



Mains Practice Question

Q. Examine India's role in the Global South. Discuss the challenges and opportunities in strengthening South-South cooperation. (250 words)

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Approach

- Introduce by highlighting India's unique position in global south
- Delve into the factors driving India to become Leader of Global South
- Highlight the challenges associated with it
- Mention the opportunities that India has in this regard.
- Conclude positively.

Introduction

India, as the **world's largest democracy** and a rapidly growing economy, occupies a unique position in the **Global South**. Its role has evolved from being a recipient of aid to becoming a key player in **South-South cooperation**.

- This transformation is rooted in India's historical commitment to solidarity among developing nations, its economic progress, and its **aspirations for a more equitable global order**.

Body

India's Role in the Global South:

- **Leadership and Advocacy:** India is a prominent voice for developing nations in international forums, advocating for climate justice and equitable access to resources.
 - It actively pushes for the **reform of multilateral institutions** such as the **UN, WTO, IMF, and World Bank**.
 - The African Union became a full member of the G-20 during India's Presidency in 2023 signifying the theme "**One Earth, One Family, One Future**."
 - India also champions **South-South cooperation** at the United Nations, highlighted by the establishment of the **India-UN Development Partnership Fund in 2017**.
- **Development Partnerships:** India's **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** program benefits over 160 partner countries through capacity-building initiatives in IT, rural development, parliamentary affairs, and more.
 - It has committed over **USD 30 billion** in lines of credit for infrastructure projects in Africa and Asia, including notable projects like the **Pare Hydroelectric Plant in Bhutan**.
 - India also provides project-specific aid, such as the **USD 1 billion** line of credit to **Mongolia** for oil refinery construction
- **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief:** India has been proactive in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as demonstrated by the **Vaccine Maitri initiative**.
 - India also conducted Operation Dost for **Turkey and Syria earthquake** relief in 2023 and deployed National Disaster Response Force teams immediately.

- Cyclone relief efforts include **Operation Sahayata in Mozambique** after Cyclone Idai in 2019.
- **Economic Cooperation and Trade Facilitation:** India promotes trade and investment within the Global South, focusing on complementarities and mutual growth.
 - The **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor**, in partnership with Japan, enhances connectivity and promotes sustainable development.
 - Within the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)**, India supports initiatives like the **SAARC Food Bank and SAARC Seed Bank**.

Challenges in Strengthening South-South Cooperation

- **Divergent Interests:** The Global South is a heterogeneous group with diverse economic, political, and social conditions.
 - Aligning their interests and priorities for cooperation can be challenging.
- **Political Instability and Governance Issues:** Frequent regime changes affecting long-term cooperation
 - **Example:** Recent coups in **Niger** impacting regional stability
- **Resource Constraints:** Many Global South countries face **resource constraints**, limiting their capacity to participate effectively in South-South cooperation.
- **Dependency on the Global North:** The Global South's economies are **still heavily reliant on the Global North**, making it difficult to reduce dependence on traditional development partners.
- **Infrastructural Deficiencies:** Inadequate infrastructure, particularly in connectivity and digital realms, hampers effective South-South cooperation.
- **Lack of Institutional Mechanisms:** Robust institutional frameworks for facilitating South-South cooperation are still under development.

Opportunities in Strengthening South-South Cooperation

- **Technology Transfer and Digital Cooperation:** India can share its technological process with the Global South.
 - This includes digital public goods like **UPI, Aadhaar, and CoWIN**.
 - The country collaborates on emerging technologies through **joint research on AI, blockchain, and quantum computing**.
- **Climate Change Mitigation and Environmental Cooperation:** India can lead efforts in climate change mitigation through the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
 - India can also share best practices in sustainable development, such as its **LED bulb distribution program (UJALA)**.
- **Health Cooperation and Pharmaceutical Collaboration:** In health cooperation, India can engage in joint research on tropical and neglected diseases through the **India-Africa Health Sciences Platform**.
 - India can also share its Telemedicine and e-health initiatives, like the E-Sanjeevani.
- **Cultural Exchange and Soft Power Projection:** India can foster people-to-people contact and cultural understanding with initiatives like the **Know India Program for diaspora youth**.

Conclusion

India can be a pivotal leader in South-South cooperation. Platforms like the **Voice of Global South Summit** can facilitate enhanced collaboration, overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities will **enhance India's global standing and benefit the entire Global South**.