

Article

Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals: South-South Cooperation and SDG 16

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Abstract

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the global community with hope and fanfare in 2015 but, its progress and realisation have been dented. In 2020, all the stakeholders involved ought to devise strategies in order to achieve the ambitious goals by 2030. This paper will discuss the challenges towards the progress of the goals and will debate as to why South-South Cooperation (SSC) is a unique and distinctive means of implementation towards the same. The paper will also introduce the operationalisation of goal 16 dealing with peace, justice and strong institutions through the lens of India's capacity building programmes under the rubric of the principles of SSC. The paper will deliberate on some of the inherent challenges associated with SSC and ways to tackle them. The paper will end with possible recommendations for reinvigorating the pace towards the achievement of SDGs.

Keywords

Sustainable Development Goals, South-South Cooperation, Goal 16

Introduction

The first round of development goals, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by the global community in 2000. MDGs ran its course in 2015 and the incumbent, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in the same year for the next fifteen years. The development agendas have not only evolved in quantity, from 8 Goals, 18 Targets and 48 Indicators to 17 Goals, 169 Targets and 230 Indicators but, have also advanced qualitatively. Situating 17 SDGs covering 5 Ps: People, Planet, Peace, Partnership and Prosperity along with its impact on social, economic and environmental dimensions have qualitatively widened the scope of global goals as compared to MDGs. Apart from inclusion of new goals in SDGs, some of the goals that existed in MDGs have been expanded to connote qualitative widening.

For example, hunger and poverty were put together in MDG 1. However, with renewed understanding regarding poverty alleviation, aspirations of ending poverty and access to food including nutritional security have been separately placed in SDG 1 and 2 respectively. Also, the negotiation process of formulating SDGs were participatory and inclusive in nature with consultations taking place in a multi-stakeholder format in more than 100 countries. Policymakers, diplomats, academics and civil society organisations took part in the negotiation process. Such an across the board system was lacking during the MDGs formulation phase.

Another important addition in the SDGs are the Means of Implementation (MoI) for achieving the goals by 2030. SDG 17 is a standalone goal specifically geared towards MoI. Also, the a, b, c goals in each of the preceding 16 goals are the MoI. In terms of operationalisation, MDGs were seen as an aid driven (North-South) model whereas, SDGs have expanded the scope of implementation to include not only North-South Cooperation (NSC) but, also South-South Cooperation (SSC) and Triangular Cooperation. The 2030 Document has specifically mentioned SSC to be a complementary mechanism for achieving SDGs. (UNGA, 2015).

Adoption of the SDGs in 2015 quickly coincided with the inward looking political and macroeconomic tendencies adopted by the (major) economically developed countries of the North. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused further damage to the already existing stress on multilateralism. SSC, as mentioned in the Agenda 2030 Document as a complementary mechanism for achieving SDGs is a unique MoI but, it too suffers from certain inherent challenges. However, at the same time it provides a unique, transformative and distinctive model achieving the goals (Cabral, Russo, and Weinstock, 2014). Discussion on these aspects are the need of the hour as the global landscape toward realisation of SDGs have deteriorated since 2015 with commitment to multilateral cooperation (central to the idea of SDGs) in under stress (ECOSOC, 2019).

This paper will start with the discussion on the threats to multilateralism which is hampering the progress and realisation of SDGs and the enhanced challenges posed by COVID-19. The section will end with a confidence that multilateralism and international cooperation are the only way forward towards achieving SDGs by 2030. Next section will briefly discuss the historical evolution of the North-South divide and the emergence of NSC and SSC. This section will talk about the principles of cooperation that guide respective cooperation activities. The section will also analyse the positives and advantages that SSC brings towards different aspects of development.

Section III will deal with the case study of India's SSC contribution in the realm

of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16). The section will start with context setting that SSC has traditionally dealt with only the mainstream developmental challenges of poverty, education, health, etc. and left the issues of peace, justice and institutions for the North to deal with. It will analyse as to why such dereliction on South's part is a mistake that needs rectification. The section will further analyse as to what India brings in through its operational principles of SSC in the issue areas of SDG 16 in form of capacity building. Next section will briefly discuss some of the inherent challenges in SSC and why/how a normative framework of the Right to Development can strengthen SSC towards realisation of SDGs.

Multilateralism in Retreat

In decades after the end of the Second World War, multilateralism took root where in institutions like the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and recently the Group of 20 (G20) have continued to formulate and direct financial infrastructure of the world; (initially) General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and (later) the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are regulating the global trade; and the development, peace and human rights related issues are being tackled by the United Nations (UN). These institutions have had a chequered history. They have been able to make the world more prosperous, rules based, interconnected and globalised but, at the same time the world has grown more unequal both, inter-regionally and intra-regionally along with increased localised skirmishes and conflicts. Initial decades of multilateralism led to the spurt in economic prosperity of the global North and the same system assisted the growth of the major emerging countries from the global South. Negotiation and adoption of global agendas like the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; Agenda 2030; and the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 represented the high point of multilateralism (Linn, 2018).

International Organisations post 1945 were required as in the world plunged into the war in absence of a rules-based order. The above mentioned organisations evolved discourses and debates around perpetual and continued peace, effective human rights, multilateral trading system and financing after the end of the Second World War. These sectors were considered to be important areas to be worked on in order to stop the repeat of the war. Understanding of peace and human rights developed as a direct response towards the Holocaust, loss of young men at the battlefield and other associated tragedies. Protectionist trading practices and inward-looking financial structures, on the other hand, were understood to be the causes of the war as 1930s saw the Great Depression in the US and unsustainable economic, financial and trading practices which led to rise in nationalism across Europe (Sharma, 2018). In a way, multilateralism and rules-based order was considered to be a prerequisite for a peaceful world.

However, the same rules-based system of multilateralism and globalisation ignited discontent and rise in populism among the population which got left behind in this phase of growth. Domestic disintegration and the deepening divide between the winners and losers of this multilateral system have led to a populist backlash against the elites (Rodrik, 2020). This attack on the political elites have not only taken place across the major economies of the global North but, also in the global South. It has manifested differently wherein, the anger in developed countries have been directed towards a mistrust in the rules based multilateral order whereas, the governments in the developing countries have continued to repose faith in the existing order. However, rise in nationalism and authoritarian regimes in both, North and South are reversing the trends of democracies towards illiberalism.

Successful referendum in the United Kingdom for Brexit and election Donald Trump as the President of the United States have been regarded as turning points in the developed world where in these countries appear to lean towards transactional practices by favouring the interest of their respective countries at the cost of multilateralism (Linn, 2018). Domestically as well, the situation is of grave concern when people from the minority population are targeted be it discrimination based on race (typified by the #BlackLivesMatter movement), gender (typified by the #MeToo movement) and attacks on the religious minorities in various parts of the world. The emerging countries of the global South had already started the process of establishing their own institutions emanating from the frustratingly slow process of reforms in the international organisations of the WB, the IMF, the WTO and the UN. Institutionalisation of the BRICS led New Development Bank and China led Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, along with a surge in number of free trade and regional trade agreements are a few cases in point.

Just as the world was already grappling with stressed multilateralism, COVID-19 has further pushed the idea of isolationism. COVID-19 has been unique in exacerbating the changes in the sphere of geopolitics. US under President Trump has frequently shown his displeasure towards multilateralism be it for NATO alliance in security arena (Borger, 2019) or referring negatively to UN and WTO (Johnson, 2019). He said in his (in)famous speech at UNGA 74 “The future does not belong to globalists. The future belongs to patriots” (Gearan and Kim, 2019). Even during the pandemic, the announcement by the US President regarding rescinding the financial contribution to World Health Organisation (WHO) did not come as a surprise. Even some of its allies like Japan is thinking on similar lines (Wakatsuki, 2020). Cooperation and multilateralism in the European Union (EU) have also come under tremendous stress in this situation. EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen extended a ‘heartfelt apology’ to Italy on behalf of Europe, admitting that it had not been by its side since the beginning of the

crisis (Gill, 2020). Relations between US and EU soured as well when France (The Guardian, 2020) and Germany (Deutsche Welle, 2020) in separate incidents blamed the United States of high jacking the consignments of masks when the shipments were ready to be flown to the European countries from Shanghai and Bangkok airports respectively (Sharma, 2020).

It is important to underline that solidarity, rules based international cooperation and multilateralism are even more important in this crisis due to COVID-19. The present situation has reinforced the importance of multilateralism “more than ever before, we need solidarity, hope and the political will and cooperation to see this crisis through together” (UNGA, 2020). Isolationism and exclusionary tendency will only exacerbate the negative impact of the pandemic whereas multilateralism and inclusionary policy towards public health, and socio-economic response through mutual learning amongst countries affected will result in suppression of the virus, restart the economies and get SDGs back on track (UN, 2020). A collaborative approach is essential towards technical cooperation for sharing scientific and technological advancements related to universal health care and research and development of the requisite vaccine (UNGA, 2020).

Rules based (universality and indivisibility of human rights, non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity) multilateral order will further be required for “expediting trade and transfer of essential medical supplies and equipment, including personal protective equipment for health-care and other front-line workers, and address intellectual property issues, to ensure that COVID-19 treatments are available and affordable to all” (Ibid, Para 69). It is extremely essential to keep ourselves reminded that “no-one is safe until everyone is safe” (Guterres, 2020). Inward looking and selfish policies at this time will only make the planet, a dangerous place to live in. The crises of COVID-19 must also initiate a process of reform of international organisations which are long due. It must be kept in mind that the rules based multilateral order is the only workable system we have; an ineffective and inefficient beggar-thy-approach gave us the Second World War.

With this background on the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation, it is the right time to introduce the debate around international cooperation with regards to development related activities. The subsequent section will discuss development cooperation, the north-south schism and issues dealing with peace and justice.

Development Cooperation and the North-South Divide

In order to better understand South-South Cooperation (SSC), it is imperative to have some background of NSC. NSC is a development concept in which there is a linear transfer of resources from a developed country to a developing coun-

try. It draws its origins from the reconstruction activities and economic recovery plans for Europe which was ravaged after the Second World War led by the US. Under the Marshall Plan initiated in 1948, US granted USD 15 billion (nearly 100 billion in 2018 US dollars) for a period of four years to Europe for rebuilding war-torn regions, removing trade barriers, modernising Industries, improving European prosperity, and preventing the spread of Communism (Rosseel, De Corte, Blommaert, and Verniers, 2009). The reasons behind Marshall Plan were thus, both altruistic and strategic. On the one hand, USA aspired towards the development of Europe and on the other hand, fear of spread of Communism from the Soviet Union was palpable as well (Hogan, and Hogan, 1987). After the development activities in Europe, the attention of the US shifted to the developing world with the intention of replicating the successes of Europe in Asia, Africa and Latin America. By late 1950s, even Europe joined the bandwagon of NSC with the establishment of Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1961 (Abdenur and Da Fonseca, 2013). Its members are high income countries with high Human Development Index and are considered to be the developed countries, the so-called global North.

Struggles of Global South

Global South has grappled with development challenges since post Second World War. At global stage, their struggle has been with industrialised countries of global North. Few of those in global North (victors of the War) have been major drivers of global economy; global financial institutions; global trade bodies; norm creators of human rights and environmental regimes; and have had hegemonic control over international relations and international law which governs the globe. Most of these developments in international relations and institution building at the behest of North took place in a non-inclusive and non-participatory manner. Southern countries inherited an international system of which they became a part much later as most of Asian and African countries were still colonised till late 1960s and nations of Latin America, though decolonised, did not wield agenda setting powers.

Late 1950s and 1960s saw some of the newly decolonised countries of Asia, Africa and now assertive Latin America challenge the status-quo and the system institutionalised by the global North at UN General Assembly. The Southern countries also came together to successfully lobby for creation of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964 as a permanent inter-governmental body housed in Geneva. Mandate of UNCTAD is to provide technical assistance tailored to the needs of the developing countries with special attention being paid to the needs of the least developed countries (LDCs) and countries with the greatest needs. The economic frustration experienced by now decolonised countries of Asia and Africa; and Latin America in 1960s and 1970s

led to the emergence of New International Economic Order (NIEO). This came about through realisation of newly independent countries that they had been born into a global political and economic system which they had neither created, nor was in their interest (Chakravarthi 1991).

The 1974 NIEO declaration specifically mentioned:

Para 1 “The developing countries, which constitute 70 per cent of the world’s population, account for only 30 per cent of the world’s income. It has proved impossible to achieve an even and balanced development of the international community under the existing international economic order. The gap between the developed and the developing countries continues to widen in a system which was established at a time when most of the developing countries did not even exist as independent States and which perpetuates inequality” (Resolution 1964).

Para 3 “International co-operation for development is the shared goal and common duty of all countries” (Ibid, Page3).

Para 4 (1) “Ensuring that one of the main aims of the reformed international monetary system shall be the promotion of the development of the developing countries and the adequate flow of real resources to them” (Ibid, Page 4).

South-South Cooperation (SSC)

With all these developments taking place at the global level, Southern countries amongst themselves initiated a solidarity driven cooperation towards mainly, capacity development programmes, and also infrastructural and industrial developments. The Afro-Asian conference of Bandung in 1955 and subsequent emergence of its development offshoot (SSC) must be seen under the wider sphere of Global International Relations¹ as it was for the first time that a framework of enquiry in all its diversity, especially with due recognition of the experiences, voices and agency of non-Western peoples, societies and states, who were marginalised in the discipline of economics, development and international affairs, came to limelight (Acharya 2014). SSC in present times is certainly a non-western construct for inter-state and inter-social relations. The SSC pillars of shared identity; countries with similar levels of economic development; common goals; and

¹ It is pertinent to point out that discipline of International Relations (IR) emerged after the ravages of the Great War (1914-1918) with the sole intention of spreading peace, attaining peaceful settlement of disputes between countries and stopping a repeat of such dastardly wars. The developmental (trade, finance, peace and human rights) angle in IR was realised only when previous set of beliefs couldn’t stop the Second World War (1939-1945). The victors of Second World War set the stage for IR in post 1945 era with establishment of various international and inter-governmental organisations. Emergence of Southern countries have brought in different set of value systems in existing IR. The discipline of IR now appears to be global in nature with infusion of ideas and principles from countries that were still under colonial rule right after 1945. This can be best viewed as transition of the discipline from IR to Global IR.

aspiration of equitable exchange situates SSC at different setting. (RIS 2016). The First Afro-Asian-Latin American Peoples' Solidarity Conference or the First Tri-continental Solidarity Conference held in 1966 in Havana further consolidated the position of the Southern countries. An operational definition of SSC, based on 2009 Nairobi declaration, was agreed and it reads as "[SSC is] a process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how, and through regional and interregional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions" (UN, 2012).

It is important to note that over the years SSC has expanded both, in quantum and its geographical spread. Just as in trade, in SSC too, comparative advantages of countries involved played a significant role. For example, in initial phases of SSC, India, owing to better human resources in the field of education and engineering, assisted different Southern nations in developing their education system through capacity building programmes (Chaturvedi, 2016). Similarly, Cuba helped in strengthening the health sector in different African countries by sending their team of medical practitioners (Brouwer, 2011). Brazil has assisted other countries through their policy transfers (de Morais, 2005) and China in the recent decades has built infrastructure in various Southern countries (Abdenur, 2013). The plurality, which is a celebrated virtue of SSC, has put the concept in good stead over the years but, at the same has become the bane (due to a diverse nature of SSC) as no unified definition and a normative framework for SSC could emerge. More of this would be discussed in the last section of this paper.

Situation of SSC with respect to the challenges (discussed later) of narrow sector specificity, restricted modalities and lack of institutionalisation, along with limited quantum and restricted geographical spread, has improved, enhanced and developed to a large extent in recent years. Overall, in 2019 69 per cent of programme country governments in United Nations indicated that their country provides development cooperation to other countries through SSC (QCPR, 2020). Another 63 per cent countries claimed to have peer-to-peer exchange platforms for exchange information and best practices with Southern partners on science, technology, and innovation (Ibid.). SSC now is not restricted to only the modalities of capacity building, technical cooperation and knowledge transfer but, trade, finance, investment, grants and concessional loans also form a major part its modalities. Similarly, along with continuing the sectoral support to developing countries in health, education and agriculture, the sectors have now been expanded to infrastructure, connectivity, internet and communication technology, banking and insurance, peace industry, and humanitarian support. Policy trans-

fers, policy coordination, and sharing of development strategies have also become common within SSC.

Most of the major countries involved in SSC in present times were once the recipients of foreign aid from OECD member countries. The guiding principles of SSC that emerged over the years were a response against the hardships and challenges faced by Southern countries when receiving aid from the North (Mawdsley, 2012). It came to be seen as a statement which meant that Southern countries would not subject fellow developing countries to the same treatment which they suffered at the hands of the developed nations. This meant absence of any political and macro-economic conditionalities attached with development cooperation activities in SSC. However, on many occasions these guiding principles have either come under stress or a controversy has erupted where observers claimed SSC to be neo-colonial in nature. Conditionalities attached with foreign aid in NSC were mainly in the form of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) by the North which was seen as policy intervention in the domestic affairs of the recipient countries (IPC-IG, 2010).

Towards late 1980s and 1990s, various research came forward which claimed that SAPs and conditionalities were counterproductive and the fiscal conservativeness were harming the essential sectors such as education, health and agriculture in the developing countries of Africa and Asia (Prabhu, 1996). In contrast, in line with the principle of respect for national sovereignty, SSC was sought to be developed based on the idea that the partner or the recipient countries themselves initiate, organise and manage SSC activities. SSC presumed interdependences, not new dependencies. The basic tenet that emerged for SSC was thus that international cooperation never ought to interfere with internal dynamics of the partner countries by providing policy recommendations, thereby challenging the national sovereignty of the partner. Nor did it seek to withhold and/or rescind partnerships due to changes in the policy and legislative spaces within the partner country.

Different approaches and understandings of SSC have led to the evolution of basic tenets of SSC. Operational Principles of SSC were ideated as (RIS, 2013):

- **Demand Driven**

“In SSC, it is the partner or the recipient, rather than the provider as the source of funds or capacities that determines the priorities in the project. The selection of projects and the methods for implementation are decided in consultation with the partner and is never imposed” (Ibid).

- **Respect for national sovereignty**

“In line with the principle of national sovereignty, the partner or the recipient countries themselves initiate, organise and manage SSC activities.

SSC is basically about interdependences, not new dependencies” (Ibid).

- **Political and Macroeconomic Non-Conditionality²**

“SSC never interferes with internal dynamics of the partner countries by providing policy recommendations thereby, challenging the national sovereignty of the partner. Nor does it withhold or/and rescinds partnerships due to changes happening within the partner country” (Ibid).

- **Spirit of Sharing (Solidarity)**

“One of the major tenants of SSC is that it is based on a partnership of partners involved with an absence of hierarchy in development cooperation. The spirit of sharing through capacity building and technology transfer continues to drive SSC” (Ibid).

- **Mutual Benefit**

“SSC is carried out in the nature of partnership to promote mutual benefit and thereby rejecting an unequal dependent relationship. The aim of cooperation is to create a higher level of capability and economic opportunity for both the partners, aimed at mutually beneficial interdependency” (Ibid).

The political solidarity within SSC has now progressed to a relationship based on the sound economic logic of win-win cooperation and mutual benefit for the countries without relinquishing the features of equality and trust. What really differentiates SSC from NSC is its demand driven nature along with an absence of conditionalities attached with the partners. India has believed in the principles of SSC and has been instrumental in its conceptual and normative growth since its origin.

Main differences between NSC and SSC can be summarised as below:

Parameters	North-South Cooperation	South-South Cooperation
Aim/Purpose	Historically altruistic endeavour	Solidarity driven mutual benefit endeavour
Geopolitical Origin	Emerged under Cold War rhetoric	Emerged during Non-Aligned Movement
Political Aspiration	Maintenance of North led International Order	Democratisation of International Order

² “The priorities and policies of the partner countries are not hindered in any manner and the non-interference in the internal affairs and the national sovereignty of the development partner is also taken care of, thus making the SSC more efficient and cost-effective. By not imposing any conditionalities, SSC gives the power of independent decision making to the partner countries, keeping in view their aspirations and special values. Thus, the SSC believes in respecting the independence and national sovereignty, cultural diversity and identity of local content” (RIS, 2013).

Parameters	North-South Cooperation	South-South Cooperation
Primary Drivers	OECD-DAC members	Global South (Tri-continentalism: Asia, Africa and Latin America)
Nature of Partners	Donor from an industrialised state with high per capita income	Partnership between states with similar level of development
Theoretical Basis	Theory of Change	Lacks theorisation
Philosophical Basis	Framework Approach	Ingredient Approach
Conditionality	Extensive political and macroeconomic conditionalities	Presence of soft procedural conditionalities
Operational Sovereignty	Multilayered time-consuming bureaucratic structures, hence added transaction cost	Highly decentralised and relatively fast with few implications for transaction cost
Institutional Oversight	No global body. OECD acts as a Secretariat	No global body. Tri-continental multi-stakeholder partnership on the rise
Public Perception	Negative with inward-looking tendencies in donor countries	Positive with belief in globalisation in partner countries

Source: Adapted from (Chaturvedi, 2014) and (Lengyel and Malacalza, 2011)

After this introduction of SSC and NSC, it is pertinent to move towards the case study part of the paper which would discuss the issues of SDG 16 and the role of India's SSC engagements towards the achievements of goals and targets as enshrined in SDG 16 though the modality of capacity building.

Global South and the Idea of Peace and Development

Traditionally, Southern countries have primarily focused on development from a conventional sense in form of finances, trade, technology and infrastructure. It is important to point out that a sovereign state can develop by many different processes (Sengupta, 2002). There may be a sharp increase in gross domestic product (GDP), mainly spearheaded by richer sections of the society which have greater access to financial and human capital. In the process of GDP led growth, it is this group that further consolidates their wealth becoming increasingly prosperous. The schism between rich and poor gets widened further in this type of development. The second way of development is through industrialisation, rapid or not so rapid. In this case as well, the benefits accruing because of increased industrialisation does not trickle down to the small-scale and informal sectors (Ibid). These sectors get further marginalised. Third modality of development may be through an impressive growth of export industries with increased access to global markets. This has the danger of non-integration of economic hinterland into the process of growth (Ibid). All these may be regarded as development in the conventional sense. The efforts of global South through NIEO, or through UNCTAD, or through SSC have tended to view development and achieve development in this conventional sense. Most of the Southern countries after their independence

lacked well trained citizens and skilled manpower who could become part of their workforce. Thus, building capacities of the young population with establishment of training institutes, colleges and universities also became the immediate focus of these governments.

Apart from marginalisation of specific groups as mentioned above, the conventional development has also almost sidetracked peace and security paradigm of development. One of the reasons for absence of peace and security dimension of development in SSC agenda is attributed to the fact that many Southern countries believed that peace was a North led process. At the international level after the end of World War II, normative peace has been understood through the lens of Realism. Realist understanding of peace has been 'absence of war', Johan Galtung described it as 'negative peace'. The present understanding of peace has been understood as 'liberal peace' (Richmond, 2006) and has been determined by the securitisation agenda propelled by the countries of global North. This straight jacketed and formulaic neo-liberal peace package consists of bringing warring parties together with the intention of power sharing followed by holding democratic elections. The subsequent process is then the (re)introduction of neo-liberal market-driven economic policies. All these initiatives would take place under the aegis of a Northern donor and is also informally known as the Washington consensus.

North led processes also led to rise of 'military-industry complex' and 'peace industry' which included arms manufacturing enterprises and non-governmental organisations; consultancies; think-tanks and research centers which addressed security, conflict and peacebuilding (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley, 2018). Most of the Southern countries, till to this day, depend on their Northern partners, either materially for access to arms and ammunitions, or intelligence and intellectual support or sometimes both with respect to peace and security paradigm. The Southern presence in peace-building process has traditionally been in the post-conflict infrastructure, capacity and institution building project activities. For example, India's post-conflict reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. Its development activities in Afghanistan could be categorised under humanitarian assistance, infrastructure development, small community development projects and capacity building programmes aimed towards training students, teachers, medical and health practitioners, and training in fields of agriculture and other primary occupations. However, there are instances of Southern countries contributing to the process of peacebuilding. South Africa for example, has embarked upon peacebuilding initiatives in Democratic Republic of Congo employing the convergent and divergent operational methods with the dominant liberal model of peacebuilding (Lalbahadur and Rawhani, 2018). In the past, India, had played an overlooked but significant role during the Korean War (1950-53), by mediat-

ing at the behest of United Nations between the warring parties (Barnes, 2013). Also, in 1953, an Indian initiative at United Nations General Assembly led to the formation of the Disarmament Sub-Committee of the United Nations (Prashad, 2007). Apart, from them, South's role in UN led peacekeeping operations have been well documented.

The differences between North led peace model and SSC are as follows:

Principle	Peacebuilding	South-South Cooperation
Ownership	Multilateral programmes are initiated in consultation with national leadership which set peacebuilding priorities across sectors	National leadership articulates need for specific projects and ensures participation of national entities on a long-term basis
Mutual Benefit	Programmes are designed to bring peace in host societies	Projects are designed for mutual benefit
Equality and Horizontality	Donor-recipient relationship	Partnership among equals; mutual respect for sovereign equality with sense of mutual welfare
Conditionality	Presence of political and macro-economic conditionalities (Liberal Peace/Washington consensus)	Absence of political and macroeconomic conditionalities
Mutual accountability	There is greater accountability through targets and indicators	There is capacity building through transfer of skills, knowledge and sharing of best practices
Complementarity	Programme objectives aligned with priorities of the country concerned	Demand-driven programmes aligned with the priorities of the partner country.
Monitoring and Evaluation	The extension of programmes is based on progress achieved towards pre-determined benchmarks	Intends to follow the principles of Impact Assessment
Operationality	Follows straightjacket approach: peacemaking - agreement of power sharing between warring parties - holding democratic elections - introduction of neo liberal economic policies	Emphasis on the replication and adaptation of successful experiences already implemented in other developing countries. Adoption of inter-substitutable modalities.

Source: Adapted from (Mathur, 2013)

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Apart from other major differences between MDGs and SDGs, which are beyond the scope of this paper, one of the most crucial is inclusion of a standalone goal related to peace and security; justice; and institutions in SDGs. The general consensus amongst development thinkers and practitioners were that a peaceful environment is essential for realisation of SDGs and in turn an enabling environment of sustainable development is required for a peaceful society. Also, the normative and operational pillars of United Nations in form of peace and security, human rights and development forms a mutually reinforcing compact. Ar-

ticle 1(3)³ of the UN Charter states the interlinkages between these three pillars (Kanade, 2018). The inclusion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies with presence of effective and accountable institutions (SDG 16) is thus critical towards realising sustainable development and yet it was totally ignored in the MDGs (Coonrod, 2014).

Inclusion of peace and security; justice and institutional dimensions in the Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986, Martha Nussbaum's ideation of Quality of Life in 1993 and Amartya Sen's moral framework of capabilities approach (duly incorporated in UN's development Programme) further problematises the absence of peace and security; justice; and institutional dimensions in MDGs which were adopted in 2000. It became clear that not only direct violence, but also structural factors that lead to violence such as violations of human rights can result in undermining sustainable development (Kanade, 2018). These realisations were the fundamental basis for inclusion of above mentioned three pillars in SDGs. Overall SDG 16 "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" falls in the category of enabling goals. SDG 16 as enabling goal means that it will act as catalyst in promoting, sustaining human development and will play an active role in realisation of other goals. SDG 16 should be viewed to consist of four pillars: targets associated with peaceful societies; access to justice; national policies catering towards effective, accountable and inclusive institutions; and international cooperation towards building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at regional and multilateral levels.

Institutions and SSC

SDG 16 leans towards good governance spectrum of liberal democracy with its focus on peaceful and inclusive societies along with emphases on justice and institutions. This section will discuss one of the essential pillars of SDG 16 being role of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. As has been understood that most of the development challenges lies in the global South and that the normative and operational principles of SSC are best suited to realise SDGs. In this backdrop it is essential to discuss SSC's role with respect to institution's creation and institution building. This becomes all the more important in wake of criticism levelled against the South in terms of their inability to create, establish and support institutions both, domestically and across developing countries. For SSC to be made effective at national, regional and multilateral levels, it is imperative that it is strengthened through South led political institutions at multilateral level like G77 and the NAM; at regional level like Association of Southeast Asian na-

³ "To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" (Kanade, 2018).

tions (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the African Union, the Caribbean Community, MERCOSUR; at inter-regional level like BRICS and IBSA; policy institutions like the South Centre, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, Network of Southern Think Tanks; and its financial institutions like the BRICS led New Development Bank and South led multilateral development Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank towards formulating a unified Southern positions on development projects, policy coordination and collective action.

One of the areas where SSC needs to evolve is its traditional weak organisational structure and lack of institutionalised support, both domestically and globally. Inadequate and ineffective institutions coupled with lack of financial resources and political will and along with tendency of Southern countries to lean towards global North with respect to seeking solutions and intellectual inspiration have damaged the furtherance of SSC (Paolo, 2019). South also lacks a common and permanent platform for regular consultations on various issues, something that North has in form of OECD. At the multilateral level, UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) is playing the aggregator's role of good practices, sharing information, experiences and lessons learnt for the benefit of Southern countries in particular and for global good in general, however, quite rightly, its mandate does not cover policy making exercises on different dimensions of SSC. In the last two decades, SSC has expanded in its geographical reach, in its financial capabilities, in its sectoral plurality and number of Southern countries which are actively pursuing cooperation with other developing countries.

Also, over the past decades, there has been a proliferation of Triangular Development Cooperation (TDC). TDC is another way through which development in a Southern country can be achieved. There are different combinations of TDC with the most commonly observed TDC being in terms of a DAC member as the provider, an emerging economy as the pivot country and a low-income country (LIC) as the partner. There are many other combinations possible, for example two or three middle income countries (MICs) coming together with or without a multilateral organisation or a DAC member with a multilateral agency. Implementation of development projects in developing countries at the behest of IBSA cooperation is an example of TDC where India, Brazil and South Africa have pooled in resources and UNOSSC is the implementing agency. In wake of these developments, Southern institutions are greatly needed in order to guide SSC as an important mechanism of means of implementation towards realising SDGs.

Report of the Secretary General on state of SSC in August 2017 mentions that expansion of SSC needs to be strengthened by institutionalisation of the process (UNGA, 2017). The report came up with salient dimensions of the institutionalisation process. It mentioned about the increasing interest in Southern countries

to come up with specific ministries, departments, agencies, portfolios, etc. to deal with issues of SSC. These processes not only help in streamlining the country's SSC initiatives but, also help United Nations country teams to strengthen their engagement with host Governments on South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. It further mentions the multi-stakeholder nature of SSC wherein there are active involvement of civil society organisations, academic institutions, private sector and volunteer groups. Thus, in a way decentralised SSC has become more formalised. As mentioned previously, SSC has existed since late 1940s and 1950. The experience and knowledge acquired by Southern countries have enabled them to underscore their comparative advantages significantly. These years have also led academics, policy makers, diplomats, development practitioners and other relevant actors to specialise in SSC. All these factors have contributed towards initiating a process of institutionalising SSC.

Capacity Building by India in the realm of SDG 16

The aforementioned developments towards the institutionalising SSC is mainly being accomplished by emerging Southern countries. The lack of institutions in LDCs is still a problem to reckon with. It is here that capacity development programmes through technical cooperation by middle income Southern countries focused on the specific needs of LDCs and other developing countries becomes important. For example, capacity building initiatives by India are channelled through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) which was formalised in 1964, though India has provided human resources assistance to developing countries since its independence in 1947 (Kumar 1987). Scholarships and educational exchange remain a significant part of ITEC to this day. ITEC is offering training to more than 12,000 candidates per year from 161 countries through 52 institutions which cover over 300 courses (ITEC, 2020). Total number of people trained since ITEC's inception stands at 80,344 (MEA, 2020), starting with a small number of nine scholarships just after independence. (FIDC, 2016). Approximately USD 3 billion has been spent on ITEC programmes since its inception (Call and Coning, 2017). Out of 300 different capacity building courses every year under the aegis of ITEC, there are specific courses which are strongly aligned with the institutions of democracy in Southern countries. In June 2011, the Election Commission of India (ECI), conceptualised and set up the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) to advance the professional competence in election management, promote people's participation, contribute to developing stronger democratic institutions and support the efforts of ECI in carrying out its mandate and functions in India. It also carried out training and capacity building programmes for other developing countries. Since, its inception IIIDEM has organised 37 international capacity building programmes with participants from 85 developing countries forming its alumni.

The specific themes covered under the training curriculum of Capacity Building for Use of Electoral Technology are as follows:

Themes	Sub-Themes
Introduction to Technology and Elections	Role of Technology in Electoral Process, its Benefits and Challenges, Core Elements of International Electoral Standard and its Legal Framework.
Voter Education	Emerging Technologies: Emerging Technologies for Voter Education, Uses and Challenges of Internet/Mobile Applications, Social Media etc.
Voter Registration	Technologies for Voter Registration, Biometric Systems, Electoral Roll Management Systems, De-duplication and Statistical Tools to Improve the Health of Electoral Roll.
Inclusion and Technology	Ways Technology Increases Women's Participation and Technologies to Enhance Participation of People with Disabilities to strengthen the inclusion process.
Geographic Information System (GIS)	Use of GIS in Demarcating Constituencies and Polling Station Areas, GPS Mapping of Polling Station Locations, Mapping Vulnerable Areas, Tracking Election Materials etc.
Expenditure Control/Campaign Finance Module of ECI	Indian System of Monitoring the Electoral Campaign Expenses, Campaign Finance in Electoral Campaign, Technological Options for Presenting and Submitting Financial Reports and Statements.
Social Media in Electoral Campaigns	
Election Monitoring	SMS/Internet based Poll Monitoring System, Hot Lines and webcasting etc. for monitoring operations and Case Studies.
Mapping Electorally Vulnerable	Areas - Electoral Risk Management Tool
Voting and Counting Technologies	EVMS/VVPAT, Results Transmission Systems and Case Studies.
E-Learning	Capacity Building of Poll Personnel through Online Application and Multimedia-based Learning

Source: Author's Compilation based on India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management. Available at: <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/4700-iiidem-organizes-12-day-training-programme-on-capacity-development-for-election-management-for-itec-countries-in-association-with-mea-english-हॉट>/ Accessed on July 2, 2020. and; ITEC 2019-20. Available at: https://www.itecgoi.in/courses_list.php?salt3=7334dbb8f32019-2020&salt4=b320dddf5f25&salt=b616c95082135 Accessed on July 2, 2020.

Other (specimen) courses under ITEC 2019-20 which substantiates different aspects of SDG 16 are as follows:

Themes	Associated SDG 16 Targets
Banking, Insurance, Finance, Accounts and Audit	16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime

Themes	Associated SDG 16 Targets
Strategic Financial Management	<p>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</p> <p>16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</p>
Public Expenditure Management	<p>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</p> <p>16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</p>
Banking and Finance	<p>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</p> <p>16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</p> <p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>
International Programme in Bank Financial Management (Focus: Risk Management and Basel II and III and Accord)	<p>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</p> <p>16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</p>
International Programme in Asset-Liability Management in Banks and Financial Institutions	<p>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</p> <p>16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</p>
International Training Programme in Legislative Drafting	16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
International Training Programme at National Centre for Good Governance	16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
Training program for Judicial Officers	<p>16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all</p> <p>16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration</p>
Training in Development Journalism	Various targets across SDG 16

Source: Author's Compilation

SSC and Inherent Challenges

SSC has been celebrated as a distinctive operational model and has now emerged

as one of the main operational tools available towards realisation of global development goals, including the SDGs (UNGA, 2015). However, current SSC policies and practices adopted by different countries are quite diverse and operate in absence of a normative framework, making its implementation arbitrary, subject to the level of power wielded by the provider country and thus, SSC has been claimed to be a vague term (Dembowski, 2018). The countries involved in SSC have operationalised their projects through their indigenous understanding of SSC involving various modalities and sector specificities. This has certainly led to enhanced visibility of SSC, increase in its quantum and expansion in its geographical spread, but a theoretical and normative framework couldn't be worked and agreed upon (Quadir, 2013). However, the basic tenets of SSC (previously mentioned) have been questioned in recent past, mainly with respect to China as the country has come forward with ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) for infrastructure and connectivity projects in developing countries. Interestingly, the criticisms have come from both Northern (DOD, 2019) and Southern (MEA, 2020) countries alike who have claimed BRI to be debt-trap diplomacy (Chelany, 2017; Ferchen, 2018; Lindberg and Lahiri, 2018). The lack of theorising research on the topic of SSC has resulted in its unfulfilled potential towards contributing to realisation of sustainable and equitable development for all cooperating parties, including the partner country (DIIS, 2015). Growth and expansion of SSC in recent decades, bereft of a normative framework, has resulted in the same challenges which were and are being faced by traditional models of cooperation such as NSC (Zheng, 2010; Junbo and Frasher, 2014).

As a natural progression to NIEO, idea of Right to Development emerged in 1986 in form of Declaration on the Right to Development (RtD). NIEO, as discussed previously, was based on outcome idea of economic development but, RtD expanded the scope of development to include a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aimed at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals. Thus, RtD emphasised on the process and outcome aspect of achieving economic development whereas, NIEO was concerned more about the economic outcome. Resolution concerning NIEO led to fruition of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) in 1978 what is now informally referred to as Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). All these three processes were led by developing countries and dimension of international cooperation were present in all these declarations.

Normative basis for realisation of RtD through international cooperation (including SSC) have been specifically mentioned in 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; UN Millennium Declaration which led to the adoption of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000; and in four 2015 declarations of the Third

International Conference on Financing for Development; Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Paris Agreement on climate. In particular, MDGs were negotiated by global community with one of the stated objectives being “making the right to development a reality for everyone” (UNGA, 2000). Later in 2015, SDGs recognised that it is “grounded” in the RtD. It did this by specifically acknowledging that the SDGs are “grounded” in the UN Millennium Declaration, which as mentioned, contained a categorical commitment to making the RtD a reality for everyone.

These collective and consensual assertions by nation states that the SDGs reaffirms the RtD, is informed by the Declaration on RtD. Such a linkage should be seen as a mandate that implementation of SDGs must be essentially founded on operationalisation of RtD (Kanade 2018 a). As mentioned previously, RtD seeks to achieve economic well-being for all through a just and equitable process; and SSC embodies many of the principles enshrined in RtD such as equality, inclusiveness, participation, national ownership and self-determination (UNGA, 2018). As SSC has been accepted to be an important Means of Implementation (MoI) for realising SDGs, it now time to actualise SSC based on normative principles of RtD. Many observers have critiqued that MDGs could have achieved much more had sustainable means of implementation been deployed. Similarly, if the global community aspires to realise SDGs, it must internalise the sustainable means of implementations (RtD). RtD has two limbs; duty which a state has towards its citizens; and responsibility that the global community has towards developing countries with respect to SDGs. India, through its development cooperation and other Southern countries through the principles of SSC believe in similar two-pronged approach towards realisation of SDGs. Moreover, normative principles of development cooperation are best captured in the RtD framework which treats development not as a charity or privilege but as a right of all human persons and peoples everywhere, bearing corresponding duties on States, individually and collectively (Kunanayakam, 2013).

One of the main challenges inherent in development cooperation, including SSC is the lack of duties and responsibilities ascribed to the countries involved in realisation of SDGs. The RtD entails duties on all States to respect, protect and fulfil the RtD across the following three levels:

- States acting individually as they formulate national development policies and programmes affecting persons within their jurisdiction;
- States acting individually as they adopt and implement policies that affect persons not strictly within their jurisdiction; and
- States acting collectively in global and regional partnerships.

The RtD imposes an obligation on States, individually and collectively, to eliminate existing obstacles to its realisation, refrain from making policies which are averse to its realisation, and to positively create conditions favourable to its realisation. Most importantly, the RtD imposes a duty on States with respect to international cooperation to realise the RtD. The issue of obligation becomes more pertinent in times when multilateralism is under stress as countries tend to not follow through on their commitments related to SDGs. Realisation of SDGs by 2030 appears bleak in absence of the RtD framework. A counter-factual narrative drives home the point with regards to the necessity of the RtD as a normative framework for development cooperation including SSC (Kanade, 2020).

Just as the responsibilities of countries are three levelled in international cooperation when viewing it through the lens of the RtD, similar level of categorisation is also essential when tackling SDG 16. Targets within SDG 16 can be differentiated into bits that would require international cooperation and others that entail national policy building endeavours.

Global and National Obligations of Specific Targets within SDG 16

Pillars of Institution Building in SDG 16	Associated Targets in SDG 16
	16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime
International cooperation towards building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at regional and multilateral levels	16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
	16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
	16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
	16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
	16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development
National policies catering towards effective, accountable and inclusive institutions	16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
	16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
	16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Source: Adapted from (Behar, 2016)

Conclusion and Recommendations

- SSC are unique, popular and effective mode of development cooperation as compared to NSC. It has grown in quantum and geographical spread over the years not only, through the favourable policy making by countries of the South but, also at the behest of international organisations. Also, as mentioned previously, initiatives by the UN Office for South-South Co-operation have been commendable. However, there are challenges within the operationalisation of SSC which needs to be looked and discussed. Some of those challenges have been discussed in this paper.
- India's capacity building initiatives towards SDG 16 have already been explained and elaborated in the paper. However, specific targets of SDG 16 must be individually emphasised by countries to help realise the goals and targets of SDGs. Mainstreaming of SSC in various UN agencies have been initiated but, they need to be further strengthened by incorporating the RtD as their normative framework.
- Just as all the goals and targets of SDGs, SDG 16 has also been found deficient in its progress and realisation since its adoption in 2015 (HLPF, 2019). A consensus driven model between North and South will go a long way in achieving the targets. Similarly, specific targets must also be identified for international and national level coordination to come up robust institutions.
- Also, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the world needs to get together, possibly at the UN level to discuss and deliberate on various issues related to multilateralism. Many of the challenges in multilateralism (in present times) have cropped up due to lack of reforms in this process and in the institutions of global governance. Countries (both North and South) need to realise that the world is/will be a better place to live in with rules-based multilateral order however, it needs to be fixed at the soonest.
- UN agencies need to strengthen their work and activities on multilateral economic policy issues, including on international trade and finance. There needs to be an impetus towards more research, financing, technical assistance, and capacity building to be provided to developing countries as many of the challenges associated with SDG 16 are present in developing and low-income countries (Ibid, Page 22). There also needs to be a push for their SSC institutions to facilitate their coordination and collective engagement in multilateral policy discussions and negotiations.
- COVID-19 has to some extent already dismantled the traditional understanding of things. The presence of disadvantaged population in the North

which are suffering disproportionately more as compared to the privileged population in the developed countries; and also the presence of immune, secluded and safe elites in the global South have brought things in perspective. In a way the existence of “South in the North and North in the South” (de Sousa Santos, 2015) has been brought out clearly in the open for everyone to see.

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Bio

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