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THE POLITICS UNDERPINNING THE BRICS EXPANSION

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Abstract: *The cooperation of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, or BRICS, is a vital organization founded in 2009. In the politics of the modern world, there is no denying the significance of this international institution. Throughout its history, the organization has been a strong supporter of developing nations and has earned the reputation of being a guardian. The announcement that BRICS leaders had agreed to expand their organization during the fourteenth BRICS summit, which was held in Beijing, China, in 2022, garnered a great deal of attention from many different regions of the world. This article examines the reasons behind the BRICS' considerable involvement in global politics, the expansion policy, and how the BRICS outreach and the BRICS Plus summit or meeting play a role in this sector.*

Keywords: *BRICS; Expansion Policy; Global Politics; Strategic; Security; Sub-Regionalism*

INTRODUCTION

In today's global politics, various international and regional organizations are established or founded in different parts of the world; based on geographical proximity and shared interests or problems to solve. Every state, whether developed, developing, or least developed, has come to understand the importance of creating regional alliances highlighting their distinct similarities and shared goals with other nations. When these relationships got expanded from one region to another, and sovereign states from the various areas joined together to communicate and work together, they created a new type of broader grouping known as inter-regionalism (Naik 2019). Multiple kinds of regional organizations emerge due to globalization or the silence of some voices in international organizations. Furthermore, in modern international politics, coalitions are essential for bolstering one foreign policy and fighting any governments that go against the interests of other nations. National security was one of every state's most vital national interests during the Cold War. In addition, the formation of military alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO), and the Warsaw Pact became every state's foreign policy's primary objective to stand against any danger from other countries. All other alliances and treaties are inactive or

terminated except for NATO. One of the world's biggest and most powerful military alliances is still NATO.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold war in 1991, there was a detente in military alliance formation and the arms race. The creation of regional international organizations like the European Union (EU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 1996 and the G20 in September 1999 would be the clearest example of détente in manufacturing armaments competition and the turning of the world in economic integration. Most regional international organizations established following the Cold War end focus on discussing policies to ensure global financial stability. Additionally, a new discourse in international politics has been sparked by the advent of new powers in the global system. A shift in the current balance of power in the world is the result of the emergence of numerous nations from the non-traditional superpower club, including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS). These nations, frequently referred to as 'emerging economies' or 'rising powers,' are attempting to establish a new framework for international relations known as inter-regionalism, within which they can pursue their bilateral, regional, and global interactions and objectives (Naik 2019). Inter-regionalism, a recent development in international affairs, is the institutionalization of relationships between world regions. It also represents a new development in the increasingly diverse global order.

The contemporary global environment characterized the rising rivalries and confrontations among significant powers over trans-regional integration efforts and new threats to international security. For example, Beijing considers Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (AUKUS) and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), a group of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States of America, led by the United States in Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific, a threat to national security. Global trends are increasingly driven by emerging markets and developing nations, particularly South-South cooperation between emerging and developing countries; BRICS and Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) are relevant examples. All the economic perspectives of a grouping will likely become strategic partners. Moreover, the Russia-Ukraine crisis and growing rivalry between China and other states under the US umbrella in the Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific have raised the importance of regional international groups. Every state seeks more partners and conditions to join any organization or group.

Similarly, BRICS has developed into a crucial sub-regional international organization, and its member nations are actively looking to expand their collaboration and partner networks. As a direct result of the 14th Summit of the BRICS, which China essentially hosted, and the decisions made by the member nations to expand BRICS, BRICS has garnered an incredible amount of attention in world politics. The war in Ukraine affects international politics and has led to proposals for the expansion of both NATO and the European Union (Katoch 2022). As a result, the BRICS expansion policy can be regarded as a response to the western blocs' strategy of expanding their blocs and putting more effort into integrating with its allies in Europe and Asia. China, India, and Russia, the three most potent governments that comprise the BRICS grouping, face significant challenges in home and international affairs. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the disputes in the Indo-Pacific region's territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and China's one-nation policy are some of the problems now affecting global politics. As a result, the current

state of world politics compels Moscow and Beijing to cooperate to build a constructive partnership against the western blocs. In addition, the western blocs harbor the idea that BRICS could become a platform for Beijing and Moscow to include other members who are the victims of or against the Western bloc to compete with them. This is something that the western blocs have the mindset that anything like this is entirely conceivable.

In contrast, India and China have been engaging in a prolonged conflict regarding their shared border for a considerable time. The competition between the two nations and the inconsistency of their policies in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Indo-Pacific area provides an exciting and engaging research subject in international politics. However, Russia acts as the bond of collaboration between India and China. So, the future of BRICS is uncertain and exciting to follow how they will expand members and what procedure, as the organization's operation depends on the relationship among the three most influential states. In addition, several states originating from the Middle East, Latin America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia have expressed an interest in joining BRICS; nevertheless, the incorporation of new members into the organization is strongly dependent on the cooperation of the members who are already present.

This paper examines the significance of BRICS in international politics, the expansion policy adopted from its Fourteenth Summit and how the outreach and BRICS Plus Summit or conference fostered the idea and steps of growth since its inception. In addition, it examines the possible means and barriers to the admission of new members and how the confrontation or bilateral issues between the two most influential members (China and India) in the organization can affect the growth and expansion of BRICS is the subject of this study.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF BRICS

Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs deserves credit for the formation of BRICS; once he dubbed the first four of these significant emerging economies BRIC in 2001, their combined growth exploded. And it highlighted the rise of Brazil, Russia, China, and India as new economic powers (Agtmael 2012). The emergence of BRICS dates back to Cancun, Mexico, during the Doha Round in September 2003. Two weeks before the meeting, the US and the EU had jointly prepared a skewed negotiating draft they wanted to impose on the World Trade Organisation, which Brazil, India, South Africa and other developing economies rejected at Doha Round (Drysedale 2011). However, the foundation to form the BRICS inter-regional organization can be traced back to when the leaders of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) met for the first time in July 2006 at the G8 Outreach Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia (Sarkar 2014). It was possible to see how BRICS was developing simultaneously. After a brief hiatus, the first BRIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in New York City in September 2006 in conjunction with the UN Assembly's General Debate.

Moreover, a series of significant seminars preceded the inaugural BRIC summit, which took place on June 16, 2009, in Yekaterinburg, Russia, and BRIC became an essential institution in world politics (Sarkar 2014). Since began the foundation stone of the organization in 2009, experts have argued that the 2008 global financial crisis and the reform of western dominance of the international monetary system management, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, led to the founding of the BRICS (Sarkar 2014). As a result, South Africa

was allowed to join as a full member of the organization at the BRIC Foreign Ministers meeting in New York in 2010, which prompted the BRIC organization to change its name to BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Furthermore, South Africa, for the first time, attended the BRICS summit as a full member in the third Summit in Sanya, China, in April 2011 (BRICS 2021). To date, BRICS concluded nine informal meetings and fourteen summits, and there is no gap in the year of the summit. Brazil, Russia, India, and China hosted three summits each, and South Africa hosted two Summits. China hosted the latest summit in Beijing on 23 June 2022, virtually.

On the other hand, when the global financial crisis in the US in 2008 hit the world's economy, that catastrophe opened the door for reconsidering alterations to the structure of international governance. Many regional power confederacies emerged due to the crisis's impact on the world's precarious political and economic conditions, particularly in developing countries. As a result, the BRICS nations have gained significance within the global governance system (Chakraborty 2018). One of the crucial things to remember is that the emergence of BRICS as a collection of big and potent 'new powers' attracts both skepticism and hope. It signifies a threat to US-led Western hegemony in international politics and a quick shift in the balance of power due to growing interdependence among all countries and the subsequent economic and financial crises (Singh 2013). Even Hu Jintao, the former leader of the People's Republic of China, has praised the BRICS nations as protectors and advocates of emerging countries and a force for global peace (Jayan 2012). The US hegemony is one of the critical objectives of the BRICS gatherings.

Furthermore, the developing nations' interests should be represented and protected by the BRICS. The BRICS are now a significant player in world geopolitics, whether one like it or not. The group had the potential to have a structural impact on the international system when it had five members after the addition of South Africa. The impact on one state's identity or future configuration is a structural impact (Laidi 2022). It is an interregional organization, as member countries are from different regions where Latin America, Africa, Eurasia, and Asia converge to form a 'region' of their own. Moreover, it can be highlighted as a hybrid interregional grouping from the Global South. It crosses traditional inter-regionalism definitions, such as bi-inter-regionalism, mega-inter-regionalism, and trans-regionalism (Naik 2019).

THE EMERGENCE OF BRICS AS AN IMPORTANT PLAYER IN GLOBAL POLITICS

BRICS has become an essential or undeniable organization in the present global politics since it has 42 percent of the world population behind its back, and 28 percent of the world economy rests in the organization's members region (Králíková 2014). The percentage of the world's nominal gross domestic product (GDP) contributed by the BRICS nations has increased from eight percent to 22 percent since 2000. As a result, the share held by the Group of Seven (G7) decreased from 65 percent to 45 percent (Wang 2019, 222). From the purchasing power parity (PPP) metric, the BRICS group and the G7 group each account for nearly one-third of the world's total GDP (Wang 2019). It also has two superpowers (China and Russia) in the United Nations Security Council and two states (India and China) with the largest population on Earth, making the organization more significant in contemporary politics. Its members are from four continents and play an essential dominant role in their regions, such as Brazil in South America,

Russia in Eurasia, India in South Asia, China in East Asia, and South Africa in Africa. Therefore, the BRICS' current positions in terms of global governance are undeniable. It will be challenging to handle international issues by side-lining the BRICS in the modern world. It is now beyond dispute that this organization is significant as an emergent global force (Chakraborty 2018). Although the organization's initial aims and focus area lie in economic cooperation and acting as the voice of the international south countries, these five nations' union indicates their desire for a more prominent role in world affairs and access to decision-making power. They intend to create a multipolar international order, and the organization has extended its cooperation beyond investment activities (Naik 2019). The Member States' rising economic clout has elevated BRICS to a crucial stage in world affairs. Some industrialized countries in Europe are looking to the BRICS for support. For example, Cyprus is also looking to Russia and China for financial aid as its economy needs a cash infusion, as Greece approached Beijing for financial assistance for its sagging economy (Chakraborty 2018).

The grouping has three members in the top five military spenders in the world, China, India, and Russia. The United States was first, with \$801 billion in spending in 2021, followed by China spending with an estimated \$293 billion in 2021, an increase of 4.7 percent from 2020 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2022). India ranked top three in military expenditures by spending \$76.6 billion; New Delhi is pushing forward to modernize arms and weapons by producing them in its territory, and 64 percent of its military budget is designated to update domestically produced components (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2022). Between India and Russia, the United Kingdom ranked in the top four, and Russia has the fifth most significant military expenditure in the world, with \$65.9 billion. Despite decreasing its military spending in the last decade, it increased by 2.9 percent in 2021 to boost its forces on the Ukrainian border (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2022). Many experts believe Russia might grow more in its military budget after the invasion of Ukraine. Thus, keeping BRICS at arm's length would be neglecting the presence or influence of the three most powerful militaries in the world and almost half of the world population.

Geographically, BRICS countries are in an important strategic location. Brazil in the South Atlantic Ocean, South Africa in the Indian Ocean, India in the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal, China in the Pacific Ocean, and Russia in the Arctic and Pacific. They occupied most of the world's essential sea routes for trading. Building the third-longest underwater fiber optic cable through the Indian Ocean to connect the Pacific and Atlantic oceans is one of the most critical maritime projects undertaken by the BRICS nations. This "34,000 km long and 12.8 terabit capacity network, the third longest underwater cable in the world, connects Vladivostok in Russia, Shantou in China, Chennai in India, Cape Town in South Africa and Fortaleza in Brazil" (Sakhuja 2014). With this project, the BRICS can create a private, secure intranet and transfer important financial and security information. BRICS countries occupy 29.3 percent of the global surface area. They are among the world's largest emerging economies, accounting for 41 percent of the worldwide population, 24 percent of the global GDP, and 16 percent of international trade (BRICS India 2021).

Furthermore, the leaders of the BRICS countries have promoted cooperative security institutions because they believe the entire maritime community should share the benefits of collaboration. BRICS countries place a high priority on maritime security. Notably, four of the

five BRICS nations have actively combated piracy in the Gulf of Aden (Sakhujia 2014). In essence, the maritime domain presents the BRICS nations with chances to forge shared understanding on various topics, including trade, the security and safety of sea routes, sustainable resource development, and ocean governance. These problems may help the BRICS partners cooperate and build confidence while advancing global security.

On the other hand, during the fifth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, in July 2014, representatives from all states came together to establish the New Development Bank (NDB) and, with its headquarters in Shanghai, China, in 2005, put it into operation (NDB 2021a). Initially, in response to the worldwide financial crisis that took place in 2008, the concept of the NDB was offered by the former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, by proposing a new institutional instrument for fostering infrastructure development at the G20 Summit that took place in Seoul, Korea in the year 2010 (Wang 2019, 224). However, the idea of NDB was initially discussed inside the BRICS academic forum when India served as the host nation for the summit in 2012 (Wang 2019). The concept of forming the NDB is a direct challenge to pre-existing development banks, most notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), both of which western nations dominate (Roychoudhury and Vazquez 2022). In addition, the so-called voice reform in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had been slow and limited for many decades, even though emerging countries had been trying to achieve greater involvement in both institutions. In multilateral finance for international development, Western control of the World Bank and the major regional Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) affected the priorities and functioning of the various organizations. Developing states feel that the West has dominated essential institutions like The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Both institutions prioritized alleviating poverty, fostering good governance over funding infrastructure projects, and incorporating transitional arrangements into their lending to influence government policymaking, which would be example (Wang 2019). Due to western dominance and their favoring policy while loaning funds, the decision to establish NDB was the right time for the BRICS and developing countries. It became an inevitable institution for funding development projects. NDB does not impose any political conditions on the development financing it offers, in contrast to the World Bank and the IMF, which are partial in how they grant aid to various countries (Roychoudhury and Vazquez 2022). It offers membership to Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Uruguay in the NDB, despite not being BRICS members (NDB 2021b). So, expanding the NDB's membership aligns with the organization's goal to become the preeminent financial institution that serves the needs of the world's developing nations.

On the other hand, several important BRICS countries have become epidemic hotspots (Pham 2020), and Covid-19 would be an example. So the healthcare industry is another area where BRICS countries may work together more effectively. With Covid-19 as a backdrop, the New Development Bank of the BRICS unveiled its Emergency Assistance Program loan to help with unexpected health and social security costs. However, how all the five BRICS governments are dealing with the epidemic's horrible effects and the unemployment rate rising in all BRICS states raises questions about the BRICS' potential role to play a more significant role in tackling the global issue.

UNDERPINNING THE BRICS EXPANSION

Since its inception, BRICS has been considered a group of South-South cooperation and resistance to western hegemony in international institutions. Its membership did not increase despite its designation as a group of emerging economies or a developing country protector. After South Africa was granted full membership status in 2010, the expansion of BRICS has been on hiatus for over a decade. Nevertheless, the organization collaborates or interacts with nations that are not a part of the BRICS grouping through the BRICS-Outreach Summit and BRICS Plus. Both of these forums are examples of BRICS-related initiatives. A group's outreach to countries that are not members of the organization can be used as a technique of exerting influence and influencing the policies, views, and interests of the governments of other countries. It is vital to incorporate non-members into the group's consensus to accomplish this, and one way to do so is to do so base on their similar interests and points of view. In short, "outreach can be a group strategy to influence non-members, more precisely to reshape their governments' policies, views, and interests by socializing them into the group's consensus in terms of common interests and views" (Zhao and Lesage 2020, 72). Likewise, establishing networking links with the sub-regions of each nation serving as the rotational president is a component of the BRICS regional outreach strategy. BRICS takes advantage of the fact that it rotates the presidency to achieve a geopolitical advantage by increasing South-South interaction and strengthening institutional ties with the sub-regions it embraces (Siddiqui 2022). For the first time, the BRICS regional outreach was held in 2013 under the chair of South Africa by inviting the African Union (Zhao and Lesage 2020). Through its outreach, BRICS somehow accomplished its goal of becoming a more influential organization.

Furthermore, the BRICS Plus is comparable to the outreach; however, it has a broader scope in inviting state and non-state actors to the organization conference or gathering. As part of China's 2017 Xiamen Summit, the BRICS Plus concept was first proposed and formally introduced for a better cooperative mechanism with nations other than the BRICS (Peng 2022).

Those invited states came from the chair nations' respective sub-regions at the outreach. However, in the BRICS Plus summit, on the other hand, the chair nations could invite any state or non-state actor from any or different sub-regions. It is possible to understand the advancement of the BRICS Plus model within the framework of the shift in China's policy attitude toward the BRICS nations. China's goal is to consolidate both the BRICS and the BRI under its leadership and take the initiative in both initiatives (Zhao and Lesage 2020). On the Chinese side, BRICS and BRICS Plus are both considered potential negotiation avenues. However, both play an essential part in influencing other countries to become members of the organization, which is a requirement for membership. In the meantime, as part of BRICS Plus in the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting chaired by China in May 2022, foreign ministers from Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates attended the meeting. These constructive efforts taken up by Beijing are unmistakable signs that the growth of the BRICS nations is picking up speed.

Moscow and Beijing are the two who put more effort into and wanted to expand the BRICS organization to reach another level of cooperation. Moreover, after the fifteenth year of its establishment, at the fourteenth Summit in Beijing, China, BRICS nations formally agreed to

admit a new member into the organization for the second time. In response, the Iranian government and Argentina have applied to join BRICS (Peng 2022). Russia wanted a bigger and more capable BRICS because it experienced the western allies' hegemony attitudes in G8 and walked out in 2014. Furthermore, a campaign by the West to boycott Moscow at the upcoming G20 conference in Indonesia also gave Russia a powerful desire to expand BRICS. China is concerned that if the BRICS mechanism is limited to its five members, it will further reduce China's total global effect and Beijing's right to speak in international forums (Singh 2022). Because of this possibility, China expresses concern over the situation, which is something that fears Beijing. Moreover, the rivalry between east and West, BRICS Plus deepening collaboration, and emerging economies' aspirations to join are the significant factors driving BRICS' expansion (Singh 2022).

There are many contradictory opinions and perspectives about the BRICS expansion. Still, one can understand that the idea or step for growth was already underway when the regional outreach started in 2013 and BRICS Plus 2017 occurred. It drew the attention of various states and non-state actors when BRICS nations formally agreed to expand from the fourteen summits due to the Russian-Ukraine crisis and ongoing Indo-Pacific tensions. Moreover, many experts believe that some states from Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia are willing to join the BRICS, which will be a significant blow to the western allies. Further, Iran's application to join BRICS was one of the major concerns for the Western partners, as it would bring together the three nations most affected by US sanctions. From the fourteenth Summit of the BRICS, it decided to establish a think tank network for finance to collaborate on financial issues among the BRICS (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2022). The risk is that China, Iran, and Russia may use this platform to circumvent US sanctions, posing a negative belief by the Western bloc.

Despite China and Russia having a strong desire to expand the BRICS and emerging economic countries wanting to join the BRICS, there are issues and challenges in allowing new members and in the types of countries that can be accepted or not by all of the present members in BRICS. One of the significant issues or challenges is whether the inclusion of new members should be conducted by consensus among the member by the approval of all the members or a majority vote, as BRICS has no charter and proper legal procedures for the inclusion of new members in the organization. When proposing a new state to become a member, the future could present a significant obstacle to suspicion, bilateral disputes, or disagreement among the members. Since China is using the BRICS expansion diplomatically to relieve the United States' containment and advance China's agenda, India is wary of the expansion. In addition, China hopes to keep BIMSTEC members, especially New Delhi, from straying too far away from the United States (Singh 2022). India is also concerned that China wants a high-quality partnership among the BRICS. It aspires to position itself at the center of economic prosperity for the entire world through the policy of BRICS expansion (Banerjee 2022). So expansion policy may boost China's dominance at the expense of the other members, and the strong aspiration for BRICS expansion by Moscow and Beijing is a source of worry for New Delhi. In addition, one of the major concerns for New Delhi is the fact that Beijing wanted to integrate with its economic ally in the BRICS and even announced its willingness to extend the China-Pakistan economic corridor to Afghanistan during the 14th Summit (Katoch 2022). It sends a message of its desire to include Pakistan in the BRICS organization in a roundabout way.

New Delhi is concerned that including Pakistan in BRICS will allow China and Pakistan to pursue their specific agendas more effectively. As a result, BRICS will become more China-centric due to the membership of many countries with which China already has economic relations.

Moreover, Brazil is unwilling to lower its United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform bid, and Russia is reluctant to approve the presence of countries friendly to Ukraine (Siddiqui 2022). All these issues and mistrust among the member will impede the expansion of the BRICS. It can be detrimental to the further development of BRICS if New Delhi takes a wrong step or makes a wrong decision because of Beijing and Moscow's firm expansion policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRICS' FUTURE GROWTH

To ensure future growth, the BRICS members need to understand that trust deficits or mistrust need to be removed and must place more effort into areas where all members share common interests and challenges. It is essential to acknowledge that any organization or association that does not have a legitimate charter or set of rules that members must follow in the future may affect the members' ability to collaborate. Therefore, the BRICS needs to have the charter at the earliest to improve cooperation, identify particular collaboration regions, and implement appropriate legislative procedures for new members. Other areas of cooperation will be of the utmost importance for the growth of BRICS in the future. In addition, it will be essential for the BRICS to put aside all of those questionable areas, such as proposing new members for a specific state policy, project, or national interest. For example, China's extended full support for Argentina in the BRICS membership process (Pandey 2022) may raise suspicions in New Delhi since Argentina is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Aside from that, the current members must understand that if any state prevents other nations from joining the BRICS, it will be like the founder members having veto power over the organization, which could lead to the organization operating in a way that is contrary to its purpose.

Despite specific grounds for skepticism among the members, the admission of new members into the organization, such as Iran and Argentina, will result in a fabulously increased presence and impact of the BRICS in the Middle East and Latin America. By adding Iran, which has the second biggest gas reserves in the world (Pavicevic 2022), the BRICS groups will gain more economic power on the international stage. Additionally, China and India, the two most significant contributors to BRICS, will benefit in the future since both depend on oil imports. Argentina is the world's leading supplier of soybean oil and meal, the second largest exporter of corn, and a vital exporter of wheat to markets all over the world (Global Times 2022). The country has requested to join the BRICS economic bloc as an opportunity for the BRICS to strengthen its economic power in the food supply on the global platform. Therefore, the potential for increased BRICS collaboration among developing nations in the food supply is very promising if the group expands or allows admission of new economic emerging countries into the organization.

Moreover, the admission and participation of emerging economic countries in the organization will help the BRICS decision to engage constructively in pursuing necessary World Trade Organisation and other institutional reforms for an open world economy, global trade, and rules and governance. In addition, additional members would add to the BRICS networks'

economic complementarities since other resources and commercial advantages would be brought together, enhancing the potential for cooperation. Likewise, developing nations will have a greater chance of jointly coping with the numerous economic shocks created by the hegemony and unilateralism of some developed nations if BRICS welcomes and allows admission to new developing nations in the organization. BRICS, which regards itself as the protector of developing economic countries, will determine how it deals with the new membership application or the desire of the emerging economic nations to join the groups. As a result, there is a need for a sensitive or rational policy while formulating a procedure for new membership admission.

CONCLUSION

Every international organization has a goal or purpose that it seeks to accomplish or pursue, and this goal or objective should be in line with all its members' national interests. Similarly, BRICS is an organization comprised of countries with emerging economies that are united in their opposition to the hegemonic influence of the West in international institutions and their support of changes made on behalf of developing nations. Although the organization's initial aims and focus area lie in economic cooperation and acting as the voice of the international south countries, these five nations' union indicates their desire for a more prominent role in world affairs and access to decision-making power. The percentage of the world's nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contributed by the BRICS nations has increased predominantly. It has also grown into an organization that cannot keep aside because it comprises two of the world's superpowers and the countries with the largest populations. Because of the strategic positioning of its members, the BRICS is an indispensable actor in international politics. The countries' contributions to global trade and security are of critical importance. In addition, the members agreed to increase the number of BRICS members at the fourteenth summit, held in Beijing, China, in 2022. As a result, Argentina and Iran have submitted their applications to become members of the BRICS. These two countries (Argentina and Iran) are on the cusp of becoming major economic powers, are abundant in natural gas, and are significant players in the international food supply market. There is a good chance that some of the developing economies in the Middle East and Southeast Asia may also be interested in the BRICS. It will enhance global power and influence if BRICS can support the aspirations of new emerging or developing countries to join the organization.

Nevertheless, the method and procedure have not been formalized, and BRICS does not yet have a Charter or an appropriate legal framework for the admission of new members. When it comes to advocating or offering complete support to any state's application to become a member of the BRICS, there are suspicions among the members. Therefore, for the growth of BRICS, it is necessary to have a charter at the earliest, and the inclusion of new developing economic countries to give them a more prominent voice in the international organization is an absolute must. In addition, there are regions of antagonism or contradictory policies conducted by India and China concerning the problem of the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific, both of which have the potential to impede the growth of BRICS. Because India and China are the most influential players or members in the BRICS, the fact that they are antagonistic toward each

other can pose a significant obstacle in formulating and executing any policy inside the organization. It is, therefore, necessary for Beijing and New Delhi to collaborate and set aside their mutual hatred and suspicion of one another to formulate a strategy and policy for BRICS growth and accomplish the goals and objectives of the organization.

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