Germany's Federal Minister for Digital and Transport Volker Wissin using UPI to pay a local '*sabzi wallah*'. This picture spoke a million silent words of attestation. Let's be honest, if a piece of technology has been adopted in every nook and cranny of the most populous country at break-neck speed, it is a definite case study for the world to learn from. Our country's many digitization successes give us a unique edge to pioneer innovative models for the future world order and share our learnings globally.

Reforming multilateralism for contemporary challenges, as proposed by India, is a clarion call for a new world order - more inclusive, equitable, and representative. Such reforms can pave the way for a more cohesive and cooperative world, where challenges are met with collective effort and shared wisdom. Moreover, the push for Women-led development, acknowledging the indispensable role of women in socio-economic growth, is ground-breaking.

One of the most astute moves of the Indian government was the choice of cities to host the G20 meetings. Call me biased, but the crown jewel was the manner in which the government showcased India's cultural, geographical, and historical diversity. Its equitable approach allowed the world to witness India in its entirety - its range, majesty, and vibrant spirit. Cities like Bhubaneswar, Thiruvananthapuram, Hampi, Siliguri, which might not typically be in the limelight, received global attention. This strategic move expedited infrastructural development and facelifts in these regions, which otherwise might have taken years, benefitting local economies and communities immensely.

Cultural diplomacy, too, has been an integral part of India's G20 strategy. The myriad cultural initiatives, from the grand display of 100 ASI monuments bathed in G20 colours to Shri Sudarshan Pattnaik's mesmerizing sand art, echo India's rich tapestry of traditions. These initiatives not only showcase India's cultural wealth, foster a spirit of global camaraderie but speak volumes about our country's intent to blend soft power with hard diplomacy. It's a symphony of India's ancient heritage with its modern aspirations. Much like the tourism landscape of the country, which will now gain refreshed appreciation from the global travel community.

Reflecting on past G20 presidencies, the benefits of hosting are manifold. Economic surges, bolstered international reputation, improvement in the nation's investment-grade rating and enhanced tourism are just the tip of the iceberg.

To my mind, India's G20 Presidency isn't just an event; it's a legacy in the making. A synthesis of tradition and modernity, of cultural wealth and technological prowess, and of national priorities with global objectives. It sets the stage for what global collaboration can achieve. I, for one, am filled with optimism and pride, and stand in solidarity with the government's approach. I am confident that this presidency will be a beacon of hope, resilience, and sustainable leadership in tumultuous times.

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