



India's Role in the Governance of Global South

This editorial is based on ["India and the new global order"](#) which was published in Indian Express on 16/01/2023. It talks about India's role in the advancement of interests of global south.

For Prelims: G20 summit, Cold War, poverty, inequality, climate change, Non-Aligned Movement, Group-77, Russia-Ukraine war, Belt and Road Initiative, Covid-19, Global South

For Mains: India and the Global Governance Shifts, India and its Neighbourhood, Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests

In an attempt to balance the West and with an Eye on the North, India is hoping to rally the 'South'. The theme of the **recently held two-day virtual Voice of the Global South 2023 Summit - "Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose"** - is India's attempt to add another note to the chorus of the global order.

The virtual forum has provided valuable inputs from the Global South that could facilitate India's ambition to steer the [G20 2023 summit](#) in Delhi successfully.

The forum is also **about India reconnecting with a global group of nations** that had fallen off the Indian foreign policy radar since the end of the Cold War.

Over the last three decades, **Indian diplomacy's focus has been on reordering its great power relations**, bringing stability to the neighbourhood and developing regional institutions in the extended neighbourhood.

What is Global South?

- The term '**Global South**' began by loosely referring to those countries that were left out of the industrialisation era and had a conflict of ideology with the capitalist and communist countries, accentuated by the [Cold War](#).
 - It includes countries that are mostly in **Asia, Africa and South America**.
 - Moreover, **Global North** is defined essentially by an economic division between the rich and poor countries.
 - Global North' refers loosely to countries like the **US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia and New Zealand**.
- 'Global South' is **significant because of its large population**, rich cultures, and abundant natural resources.
- Understanding the Global South is **important for addressing global issues** such as [poverty](#), inequality, and [climate change](#).

What are the Issues with the Global South?

- **Economic Inequality:**
 - Many countries in the **Global South still struggle with poverty and economic inequality**, which can make it difficult to implement development initiatives.
- **Political Instability:**
 - Political instability in **many countries in the Global South can make it difficult to implement long-term development plans** and can also create a hostile environment for foreign investment.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:**
 - **Many countries in the Global South lack basic infrastructure**, such as roads, ports, and power, which can make it difficult to attract foreign investment and promote economic growth.
- **Climate Change:**
 - Climate change is a **growing concern in many countries in the Global South**, as it can **exacerbate existing poverty and inequality** and create new challenges for development.
- **Limited Human Capacity:**
 - **Lack of skilled human resources and lack of education** is one of the main challenges for development in the global south.

What are the Challenges in the development of the Global South?

- **Lack of a Unified Stance:**
 - India's experience with **Non-Alignment** during the **Cold War** presented a **challenge for the global South** in several ways.
 - One major challenge was the **lack of a unified stance among the countries of the global South** on the major issues of the day, such as decolonization and the Cold War.
 - India's non-aligned stance meant that it did not align itself with either the Western or Eastern blocs, which made it difficult for other countries in the global South to follow a unified approach to these issues.
 - Additionally, NAM made it difficult for the global South to effectively negotiate with the major powers on issues such as trade and development.
- **Issue of Green Energy Fund:**
 - Although **Global North countries contribute more to global emissions**, they neglect to pay for green energy, which ultimately harms the least emitters - the less developed countries.
- **China's Interference:**
 - China is increasingly making inroads in the Global South through the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** for developing infrastructure.
 - However, it is still questionable whether BRI will be a win-win situation for both parties or it will focus only on China's Profit.
- **North's Interference in South:**
 - One major issue is **economic inequality**, as **U.S.-dominated international trade and financial systems favor developed countries** at the expense of developing ones.
 - Additionally, **industrial countries' military and political power is sometimes used to further its own interests**, potentially at the expense of countries in the global South.
 - This may lead to a loss of sovereignty and self-determination for these countries.
- **Lack of Capability to Utilise Resources:**
 - Inadequate access to resources is a **major challenge for countries in the global South**.
 - These countries **often have a disproportionate lack of access to resources** such as clean water, healthcare, and education.
 - Additionally, **they often have limited access to resources** such as financial capital, technology, and infrastructure.
 - This can lead to a number of negative consequences, including poverty, poor health outcomes, and limited economic growth.
- **Impact of Covid-19:**
 - **Covid-19** pandemic has **exacerbated the already existing divides**.

- Not only have the countries faced different challenges in dealing with the initial phases of the pandemic, but the social and macroeconomic implications being faced today have been far worse for the global South.
- The vulnerability of the domestic economies is far more apparent now in countries ranging from Argentina and Egypt to Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

What can be the Way Forward?

- **Balancing Nationalism and Internationalism:**
 - India **needs to contribute in more significant ways** to modernising and democratising the global order.
 - In today's world, it is **imperative to find a balance between nationalism and internationalism which** will help in safeguarding interests of any country as well as interests of Global south.
- **Identifying Simple, Scalable and Sustainable Solutions:**
 - The **need of the hour is to identify simple, scalable and sustainable solutions** that can transform our societies and economies.
 - With such an approach, **it is possible to overcome the difficult challenges** — whether it is poverty, universal healthcare or building human capacities.
 - During the last century, **these nations supported each other against foreign rule**. It's time to do it again in this century, to create a new world order that will guarantee citizens' welfare.
- **Regaining the Trust of Other Developing Countries:**
 - As a low middle income country seeking rapid economic development **India remains well placed to be the “Voice of the Global South”**. However, India **needs to regain the trust of other developing countries**, especially in Africa and South and Southeast Asia, espousing their interests, for it to once again play this role effectively.
- **Role of G-20:**
 - India's year-long presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) is also an opportunity for **uniting the global south for India** by providing a platform for India and other countries from the global south to come together and discuss common issues and challenges, as well as opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.
 - At the G20 summit, **India and other countries from the global south can raise their concerns and share their perspectives on key issues** such as economic growth, trade, investment, and development.
 - The summit can also serve as a **platform for India and other countries from the global south to coordinate their efforts and collaborate on initiatives** aimed at promoting economic development and reducing poverty.

Drishti Mains Question

Considering the challenges, what kind of foreign policy approach can India adopt in this era of global political change?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. In which one of the following groups are all the four countries members of G20?

- (a) Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey
- (b) Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
- (c) Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam
- (d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- In order to achieve a robust global economic growth, the member countries which represent and contribute more than 80% of the global GDP came at the premier forum for international economic cooperation, which was agreed by leaders at the Pittsburgh Summit in Pennsylvania (USA) in September 2009.
- The G20 members include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union (EU).
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. 'The long-sustained image of India as a leader of the oppressed and marginalised nations has disappeared on account of its new found role in the emerging global order.' Elaborate. **(2019)**

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