

INTRODUCTION

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As BRICS continues to grow, in membership, scope, and global influence, the intellectual and policy conversations around it have expanded with remarkable energy. What began as a simple economic acronym has transformed into a significant platform where emerging powers articulate their visions for a more inclusive and multipolar world. BRICS today stands not only for economic potential but for political agency, cultural dialogue, and a collective rethinking of global governance. With its evolving initiatives in development finance, technology, sustainability, and people-to-people exchange, the grouping has become a space where alternative global narratives are being shaped. This issue reflects that vibrancy. It brings together voices from across countries, disciplines, and experiences, offering readers a rich and layered understanding of how BRICS is being engaged with at this critical moment in international affairs.

We begin this volume with Ambassador Anil Trigunayat's thoughtful piece, which reminds us that BRICS is as much a civilisational dialogue as it is a geopolitical alignment. His essay sets the tone for the issue by foregrounding the values of mutual respect and understanding. Dr. Parijat Bhattacharjee follows with an exploration of India–Russia relations, illustrating how historical ties have acquired renewed significance within the BRICS framework.

Questions of global order and institutional reform are then taken up by Joshua Wade, who critically examines whether BRICS is reshaping existing institutions or laying the foundation for new ones. Complementing this discussion, Maria Fernanda Carrillo turns to the New Development Bank, its ambitions, its complexities, and the development alternatives it seeks to carve out for the Global South.

The issue further broadens with contributions from Ritika Bhattacharya, who reflects on the relevance and future pathways of BRICS, and Charvi Shukla, whose analysis connects the grouping's priorities to the global Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting shared challenges and opportunities.

One of the strengths of this issue is its sustained focus on culture, an often overlooked yet deeply influential dimension of international cooperation. Dr. Subhash Kumar revisits the legacy of Nicholas Roerich in India–Russia cultural relations, while Dr. Akhauri Nitish Kumar offers a wider look at linguistic and cultural exchange across BRICS nations. Adding an external but insightful perspective, Dr. Nawnit Kumar examines India–South Korea cultural linkages and how the BRICS discourse resonates even beyond its official membership.

We conclude with an engaging interview with journalist Suvam Pal, who offers candid reflections on media narratives, public diplomacy, and the evolving importance of BRICS in a rapidly shifting information ecosystem. His insights remind us that the story of BRICS is

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not only written in policy documents or summit declarations, but also shaped by how it is communicated, perceived, and debated in the public sphere.

We hope that this issue speaks to the diversity, depth, and direction of contemporary BRICS scholarship. Each contribution adds nuance to the larger picture of what BRICS is becoming: a collective effort to rethink global structures, amplify Southern voices, and build bridges across geographies and cultures. We trust that scholars, practitioners, and students alike will find in these pages not just analysis and evidence, but also curiosity, imagination, and a shared commitment to understanding a world in transformation.