



Mains Practice Question

Q. The rise of regional powers and blocs is reshaping the global order. Discuss the potential implications for established multilateral institutions like the UN. **(250 words)**

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Approach

- Introduce with highlighting the shifting global order
- Delve into regional powers and blocks reshaping the global order
- Highlight its implications for established multilateral institutions like the UN
- Conclude positively

Introduction

The current global order is undergoing a **metamorphosis**. The rise of regional powers and blocs is challenging the established preeminence of the **United Nations (UN)**. This dynamic presents a **double-edged sword for the UN**, a potential decline in relevance alongside opportunities for renewed purpose.

Body

Regional Powers and Blocs Reshaping the Global Order:

- **Emergence of new economic powerhouses:** The rise of regional blocs is altering global economic dynamics.
 - For instance, the growing economic clout of the **BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)** challenges the dominance of traditional Western powers like the G7.
- **Evolving Security Landscapes:** Regional blocs are shaping regional security issues. The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is a prime example and its influence in the Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates its evolving role.
- **Alternative Development Models:** Regional development banks like the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** offer alternative financing models to the **World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)** traditionally dominated by Western powers.
 - This signifies a shift in influence over development finance and infrastructure projects, potentially leading to a more multipolar approach.
- **Emerging Normative Frameworks:** Regional blocs are promoting alternative norms and values.
 - The **ASEAN** emphasis on non-interference in member states' affairs stands in contrast to the **interventionist approach** sometimes favored by Western powers.

Implications for Established Multilateral Institutions like the UN:

- **Challenges:**
 - **Erosion of Multilateralism:** Regional powers may prioritize their own interests and regional alliances over multilateral cooperation, potentially undermining the UN's role as a global forum for dialogue and cooperation.
 - **Example:** the **China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** focuses on infrastructure development within a regional framework, potentially bypassing the

UN's role in global infrastructure planning.

- **Competing Interests and Gridlock:** Divergent interests and priorities among regional powers and blocs can lead to fragmentation and gridlock within the UN, hindering its ability to respond effectively to global challenges.
 - **Example:** The disagreements between the **U.S. and China** on issues like **human rights** have paralyzed UN efforts to find common ground.
- **Challenges to the UN's Authority:** Regional powers and blocs may increasingly question the UN's authority and decision-making processes, perceiving them as outdated and unrepresentative of the current global order.
 - **Example:** The inability of the **UN Security Council** to effectively address conflicts like the **ongoing Russian-Ukraine War** has highlighted the need for reform and representation of emerging powers.
- **Opportunities:**
 - **Catalyst for Reform and Adaptation:** The rise of regional powers could serve as a catalyst for much-needed reforms within the UN, pushing for more inclusive and representative decision-making processes.
 - **Example:** India's bid for a **permanent seat on the UN Security Council**, supported by several regional powers, reflects the demand for reforming the UN to better reflect the current global order.
 - **Addressing Transnational Challenges: United Nations can collaborate with** regional powers and blocs as they can contribute valuable resources and expertise to address transnational challenges that require collective action, such as **pandemics, and terrorism.**
 - **Facilitating Multilateral Diplomacy:** Regional powers can act as bridge-builders within the UN, forging consensus and bridging divides.
 - The **role of India as a bridge** between developed and developing countries is a prime example.

Conclusion

The rise of regional powers presents a complex challenge for the UN. The institution needs to adapt by leveraging **regional strengths, addressing its own limitations, and fostering a more inclusive, representative global order.** The future of the UN hinges on its ability to harness the power of regionalism for the collective good.