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Voice of global south: Need and Initiatives

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Abstract

This research paper presents an analytical study of the conflict that arose after the Second World War between the North, comprising developed states, and the South, comprising developing states, on the issues of global hegemony, resource exploitation during the colonial period, and unequal representation. During the colonial period, developed states exploited the resources of their colonies. After independence, due to a lack of capital and the dominance of developed states over global institutions, a North-South dialogue was organized to demand the creation of a new world order. After this did not bring positive results, these states took the form of Global South states. The most vivid support to the demand of this group of states has been given by the two South Dialogues held in this period of increasing the global credibility of a southern state, India. The first South Dialogue "Voice of Unity" organized by India on January 12-13, 2023 and the second dialogue "Growth and Trust for All Together" organized on November 17, 2023, were attended by 125 countries and made global change and development a common goal. Naturally, these two dialogues will have an impact on the economic development of these states as well as the southern states i.e. developed states in global geopolitics. 3rd Global South Summit's theme, "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future", guided discussions on critical issues such as conflicts, food and energy security crises, and the impact of climate change on developing countries. Key outcomes included the announcement of a \$2.5 million fund by India to bolster trade promotion activities among Global South countries and a \$1 million fund for capacity-building in trade policy and negotiation.

Keywords: India, Global North & South, new world order, global hegemony, national interest, colonial effect

1. Introduction

The term "Global South" is a socio-political and economic descriptor that refers to countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, typically characterized by lower levels of industrialization, income, and Human Development Index (HDI) ratings compared to the more developed Global North. The Global South's history is one of enduring complexity, shaped by colonialism, imperialism, and subsequent struggles for independence and development. This history is also defined by resilience, with the Global South constantly reinventing itself in the face of adversity, asserting its agency in a rapidly changing world. Early Exploration and Conquest (15th - 18th Centuries) The origins of the Global South's historical trajectory can be traced to the Age of Exploration when European powers began their expeditions to Africa, Asia, and the Americas in search of new trade routes and resources. The voyages of Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and Ferdinand Magellan, among others, paved the way for the colonization of vast territories. The encounter between European explorers and indigenous populations marked the beginning of centuries of domination, exploitation, and cultural transformation. Establishment of Colonial Empires By the 19th century, European powers had established vast colonial empires. The British Empire, often referred to as "the empire on which the sun never sets," controlled large parts of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. France, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and later Germany and Belgium also established colonies, leading to the widespread imposition of European governance, economic systems, and social structures ^[1].

Colonialism was driven by economic motives, including the extraction of raw materials, the establishment of plantations, and the creation of markets for European goods. The triangular trade, involving the exchange of slaves, raw materials, and manufactured goods between Africa, the Americas, and Europe, epitomized the exploitative nature of colonial economies.

The transatlantic slave trade alone resulted in the forced displacement and suffering of millions of Africans with lasting social and economic repercussions. Economic Exploitation and Social Changes the colonial economy was characterized by the extraction of resources, such as minerals, rubber, and agricultural products, for the benefit of the colonizing countries. Indigenous industries and crafts were often destroyed or marginalized, leading to economic dependency on the colonial powers. The introduction of cash crops like cotton, tea, coffee, and sugar transformed local economies, often leading to food insecurity and environmental degradation. Socially, colonialism imposed new hierarchies based on race and ethnicity, with Europeans occupying the top of the social ladder. The introduction of European education, religion, and legal systems disrupted traditional cultures and social structures. Missionary activities played a significant role in spreading Christianity, often at the expense of indigenous religions and practices^[2].

Resistance Movements and Early Revolts Throughout the colonial period, resistance to foreign domination was a constant undercurrent. Early revolts, such as the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), and various uprisings in Africa, reflected the deep-seated resentment against colonial rule. These movements were often brutally suppressed, but they laid the groundwork for later independence struggles.

Post-World War II Decolonization The end of World War II marked a turning point in the history of the Global South. The war weakened European powers and exposed the contradictions of colonialism, leading to a wave of decolonization. The United Nations, established in 1945, provided a platform for colonial subjects to voice their demands for self-determination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, further legitimized these aspirations.

Key Independence Movements and Figures in Asia, India's independence in 1947, led by figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, set the stage for the decolonization of the subcontinent and beyond. The partition of India and Pakistan, however, also highlighted the challenges of nation-building in the post-colonial era. In Africa, countries like Ghana (1957), led by Kwame Nkrumah, and Algeria (1962), after a bloody war of independence from France, became symbols of the continent's liberation.

Latin America though largely independent since the 19th century, experienced its own waves of revolutionary movements in the 20th century, as countries sought to break free from economic neocolonialism and U.S. influence. The Cuban Revolution (1959), led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, had a profound impact on the region and inspired leftist movements across the Global South.

Role of International Organizations and the Non-Aligned Movement the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), founded in 1961 by leaders such as Nehru, Nkrumah, Tito of Yugoslavia, and Nasser of Egypt, sought to position newly independent countries as a third force in the Cold War, advocating for peace, sovereignty, and cooperation among developing nations. NAM became a powerful voice for the Global South, promoting decolonization, disarmament, and economic justice.

Post-Independence Challenges:

Governance, Nation-Building, and Identity The post-independence period was fraught with challenges. Many countries faced the daunting task of building new nations from the remnants of colonial states. Borders drawn by colonial powers often disregarded ethnic, linguistic, and cultural realities, leading to internal conflicts and civil wars. The question of national identity, particularly in multi-ethnic states, became a source of tension. Governance was another critical issue. While some countries established democratic systems, others fell into authoritarianism, military rule, or single-party states. Economic challenges were pervasive, as newly independent nations struggled with poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment, often exacerbated by the economic legacies of colonialism^[3].

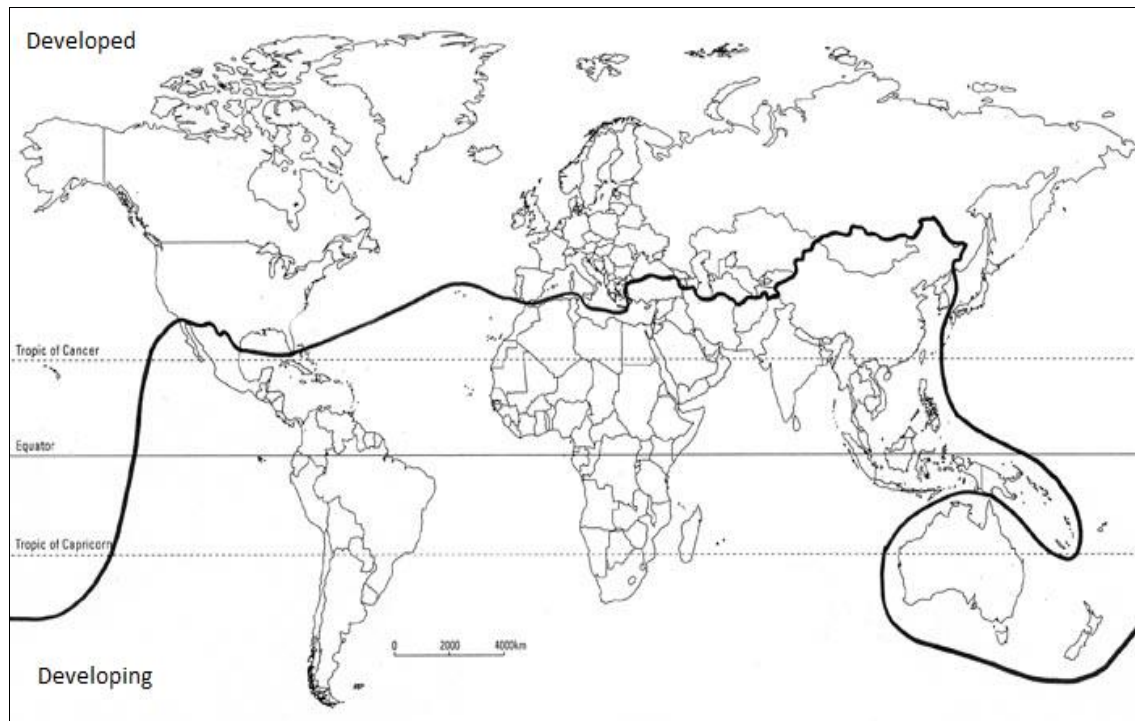
East-West Rivalry the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union had a profound impact on the Global South. Both superpowers sought to expand their influence in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, often leading to proxy wars, coups, and political instability. The Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnam War (1955-1975) were among the most significant conflicts, with devastating consequences for the involved countries.

Proxy Wars and Conflicts in Latin America, Africa, and Asia in Latin America, the U.S. supported authoritarian regimes to counter perceived communist threats, leading to a series of military coups and civil wars. The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) brought the world to the brink of nuclear war, highlighting the region's strategic importance. In Africa the Cold War intensified conflicts such as the Angolan Civil War (1975-2002) and the Congo Crisis (1960-1965). The apartheid regime in South Africa, supported by the West due to its anti-communist stance, became a focal point of the global anti-apartheid movement. Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the subsequent U.S.-backed resistance led to a protracted conflict that would have lasting impacts on the region, contributing to the rise of militant groups and regional instability.

Structural Adjustment Programs and Debt Crises The economic policies of the Global South during the Cold War were heavily influenced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, institutions dominated by Western powers. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), imposed as conditions for loans, required countries to implement neoliberal policies, including privatization, deregulation, and cuts to social spending. While intended to stabilize economies and promote growth, SAPs often led to increased poverty, unemployment, and social unrest^[4].

North-South Great Debate

North-South Great Debate focusing on the divide between developed (Global North) and developing (Global South) nations, has led to various initiatives aimed at addressing economic, social, and environmental disparities. These initiatives have been driven by the recognition that a more equitable global system is essential for sustainable development and global stability. Below is an overview of key initiatives that have emerged from this debate and the reasons behind their necessity^[5].



Source: Jovan.gec-Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48725194>

Fig 1: The_Brandt_Line

1.1 New International Economic Order (NIEO)

Proposed by developing countries in the 1970s through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the NIEO sought to restructure the global economic system to favor the interests of the Global South. Key proposals included fairer trade practices, control over natural resources, technology transfer, and debt relief. NIEO was necessary because the existing global economic system disproportionately benefited the Global North. Developing nations were trapped in a cycle of dependency, exporting raw materials at low prices and importing expensive manufactured goods, leading to persistent poverty and underdevelopment^[6].

1.2 Group of 77 (G-77)

Formed in 1964, the G77 is a coalition of developing countries within the United Nations that advocates for their collective economic interests. It works to influence global negotiations on trade, development, and financial policies. G-77 was created to provide a unified voice for the Global South, ensuring that their interests were represented in international forums where the Global North traditionally held more influence. This coalition has been essential in advocating for reforms that address the economic inequalities between the North and South^[7].

1.3 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

Established in 1961 NAM is an international organization of states that sought to remain independent from the Cold War blocs (the U.S. and the Soviet Union). NAM focused on promoting peace, sovereignty, and cooperation among developing nations. Was necessary to protect the sovereignty of newly independent nations and to resist pressures from the superpowers to align with their geopolitical interests. It provided a platform for the Global South to promote its own agenda, focusing on development, disarmament, and resistance to neocolonialism^[8].

1.4 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

UNCTAD was established in 1964 to address the trade and development issues faced by developing countries. It advocates for better terms of trade, development finance, and economic integration for the Global South was needed because traditional global trade and financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank were perceived to be biased in favor of the Global North. UNCTAD provided a forum where developing countries could advocate for fairer trade practices and economic policies that better supported their development needs^[9].

1.5 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Adopted by the United Nations in 2015 SDGs are a set of 17 goals that address global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The SDGs apply universally, but they are particularly focused on the needs of the Global South. SDGs are necessary to address the broad spectrum of development challenges faced by the Global South. They provide a comprehensive framework for achieving sustainable development, ensuring that no one is left behind. The SDGs also emphasize the need for global cooperation, recognizing that the challenges of the Global South require global solutions^[10].

1.6 Debt Relief Initiatives (e.g., Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative-HIPC)

HIPC Initiative launched by the IMF and World Bank in 1996, aims to reduce the debt burden of the world's poorest countries to sustainable levels, allowing them to focus on economic growth and poverty reduction. Many developing countries were burdened with unsustainable levels of debt, which hindered their ability to invest in development. Debt relief initiatives are necessary to provide these countries with the financial space to invest in health, education,

infrastructure, and other areas critical for development ^[11].

1.7 South-South Cooperation

South-South Cooperation refers to the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries, often bypassing traditional North-South aid channels. This includes initiatives like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) cooperation, and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). South-South Cooperation is needed to foster solidarity and mutual support among developing countries. It allows the Global South to leverage its collective strength, share best practices, and build economic and political alliances that can challenge the dominance of the Global North in international affairs ^[12].

Need for These Initiatives

Global economic system has historically been skewed in favor of the Global North, leading to persistent economic disparities. Initiatives like the NIEO, UNCTAD, and debt relief programs are essential to create a more balanced and fair global economy, where the Global South can develop on its own terms. Global South has historically been underrepresented in global decision-making processes. Groups like the G77 and NAM have been crucial in ensuring that the voices of developing countries are heard, and that their interests are not overshadowed by the priorities of the Global North. After centuries of colonialism and neocolonialism, many Global South nations seek to assert their sovereignty and control over their own resources and development paths. Initiatives that promote South-South Cooperation and self-reliance are key to achieving true independence and self-determination. Challenges of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation are most acute in the Global South. The SDGs and other development initiatives are necessary to address these issues in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and just. Global inequalities contribute to instability, conflict, and migration pressures. Addressing the North-South divide through these initiatives is essential for creating a more stable and secure world, where the benefits of development are shared more equitably.

1st Voice of Global South Summit by India:

1st Voice of Global South Summit hosted by India in January 2023 was a significant diplomatic event aimed at fostering collaboration among developing nations and amplifying their voices on the global stage. This summit was part of India's broader strategy to assert its leadership within the Global South, a term that generally refers to countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean that are often underrepresented in global decision-making forums.

Key Details of the Summit

- **Date:** January 12-13, 2023
- **Theme:** "Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose"
- **Participants:** Representatives from over 120 countries, including heads of state, ministers, and other senior officials from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania.
- **Format:** The summit was held virtually, allowing broad participation from countries with varying levels of technological infrastructure.

2.1 Objectives of the Summit

Primary objective was to provide a platform for developing countries to articulate their perspectives on global issues and to ensure these views are considered in international decision-making processes, particularly in multilateral institutions. Summit aimed to strengthen cooperation among Global South countries, focusing on shared challenges such as economic development, climate change, health crises, and digital transformation. Summit sought to advocate for reforms in global governance structures to make them more inclusive and representative of the Global South. By bringing together a diverse group of developing countries, the summit aimed to build solidarity and collective action on common interests and challenges.

2.2 Key Initiatives and Outcomes

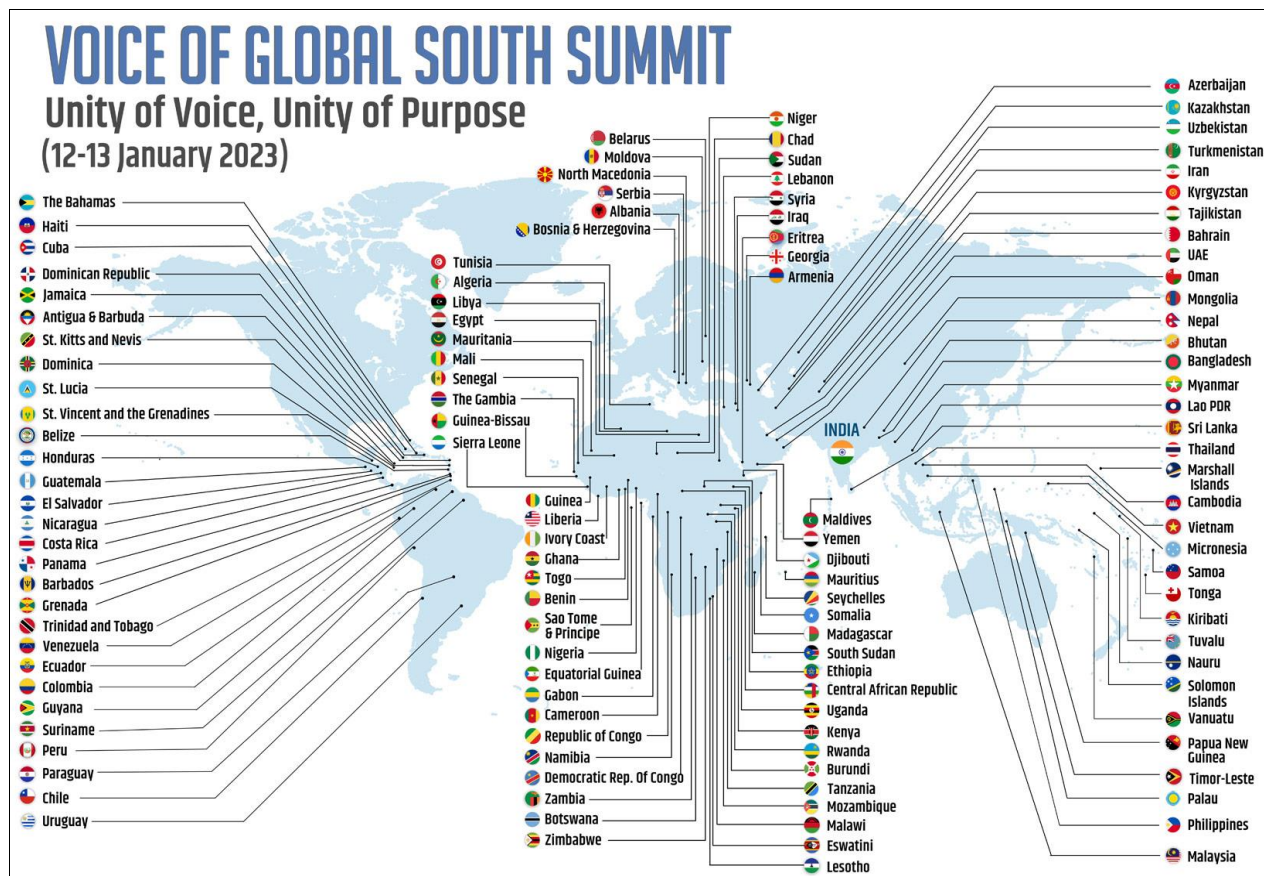
India proposed the establishment of a "Global South Center of Excellence" to serve as a hub for sharing best practices, research, and policy strategies tailored to the specific needs and challenges of developing countries. Center would focus on capacity building, technical assistance, and fostering collaboration among Global South countries. Called for the creation of a coalition within the Global South to address climate change, which disproportionately affects developing nations. Coalition would work on securing financing, technology transfer, and capacity building for climate adaptation and mitigation in Global South countries. India emphasized the need for debt relief and more equitable financial flows to Global South countries, which often face unsustainable debt burdens that hinder development. Summit encouraged international financial institutions to adopt more flexible and supportive approaches to debt restructuring and development financing for these nations. India proposed increased collaboration in technology and digital infrastructure among Global South countries. Aim was to bridge the digital divide, enhance cyber security, and foster innovation, which are critical for economic development in the Global South. Summit emphasized the importance of enhancing trade and economic ties within the Global South, reducing dependency on traditional markets in the Global North. By fostering intra-South trade, countries could build more resilient and self-sufficient economies. India offered to share its experience and resources in healthcare, particularly in vaccine production and distribution, to help Global South countries better prepare for and respond to health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Goal was to improve public health infrastructure and pandemic preparedness across the Global South. Summit reiterated the call for reforms in the United Nations and other global institutions to better reflect the interests and realities of the Global South. Included advocating for permanent representation for developing countries on the UN Security Council.

2.3 Significance of the Summit

Summit highlighted India's role as a leading voice for the Global South, showcasing its commitment to addressing the needs and aspirations of developing countries. Bringing together a broad coalition of developing nations, the summit fostered a sense of unity and collective action in tackling global challenges. This unity is crucial for ensuring that the interests of the Global South are adequately represented in global forums. Initiatives discussed at the summit laid the groundwork for stronger partnerships among Global South

countries, particularly in areas like trade, technology, and climate action. Summit helped position the Global South as

a more influential actor in global governance, advocating for a more balanced and equitable international system ^[13].



Source: Ministry of External Affairs. <https://www.mea.gov.in/voice-of-global-summit.htm>

Fig 2: 1st Voice of Global South Summit 2023

2nd Voice of Global South Summit by India

2nd Voice of Global South (VoGS) Summit, hosted by India in November 2023, aimed to solidify the Global South's voice in global governance and address shared challenges. This summit continued the momentum from the first VoGS Summit held in January 2023. A key initiative announced at the summit was the establishment of the Global South Centre of Excellence, named "Dakshin". This center will focus on research, capacity building, and knowledge sharing among developing countries, aiming to find practical solutions to the unique challenges faced by the Global South. Summit featured participation from around 130 countries and included 10 sessions that addressed critical issues such as finance, health, education, and trade. The discussions emphasized the need for a united front among Global South countries to tackle global crises like the Ukraine conflict, climate change, and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. India also launched several other initiatives during the summit, including the Global South Science & Technology initiative, the Aarogya Maitri humanitarian assistance program, and the Global South Scholarships Programme. These efforts reflect India's commitment to fostering deeper cooperation within the Global South, ensuring that these countries' concerns are heard at international forums like the G20. Summit's significance lies in its potential to reshape global governance by giving the Global South a stronger voice and promoting cooperation on issues of common interest, such as climate justice, healthcare, and energy security.

Key Initiatives and Outcomes

3.1 Global South Centre of Excellence (Dakshin)

India inaugurated the "Global South Centre of Excellence", also known as "Dakshin", which was proposed during the 1st VoGS Summit in January 2023. Center is designed to facilitate knowledge sharing, policy development, capacity building, and collaborative research among Global South countries. Its goal is to create practical solutions for the common challenges faced by developing nations.

3.2 New Initiatives Launched

Aimed at fostering scientific collaboration and innovation among Global South countries. Aarogya assistance program focusing on health and disaster relief, underscoring India's commitment to supporting its neighbors and other developing nations. Offer educational opportunities to students from Global South countries, enhancing capacity-building efforts across the region.

3.3 Themes and Discussions

Summit addressed critical issues such as finance, health, education, and trade, structured into 10 sessions with participation from over 130 countries. Highlighted the disproportionate impact of global crises like the Ukraine conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic on developing countries, with a call for a united front to address these issues ^[14].

3rd Voice of Global South Summit 2024

3rd Voice of Global South Summit 2024 was necessary due to the growing challenges faced by developing nations, which are often disproportionately affected by global crises. These include climate change, food and energy security issues, economic uncertainties, and the impacts of ongoing conflicts. The existing global governance structures have been criticized for being inadequate in addressing the unique needs and challenges of the Global South. The summit aimed to amplify the voices of these nations, ensuring that their perspectives and priorities are considered in global decision-making processes.

4. Key Initiatives

Summit focused on the theme "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future." This initiative emphasized the need for unity among developing nations to collectively address global challenges and promote sustainable development. Summit was instrumental in ensuring that the concerns and aspirations of the Global South were integrated into the G20 agenda, particularly during India's presidency. A significant achievement under this initiative was the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20, aimed at making global governance more inclusive. Developing strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change, which disproportionately affects the Global South. Discussing solutions to ensure food and energy security amid global crises. Addressing the technology divide and the economic challenges associated with technological advancements. Summit served as a platform to foster cooperation among developing nations, enabling them to collaborate more effectively in addressing their shared challenges [15].

5. Conclusion

Future of South-South Cooperation holds both promise and complexity. As the Global South continues to grow in economic and political influence, the scope and impact of SSC are likely to expand. However, addressing the challenges of internal disparities, effectiveness, and geopolitical tensions will be crucial for maximizing its benefits. Developing robust frameworks for SSC that promote transparency, accountability, and effective implementation can enhance its impact. Improved mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation can help address concerns about the effectiveness of SSC projects. Ensuring that all countries in the Global South have a voice in SSC initiatives can help mitigate power imbalances and promote equitable outcomes. Inclusive dialogue and decision-making processes are essential for achieving the collective goals of the Global South. While countries in the Global South pursue their national interests, balancing these with the broader objectives of South-South Cooperation can lead to more cohesive and impactful initiatives. South-South Cooperation represents a significant evolution in global interactions, offering a platform for developing countries to collaborate on shared challenges and opportunities. Its success depends on addressing internal and external challenges, fostering inclusive and equitable partnerships, and leveraging the collective strengths of the Global South. As the world continues to evolve, South-South Cooperation will remain a crucial element in shaping a more balanced and just global order. 1st Voice of Global South Summit by India was a pivotal event that aimed to elevate the role of

developing countries in shaping the global agenda. Through various initiatives, the summit sought to foster greater cooperation among Global South nations, address shared challenges, and advocate for a more inclusive and equitable global order. The event underscored the importance of solidarity and collective action in ensuring that the voices of developing nations are heard and respected in international decision-making processes. 2nd VoGS Summit played a crucial role in furthering India's agenda to strengthen South-South cooperation and give a stronger voice to the Global South in global forums like the United Nations and the G20. By hosting this summit, India reinforced its leadership role in advocating for the interests of developing nations, promoting a more inclusive global order. Initiatives and discussions at the summit are expected to have long-term impacts, fostering greater collaboration and ensuring that the concerns of the Global South are more prominently featured in international decision-making. 3rd Voice of Global South Summit concluded on August 17, 2024, with significant discussions and initiatives aimed at addressing the pressing challenges faced by developing nations. Summit held virtually and hosted by India, saw participation from leaders and ministers of 123 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. Notably, China and Pakistan were not invited. Summit's theme, "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future", guided discussions on critical issues such as conflicts, food and energy security crises, and the impact of climate change on developing countries. Key outcomes included the announcement of a \$2.5 million fund by India to bolster trade promotion activities among Global South countries and a \$1 million fund for capacity-building in trade policy and negotiation.

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