

**Theme:**

- United Nations was established on 24th October 1945. So, recently the UN has celebrated the 75th anniversary.
- Member countries pledged to “upgrade the United Nations” on 75th anniversary.
- As the UN failed to prevent COVID-19 pandemic, once again people are discussing whether the UN is still relevant in this 21st century.

**Background:**

- Before the establishment of the United Nations, there was a ‘League of Nations’. It was established in the year 1920 and ceased operations in the year 1946. League of Nations was failed because it couldn’t stop the second world war.
- United Nations has several bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) etc. The two principal bodies of the UN are the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). UNGA allows the members to discuss, debate and make recommendations on global issues, whereas UNSC is responsible for maintaining international peace & security. UNSC is the most powerful organ of the United Nations.

**Yes - United Nations is still relevant:**

- United Nations is still relevant because it is actively working to maintain peace within the international community. It could prevent the war since 1945 by changing the perception that the neighbouring countries should be seen as potential trading partners. This has promoted economic development and built good relations among countries.
- It is actively working on the development in several countries and tackling global challenges by forming subsidiary organisations such as UNICEF, UNESCO etc.
- It is spreading the spirit of democracy in member countries. It is also working on protecting human rights in the member countries, which is very much needed in the present times.
- It is very much needed now because many countries are turning to Nationalism and preferring it over international co-operation. It can lead to conflicts, and the UN is the only effective body which can prevent potential conflicts & cold wars.
- The fact that the UN could promote technological and economic development since 1945 and is still promoting proves the point that the UN is still relevant.
- Even though the UN has failed in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic, it can work effectively to prevent future pandemics. And it would be too idealistic to expect any

institution to succeed all the time. With information sharing & international co-operation, the member countries can save the world from pandemics using UN.

- Global challenges like terrorism, food crisis, water scarcity need global solutions. For that, we do not have any alternative to the United Nations as of now.

### **No - United Nations is not relevant in the 21st century:**

- The powerful organ of the UN, which is UNSC is not relevant to the present times. It has only 5 permanent members (USA, Russia, Britain, China, France) + 10 non-permanent members. This is resulting in the misuse of power by the 5 permanent members using their veto power. They often block key decisions, which are very much needed by other nations. There is no representation of developing countries, African countries & Southern hemisphere countries in the UNSC. This doesn't suit to the present times, which emphasises the need for equality.
- World Health Organisation(WHO) has miserably failed in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The world has changed so much since 1945, but the UN hasn't changed at the same pace.
- The funding for the UN is influencing its operations. This is constituting to misuse of power. Earlier the funding was dominated by the USA, and now as it is reducing its funds, China is increasing its contribution and influencing the UN as per its wishes.
- Still billions of people are living in poverty, which makes us wonder whether we need a new international organisation to work effectively on global challenges.
- Some countries complained about the UN that it is encroaching on their sovereignty. It is not at all right in this 21st century.
- The fact that regional organisations and other small international organisations are growing is proving that the UN is losing its relevance.

### **What needs to be done:**

- As many countries are suggesting, veto power should be eliminated and UNSC should be expanded to have a better representation of member countries. There is a dire need for reforms in UNSC. It should have a power balance.
- New UN bodies should be created to tackle other global challenges like pandemics, climate change etc to make it more relevant.
- There is a need to increase transparency and improve information sharing, the lack of which led to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Funding should be brought from diverse resources to avoid the misuse of power and dominance.

## Conclusion:

The United Nations is still relevant to the present times but it needs reforms. UNSC should be reformed to suit the 21st century. Better transparency and information sharing can make the UN a much more effective organisation.

## Your Turn...

Do you think the UN is still relevant in the contemporary world? Express your point of view through the comment section below. And subscribe to our blog to read answers to the trending GD topics.

## References:

- [Diminishing relevance of the U.N](#)
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