



Mains Practice Question

Q. How far has BRICS succeeded as a collective voice of the Global South? Suggest ways in which India can strengthen its engagement with the grouping without undermining its core interests. (250 words)

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Approach :

- Write a brief intro of BRICS
- Successes of BRICS as collective voice of south
- Limitations of BRICS as collective voice of south
- Strengthening India's BRICS engagement
- Write suitable conclusion

Introduction:

BRICS has evolved into a prominent yet complex coalition of emerging economies, projecting itself as a collective voice of the Global South against the Western-dominated global order.

- The **17th BRICS Summit, held under the theme “Strengthening Global South Cooperation and Promoting a More Inclusive and Sustainable Global Governance”**, reflected this vision.

Body :

- **BRICS as a collective voice for the Global South** has emerged as an influential platform for developing economies, yet its unity and effectiveness are mixed.
 - **Successes:**
 - **Alternative Finance:** The **New Development Bank (NDB)** and **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)** offer alternatives to **Western-dominated institutions like the IMF and World Bank**, financing sustainable development and providing liquidity.
 - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, have discussed creating **BRICS Reserve Currency** as part of a broader de-dollarization effort.
 - **Agenda-setting Power:** BRICS members have successfully amplified the **Global South's demands for reforming global governance institutions**, including the UNSC, and increasing representation for emerging economies.
 - **Recent Expansion:** The addition of new members like **Egypt, Iran, and the UAE** enhances the **bloc's demographic and economic weight**, strengthening its claim to represent the wider Global South.
 - **Limitations:**
 - **Internal Divisions:** Geopolitical rivalries, notably the India-China border dispute, create deep trust deficits and hinder cohesive action.
 - **China's Dominance:** China's overwhelming economic size raises concerns about asymmetric power dynamics and agenda-setting, complicating equitable decision-

making.

- **Conflicting Interests:** Member states have divergent foreign policy stances, with India's multi-aligned approach contrasting with the more confrontational posture of China and Russia.
- **Strengthening India's BRICS engagement:** India can bolster its role in BRICS by adopting a pragmatic strategy that prioritizes economic cooperation and multilateral reform while preserving its strategic autonomy.

▪ **Expand issue-based economic cooperation:**

- **Trade Diversification:** Leverage the expanded BRICS platform to correct trade imbalances, especially with China, by deepening ties with commodity-rich members like Brazil and energy producers like UAE.
- **Technological leadership:** Champion cooperation in technology, particularly digital public infrastructure (DPI), where India holds a comparative advantage.
 - Promoting the UPI model across BRICS can boost intra-bloc digital trade.
- **Local Currency Trade:** Actively support initiatives for trade in local currencies to reduce reliance on the US dollar, enhancing financial resilience for India and its partners for example Rupee-Ruble agreement.
- **Strengthen institutional mechanisms:**
 - **Institutional Reforms:** Advocate for robust institutional reforms, such as setting clear membership criteria and strengthening the NDB, to ensure equitable decision-making and prevent domination by any single member.
 - **People-to-people Ties:** Promote academic exchanges, tourism, and cultural initiatives to build long-term goodwill and mutual understanding among member states.

Conclusion:

While **BRICS has partially succeeded in representing the Global South**, internal differences limit its full potential. India can play a **decisive role by leveraging diplomacy, promoting cohesion, driving innovation, and advocating shared interests**, thereby strengthening the grouping without compromising its own strategic priorities.