
The Evolution of Peace Keeping And Indian Peacekeepers: Challenges and Achievements

Gurdeep Kaur*

Introduction



The failure of League of Nations to uphold the objective of peace and co-existence, culminated in the outbreak of second world war on one side and created the ground for the establishment of a unique and a dynamic organisation - The United Nations(UN), on the other hand. Like-minded and peace loving leaders of the world expressed their concern to save humanity from future wars and its adverse affects. Number of conferences wherein restoring peace and rehabilitation of the war affected nations through an effective international organisation were discussed in length and breadth, eventually led to the creation of UN. The organisation retained the concept of collective security that had a place in its predecessor organisation, the league of Nations. The collective security refers to a situation in which the security of a

nation is the collective concern of all nations. In the words of Morgenthau, the phrase *One for all and all for one* well describes the concept of collective security. UN Secretary-General Dag Hammerskjold replaced it with peacekeeping operations which in principle seek to freeze but not resolve conflicts. Hence, in conformity with its primary role 'to maintain international peace and security, peace -keeping was developed to settle hostilities among nations and by means of which an environment of enduring peace could be brought about. Known widely as BLUE HELMETS or BLUE BERETS because of their district head gear, the peacekeepers deployed under the aegis of the United Nations have proved instrumental in controlling armed conflicts ever since its inception. In pursuit of the ideals and to establish a favourable environment in which peace processes can be consolidated the year 1948 saw the deployment of the

**Dr. Gurdeep Kaur is an Assistant Professor of Political Science, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi. Delhi.*

first UN field mission. Although the UN Charter does not specifically mention the peace keeping yet the legal basis for peacekeeping can be found between the traditional methods for the “pacific settlement of disputes” under Chapter VI and the more forceful action mandated under Chapter VII. After the second World War, the UN peace keeping missions were initially undertaken as an extension of the collective security mechanism. It required the member states to provide security forces to the UN in times of need in troubled areas to restore peace and normalcy. But the Cold War prevented the UN from realizing its collective security system as the opposing interests of the P5 nations forbade it to take decisive action except in cases where the interests of the major powers were minimally involved. As a result, despite a multitude of conflicts that were detrimental to international peace and security, the United Nations was successful in bringing in to effect only 18 peace operations between 1945 and 1990 and between 1988 and 2013, UN authorised 55 peacekeeping operations around the world. Although an extension of the collective security system, peacekeeping now has an importance of its own. Since the end of the Cold War, the U.N. Security Council has been playing a decisive

role in establishing peace operations, with over 50 being established since 1990 and the tasks that it now undertakes are broad and varied. With the end of Cold War, the UN peace keeping changed from traditional missions involving strictly military tasks to complex multi dimensional activities aimed at building the foundation for sustainable peace. India has been outstanding in showing its commitment to the ideals of the UN since its inception. Not in terms of rhetoric and symbolism, the unreserved participation of India in UN peacekeeping operations, demonstrates in real and practical terms, the country’s commitment to the objectives set out in the UN Charter. India is among the countries that play a direct role in the UN peace keeping operations by contributing its troops.

India’s participation

India’s participation in peace keeping began when the Indian combat troops were first assigned to Korea in 1950 as the Custodian Force of India. And India since then adhering to its legacy till today continues to be among the largest contributors to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

India has participated in 48 of the 69 UN peacekeeping missions and

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so far, 161 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice while serving in UN missions. India 's participation has been exemplary in the sense that it has participated in some of the most difficult and challenging peacekeeping missions including those in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo , and over 176,000 Indian troops have donned the Blue Beret in 46 UN

missions to date. As of June 2015, India is the third largest troop contributor, with 8,123 personnel deployed to nine UN Peacekeeping Missions; of these, 51 are military experts and 991 are police personnel, including the first Female Formed Police Unit under the UN. The table below provides the details of the deployment of Indian army in various UN missions

S. No.	Mission	No of Personnel
1	MONUSCO (Congo)	3388
2.	UNMISS (South Sudan)	2289
3.	UNIFIL (Lebanon)	899
4.	UNDOF (Golan Hts)	192
5.	UNOCI (Ivory Coast)	09
6.	UNISFA (Abeyi)	06
7.	UNDPKO (New York)	07
8.	MINURSO (Western Sahara)	03
	Total	6793

Source: Annual Report 2015-16, Ministry of Defence, Government of India

The initial thrust not only for India but for other South Asian nations for contributing to peacekeeping came from the first Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who had a strong commitment towards liberal internationalism and a strong desire to strengthen the UN. With his pacifist, progressive, rational approach and the earnest desire to establish international peace, Nehru envisaged an active international role for India, despite its many pressing socio-economic and political problems at home. Since those times India has been a forerunner in the various peacekeeping operations under the aegis of UN. As a result many of the South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and India continue to be pioneers in terms of contributing troops to the peacekeeping operations. The text that follows throw light on the reasons that kept India participating in the peacekeeping operations till date.

Rationale of Participation

Like many other countries, India began contributing to UN missions for two cardinal reasons: first, to provide state of the art training to its soldiers and army personnel and second, was and remains, to improve upon its clout within the international community — which was especially

true for India, which was looking for a reward, a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. Despite having contributed to a significant number of missions in past more than half a century, the incentive that first held true for country however, remain unaccomplished as the training benefits for India 's soldiers have plateaued, and a Security Council seat too seems to be an ambitious dream.

But a number of factors have always kept India from withdrawing out. Firstly, since the past few decades, New Delhi has been investing diplomatic efforts at both bilateral and multilateral levels to elevate its credentials as rising power, thus participating in peacekeeping efforts enable India to augment its status at the global level. Secondly, many argue that financial gains have always attracted India to participate in peacekeeping operations. Although this argument is not completely incorrect but it would not be out of place to mention that as compared to the other two top troop contributing countries viz Bangladesh and Pakistan India's economic position is much better. The attractive remuneration that the soldiers and other personnels receive by participating in the peacekeeping operations indeed fuels the national treasuries of the troop contributing

countries. For instance, according to the country's Permanent Representative to the UN, from 2009 to 2012, the Bangladeshi troops were able to bring in Tk75 billion (US\$917 million) to the country. India too receives a heavy sum but the remuneration received by the troop contributing nations is far less than the services given and sacrifices made. It is worth mentioning that the raising of salaries of the soldiers has become a contentious issue between UN and New Delhi in the past few years that deploys nearly 7000 soldiers for peace keeping operations. Another important reason behind India's continual engagement in the peacekeeping operations is to counter balance the resurgent China which is fast emerging as a world power and is now contributing troops to various peacekeeping missions. Beijing that abstained from voting on peacekeeping resolutions or contributing peacekeeping funds or personnel until 1981, began to finance peacekeeping in 1982, and in 1989 20 Chinese military observers took part in the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) monitored elections in Namibia followed by the deployment of five Chinese military observers to support the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East. China formally

sent its first cadre of peacekeeping personnel to Cambodia in 1992 for reasons political, economic, defence and security and with the objective of increasing its standing in the international community it has had a change of strategy. In an attempt to improve upon its reputation and status as a cooperative global player equally weaken the arguments raised over its escalating military expenditure and its total neglect of human rights. Beijing, through the peacekeeping efforts seeks to project its profile as a responsible power in international affairs. And this is one of the reasons for India's continued impetus to contribute to peacekeeping operations.

New developments and challenges

In the last two decades, however, peacekeeping has become a new kind of operation. Not confined to inter-positional observation or monitoring a peace accord and restricting itself to the task of observing, verifying and reporting to the Security Council it has encompassed attempts to de-conflict and demobilise opposing forces even before a ceasefire has been ensured. Traditionally, the role has allowed for lightly-armed peacekeepers, with the consent of both parties, to observe ceasefire lines. However, with the

end of Cold War, new tasks were assigned to the peacekeepers by the Security Council that owing to its veto power had not passed the resolutions during the Cold War period. UN peacekeepers are no longer engaged in peacefully monitoring of borders and reacting to cease-fire violations but are now engrossed in complex nation-building exercises like providing electoral assistance, human rights monitoring, rehabilitation of refugees, police training, protection of humanitarian relief efforts, and disarmament and demobilisation of armed forces etc that have stretched the limits of both the theory and practice of peacekeeping. In the post Cold War period the intra-state conflicts or the civil wars, the ethnic strifes, the collapse of national institutions, transnational criminal and terrorist threats, and serious humanitarian and public health crises etc characterise the nature of conflicts, eventually new tasks were set for the UN peacekeepers although with the existing mechanisms. Thus, with the changing paradigm of conflict, new challenges emerged for the peacekeepers and for Indian peacekeepers as well.

Challenges may be enumerated as follows:

a: **Absence of clear mandate:** For

an effective implementation of operations and for desirable results, both finance and troops, are required. The wealthy nations of the world are by and large the financial contributors while the developing nations like India are troop contributors. The wealthy nations are averse to the idea of troop contribution as back home the people of those nation are disinterested in conflicts in areas that are of no direct concern to them so they have no willingness in putting their soldiers, lives in danger. However, on the pretext of financial contribution, the permanent-5 (P5) decide upon the mandate, while the troop contributing countries are excluded while deciding upon the mandate of peacekeeping operations. Moreover, mandates have got tougher without a corresponding escalation in funding or equipment. It has also been observed that mandates are unrealistically set i.e the provisions of the mandate are not in consonance with the ground realities which jeopardise the execution of operation successfully. For instance, the mandate for the UN mission in Bosnia (1992-1995) only authorized the deployment of 7,000 troops, although experts projected that 34,000 soldiers would be needed to protect the safe

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havens the mission had constructed. Further, the accomplishment of missions for the peacekeepers have become challenging as the goals and targets are reviewed and re defined and often enlarged even when the operation is in execution. Moreover, complicated Security Council resolutions fail to provide clarity on the rules of engagement. Raising concern over unclear mandates, India too is of the view that the Security Council's mandates to UN peacekeeping operations need to be rooted in ground realities and must also be in correlation with the resources provided for the peacekeeping operation. This was reiterated by Prime Minister Mr. Narendar Modi as well recently.

b: Inability of Peacekeepers to set priorities to the task assigned due to multifarious roles to be performed. In the present times UN peacekeepers are engaged in complex tasks and most of these go beyond the limited military functions. As a result, priorities are not decided making accomplishment of missions incomplete. In addition, the objective of peacekeeping was more simple and clear when it primarily was about interposition. However, now that they have to

work for establishing durable stability in nations and regions where they were deployed has increased the challenges manifold for there are regions and nations that have been experiencing instability for decades. In such places, the peacekeepers have to start from a scratch with minimal support logistic, financial, manpower, preparedness of local people and national governments as well. The peace process is often paralysed for number of reasons further complicating the task of peacekeepers.

c: The growing concern of the wealthy fund contributing nations over the escalating costs of UN peacekeeping- its current budget of \$9 billion is the largest ever, is yet another challenge. The questions are also being raised on the ability, and commitment of peacekeepers towards saving civilian lives. There has been almost three fold increase in the budget since 2003. The escalating financial resources are emerging as a strong stumbling block in yielding desirable results. The finance contributing nations have been observed to exercise control over the peacekeeping operations. For instance, for the year July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, UNPKOs require a funding of \$ 7.06 billion.

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By paying just 28.38 % (nearly \$ 2 billion) of this, the United States has managed a great say in the operations.

d: The troop contributing nations argue that they are not adequately consulted when the missions are being formulated. African countries, which also constitute the bulk of manpower, are caught in the middle, for financially being dependent upon 'developed countries' while requiring additional manpower, resources and support from 'developing countries' to bolster their capabilities. India too is treated like a Third World country despite being among the top most troop contributing country. It is denied a say over how, why and where its personnel will be deployed, as broad political consultation is ignored in the decision making process. Drawing attention towards the demands for a broad consensus on why, where and how peacekeepers carry out their mandates, Army Chief General Dalbir Singh Suhag at the Chief of Defence conference of the UN in March 2015 said "We also consider it is our right, as troop contributing countries, in terms of Article 44 of the Charter, to 'participate in the decisions of the Security Council concerning the employment of

contingents' of the troop contributing country's armed forces. This provision of the UN Charter has generally been neglected".

e: The troop contributing nations including India are seen to have failed in protecting human lives and instead have been charged with the allegations of misbehaviour misconduct and corruption. With such charges which many a time remain unproved lowers the morale, spirit and enthusiasm of the soldiers deployed in the field.

f: The substantial increase of the troop contributing states to the UN peacekeeping operations further makes targets difficult to achieve. During the initial years of peacekeeping, medium-sized developed states, primarily Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden, and larger developing states like India and Pakistan and a handful of smaller developing states, particularly Fiji, Ghana, Nepal and Senegal, contributed troops. However, beginning with the deployment of UNTAG (UN Transition Assistance Group) in Namibia between April 1989 and March 1990, a period during which

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the cold war is widely considered to have ended, there has been an enormous increase in the number of states involved in UN peacekeeping. At the end of June 2009, the Department of Peacekeeping Operation (DPKO) was overseeing more than 115,000 personnel involved in U.N. peacekeeping, political, or peace-building operations, including international and local civilian personnel and U.N. volunteers.

g:India expressed its growing concern over the severe mismatch between the resources and mandate of peacekeeping operations. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri, highlighted the fact at 'UN Peacekeeping Operations: Taking Stock and Preparing for the Future' that resource gap is emerging as major challenge for effective implementation of peacekeeping operations leading to unsatisfactory situations. He sought the attention by categorically stating that at some places there is one peacekeeper for several hundred square kilometres. Manpower, arms and logistical support needs to be reviewed and the ground realities need to be understood that would eventually lead to realistic mandates for desirable results.

h: UN peacekeeping is not immune to the allegations of mis management, fraud, and corruption. The most horrible of these reports involved the U.N. Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). U.N. personnel have also been accused of sexual exploitation and abuse in Bosnia, Burundi, Cambodia, Congo, Guinea, Haiti, Kosovo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan. The allegations of misconduct and fraud tarnish the image of peacekeepers. Thus, it is important that the perpetrators of violence and those who indulge in heinous crimes of sexually exploiting children and young girls taking advantage of their fragile security nets be identified and punitive action be taken against them. Here it is pertinent to mention that in comparison to the other troop contributing countries, the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse against Indian peacekeepers are far less. Between the period 2010 and 2013 only three such cases have been reported and after 2013 there have been no such allegations against Indian peacekeepers of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. India has been very particular while recruiting soldiers and sending them on field operations and adheres to the vetting guidelines

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of the Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) and is increasingly working towards gender sensitization as well. Against this background, it becomes important to mention that at times misreporting and the unsubstantiated allegations are detrimental to the morale of soldiers and lowers their spirit to work for humanitarian causes.

i: That peacekeeping operations are being done in a biased manner are the allegations made by many of troop contributing countries of South. Another matter of concern is the obvious imbalance between peace-operations deployed in areas of priority interest to western countries, such as Kosovo or Afghanistan, and the other operations, mostly in Africa. The latter are mostly left to UN peacekeepers from the South. The former are based on robust, well-equipped and trained peacekeepers from NATO or EU countries. It is also worth mentioning that the troops that the Western nations send are miniscule in contrast to those sent by poor and developing nations. The United States has sent 140; Germany 268, Russia 140 and even China (which has the world's largest Army) has sent only 2180 personnel but still enjoy overriding authority to the

nations that make incalculable sacrifices by putting in danger the life of not only young men and women but their families as well.

j: Increased attacks by armed militants is new development which the peacekeepers need to be prepared for. In the past few decades, there has been shift from inter state attacks to intrastate and ethnic conflicts that are responsible for the increasing toll of peacekeepers. Over the years, peacekeeping has become a dangerous endeavor. Rebel groups today are better trained and equipped while UN missions suffer from overstretched resources, and at times, a wavering political will. There are growing worries that domestic fallout from attacks on troops might spur some nations to pull out security forces from already over-stretched UN forces. Moreover, the locals are involved in such attacks and to combat such situations the peacekeepers need to handle situations very sensitively. Building confidence and establishing rapport with the locals is extremely necessary for peacekeepers. In this regard, the soldiers that are looked upon as ambassadors of peace by the UN, their national governments, the governments of nation where they

are deployed and for the common people for whom they work, cannot just take it lightly and casually. This indeed is a challenge for them.

k: The challenge also emerges from the fact that peacekeeping operations are well behind the curve in terms of application and incorporation of technology and innovations. The resource gap is getting more pronounced and glaring and eventually the impact of it is borne by the peacekeepers who risk their lives while executing difficult and challenging operations.

Achievements: A Brief summary

Despite limitations and challenges, India's contribution to the peacekeeping operations remains unparalleled. The international community acknowledges India as a reliable peacekeeper for it has exhibited higher degree of professionalism and worked for humanitarian concerns and has stayed committed to its goal of establishing peace despite all odds and difficult situations. The Indian peacekeepers have handled difficult and dangerous operations in Africa - be it Sudan, Somalia, Congo or elsewhere outstandingly. The team of peacekeepers be it soldiers, doctors,

military advisors and officers, both male and female, have been lauded for the exemplary contribution for display of courage and sensitivity towards humanitarian cause, gender equality, human rights etc. The testimony to it is the Civil Military Cooperation programme run by Indian peacekeepers in Africa under which focus is laid on building strong community relations through their humanitarian activities. For instance, thousands of Congolese, men, women and children have been treated for illness and injuries at the Indian hospital of the United Nations Organization Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). India has won accolades for initiating the deployment of all women unit for a peacekeeping operation. It sent 125 female personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to Liberia in January 2007. Many Indian soldiers have laid their lives to bring peace and harmony to the world. While serving under the UN flag, number of them have been honoured with gallantry awards. (table there).

Fifty Indian peacekeepers stationed in South Sudan have also been awarded with UN medal for the key role they performed towards keeping the community safe as well as encouraging local peace efforts in 2017.

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No.	Awards	Number of times
1.	Parama Vir Chakra	01
2.	Mahavir Chakra	06
3.	Kirti Chakra	02
4.	Vir Chakra	20
5.	Shaurya Chakra	09
6.	Yudh Seva Medal	04
7.	Sena Medal	32

On 29 May 2015, on the occasion of International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers two Indian peacekeepers were among the 126 peacekeepers who were honoured posthumously for their supreme sacrifice while working as Blue Berets. Lance Naik Nand Ram, who served with the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and Raju Joseph, who had served in a civilian capacity with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), were awarded the prestigious UN Dag Hammarskjold Medal.

In 1993, the French government had decorated Indian peacekeepers for extraordinary display of courage and dedication in Somalia followed by honouring of Indian peacekeepers in 2007 when the Indian Army Battalion of the Punjab regiment deployed in volatile south-eastern Lebanon was honoured by the King of Belgium for its professionalism and dedication in 2007.

Indian peacekeepers have been given thumbs up by the international community and have been appreciated for their commendable

role and performance. In 2017, the then Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Herve Ladsous speaking about the contribution of South Asia said "troop contributors from the South Asian nations have given the UN large numbers of peacekeepers but also "good people, people who are well trained, well equipped and in most cases behave correctly."

In praise of India's women peacekeeping unit in Liberia, the UN Chief Ban Ki-moon said "Through their unwavering performance, professionalism and discipline, including during the Ebola epidemic, these brave women gained the respect of both the Government and the Liberian people,"

Conclusion

Over the years, the United Nations is fast emerging as an organisation to not just restore normalcy and peace in conflict ridden societies but is investing efforts towards capacity building and institution building in such societies. Considerable attention is being paid to strengthen peacebuilding, peace enforcement and peace making efforts as well. In conformities, to the new goals and targets which have been set, UN forces have gradually become involved in tasks ranging from

reconstruction, disarming rebel forces and providing immediate assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), and organising elections for post-conflict governments. India too stands committed to the responsibilities that it has towards global community. Being the largest democracy in the world, with the tradition of upholding the rule of law, valuing human life and preserving human dignity above all and its experience in nation building makes it particularly relevant in the context of twenty-first century peacebuilding mission. The teachings of Buddha, Guru Nanak, Vivekananda and many other such scholarly saints and seers have been the guiding spirit of the leaders. Thus, there is more inclination towards moral idealism than realism among the leaders of the past and present times. Therefore, despite shortcomings it can be concluded that the challenges, be it political, financial, or those emerging from misunderstandings, misreporting or otherwise would not prove to be a stumbling block in India's endeavours towards world peace. In a recently organised event to celebrate International Day of UN Peacekeepers in Capitol Hill, the seat of US Congress in March, 2015, India was facilitated for its exemplary contribution for deploying a significant number of personnel

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including the first Female Formed Police Unit under the UN. On this occasion, India's Ambassador to the US, Arun K. Singh expressed his concern towards overcoming challenges for the multi dimensional role of peacekeepers in the contemporary context yet reiterated that India's commitment to global peace and security remained unfettered. However, in conclusion it

may be observed that considering the evolution of peacekeeping, the challenges that the peacekeepers encounter, need to be addressed in order that the enthusiasm and the momentum of the peacekeepers is kept high because if conflicts are central to societies so is maintaining peace through various mechanism essential for the sustenance of human life . ■

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