

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION: CHINA AND INDIA IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Africa is said to be the continent of the future. Sub Saharan Africa remains the heartland for resources and manpower in Africa, and, if the future belongs to the African continent, Global South- South cooperation in Africa holds a lot of potential. However, this potential remains under-utilized as the harbingers of this growth story, India and China are seen in a constant tussle. In international community, India and China realise that their roles are more than just economic trade and cooperation. Africa is also the battleground of social, economic and political ideologies and resultant turmoil. In such a tempestuous situation, both India and China have put in significant efforts to make situations better in the continent. In absolute terms Chinese trade with Sub-Saharan African countries is definitely higher but in the terms of a qualitative analysis India strives towards creating relationships which are sustainable, long lasting as well as mutually beneficial. This paper presents an analysis of India's and China's attempts to engage African countries especially Sub-Saharan Africa for a better cooperation framework, as well as, for dealing with challenges which are related to both land and the seas. The central argument of this paper is that India and China are not in a zero sum game in Sub-Saharan Africa rather they are in a Win-Win situation where the win-set of India and China are actually in a compatible relationship. Where, Africa stands to gain economically from the Chinese counterparts, it also stands to gain socially and politically from the largest democracy in the world only if the Sub-Saharan Africa has functional policies in place that enhance economic reform, institutional capacity development, infrastructural development, global partnerships and economic sustainability.

KEYWORDS: *Economic Transformation, South-South Cooperation, India, China, Sub-Saharan Africa*

INTRODUCTION

It's a century with a glimpse of hope guided by the hard work of the African leaders together with global and regional partners. They seem to glow under the rays of the rising stars (China and India) from the east.(Kearney, 2015) On average, it is roughly more than half a century that an immense number of Sub-Saharan African countries in their post-independence era have continued to swim in the pool of formidable yet insurmountable challenges.(Brookings, 2017) These challenges range from armed conflicts to social-economic problems (like corruption, unemployment, income inequalities, illiteracy, low expectancy, poverty and inadequate functional policies), which continue to entertain the vice of underdevelopment amidst calls for the development of "The Africa We Want".(African Agenda-2063, 2015)

The dawdling pace of socioeconomic and political transformation in Sub-Sahara African Countries (SSACs) is intrinsically viewed domestically to have a link with the western schools of thought on growth and modernization. Dependence, neoclassical/neoliberal and structuralist development economics have been closely linked to imperialism and are under scrutiny not only by a number of scholars but also by the United Nations

Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) in the quest for inclusive development (D. Moyo 2009, T. Falola and J. Achberger 2013, UNHR 2013, B. Currie-Alder et al (2014), and P. McMichael 2017). The focus has shifted to echoing out the effect of the western economic policies that are argued to cripple African progress. However, these introspections shall not be overstated since there are a number of new economic paradigms, which have been forged by the newly emerging economies like the Asian Tigers and the BRICS.

Examining why the SSACs still lag behind in terms of growth, the paper also delves in understanding how reform worked in China in the last forty years (Qian ,2017) and "...how the world's vision has fallen to India's rise."(Zheng,2019) In the quest for reforms that can bring about meaningful transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a need to diagnose and prioritize the chronically challenging dilemmas, which face the region in common. As mentioned above, it is high time that the excuses directed towards different development theories are minimized as efforts are levied to formulating policies that enhance the transition of the strategic decision-making to market, endowment to development, poverty to prosperity and waste to wealth.

DISCOURSE ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF INDIA AND CHINA IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

The literature on development and transformation in Africa can be lexically ordered in two paradigms. First is the focus on policy frameworks and global interaction and second is the area specific literature dealing with specific problems such as poverty and unemployment. Optimism about Africa in 1960s was idealised by as David Bigman (2011) who asserts that incomes exceeded those in Asia and food imports were rare. And then, there came a period known as the 'lost-three-decades' for Africa. It was not Africa alone, during the three decades starting 1960's the world saw potentials getting wasted in the global south be it Latin America or Asia. Nevertheless, given the late beginners problem, Africa had to play catchup with similarly situated countries post the 1980's.

Globally the period experienced many shocks, among them, were the two oil shocks and the famous Nixon Shock, which put an end to the convertibility of the United States Dollar (USD) to gold in 1971 and later the Washington Consensus in the 1980s - the birth of structural adjustment policies (SAPs). Consequently, SSACs lost resilience, foreign markets, became powerless, helpless, destitute, desperate and the per capita net wealth fell (Lopez and Toman 2006 and E. Wayne Nafziger 2006). These conditions compelled the African leaders to once again turn to their colonial masters after the long struggle for aid in order rescue the fledgling economy that was collapsing, alleviate the living conditions of the hungry masses and try to avert some looming rebellions in the region. (Brill,2003)

Just as poverty, income inequality, gender disparities, maternal and child mortality, illiteracy, coup d'états, rebellions, insurgents and counterinsurgents persistently mounted, the demand for and supply of development aid also sunk in most of the Sub-Saharan African states (SSASs) into debt burden and were caught by poverty trap due because of the unfair terms and conditions of SAPs. Similarly, there were trade restrictions and stringent controls imposed by western powers on Chinese trade and economic development, which is mirrored in today's US-China Trade War. India on the other hand, enjoyed deliverables of a seemingly non-aligned foreign policy and from and bilateral relationship with Britain.(Chew and Lauderdale, 2010), The Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) brought almost all African Heads of States to Beijing to participate and deliberate both political and economic ties as means of forging a future of common destiny for humankind. While this continued to draw the world's attention, at the same time criticism mounted on both African leaders and the Chinese Society for venturing into a business of the unknown. Some critics call it the recolonization of Africa by China (Mentan,2011), while others refer to it as 'China painting Africa red' and by coincidence the map that is painted red, is mainly reflecting the SSACs region in the continent.

However, the same map also indicates that SSACs did not only supply China but also the region supplied the United States and other European countries with its products. In terms of trade, if a keen and more neutral view is given to the arrows between China and Africa, it is more or less an equal transaction or a win-win partnership between the two major partners 260 export and 268% and vice versa. Deborah in her seminal work 'The Dragon Gift' gives an account on the Sino-African relations, cites a quote from a South African newspaper commending the goodwill from the Chinese People towards Africa. What is more interesting is she gives a counteracting analogy, which depicts the nature of China's relations to Africa and the Chinese Goodwill – the gift of the dragon (or the development aid). (“His ‘gifts’ were tangible and generous,”) a South African newspaper commented when Chinese President Hu Jintao signed several aid agreements during his 2007 visit to Mozambique. But for many people, the “‘gifts’ borne by the Chinese dragon are more mysterious than tangible, and much more ambiguous than simply generous” (Deborah 2009. p. vii).

Chinese aid to Africa and especially to SSASs may become mysterious indeed if firstly, the people of Africa receive the gifts they are unaware of their nature and secondly, if the recipients do not appease the Asian Dragon the way it is being adorned. Literally, SSACs have to know, understand, sort out their priorities and identify the typology of aid they need from China, whether it being conditional or unconditional grants. Strategies to combat theft (corruption) of public funds have to be in place and well-designed (industrial) policies for paying back the debt, safeguarding foreign direct investments (FDI) including exploration of resources, and the intellectual property rights. Once SSACs get to know their national needs or interests and get to prioritise them above personal interests, the dragon's gifts will be more tangible than mysterious and simply generous than ambiguous. For China was once a recipient of development aid from the former Soviet Union yet it knew what it needed most. Similar, India is still one of the countries receiving foreign aid regardless of its promising rise.

INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

India-Africa relations can be defined by the tripartite of equality, consistency and mutually beneficial. This is a testimony to the Indian world view has been an extension of spiritualism, peaceful co-existence and the philosophy of *vasudhev kutumbakam*. As India rose to the global economic scenario, it invested in capacity building, human security as well as trade in Africa. However, the Indian and Chinese investments are elementally different from each other. As a service sector economy Indian investment is modest yet substantial as compared to Chinese. Nevertheless, Africa has been a beneficiary in both cases.

This special relationship can be dated by to the bronze era when exchange of goods, services as well as ideas has been

established. Greek travelogues and trade history from the 2nd century B.C mentions interactions through the sea. These documents also mention similarities of civilizational significance among the two regions. The African people have been found to be present in India since the 8th century. These examples show that the two have had civilisational contacts and there has never been a detrimental clash of interest. Not so surprisingly, India has been at the forefront of humanitarian assistance to Africa in the 21st century. The most recent example of which is the supply of essential medicine for COVID-19 pandemic to thirteen African countries.

Additionally, India's engagement with Africa has been socially engaging, economically beneficial as well as politically democratic. Whether it was India's support for the anti-apartheid movement by raising the issue at global platforms such as the United Nations. Or, aid in the form of training human resources it has always been receptive of the social benefits as a product of aid and acceptance. Indian investment in Africa is driven by the governments impetus on "developing together as equals" as bilateral partner. India acknowledges that in a multipolar world a resurgent Africa and a rising India are more than just economic opportunities for each. Indian foreign policy acknowledges the fact that the future of Africa depends on development which might be externally aided but has to be domestically planned in democratic manner. As, any interference in Africa's domestic political or economic planning will inevitably lead to conflicts and mismatch in the future.

India's main focus under the umbrella of south-south cooperation with Africa is on deliverables like clean technology, climate-resilient agriculture, maritime security, connectivity, and Blue economy. However, the India-Africa partnership is yet to achieve its full potential. What is needed is an infusion of energy, of something new and concrete, and with a specific focus and direction that's unique to specific contexts – the localization process. As far as trade and investment relations are concerned, it has three main features. It is diverse, engaging both private as well as public sector, and, constantly increasing import and exchange. Bilateral trade jumped from \$5.3 billion in 2001 to \$12 billion in 2005 to \$70 billion in 2013, which is greater than India's bilateral trade with the U.S. African exports to India have been growing annually at 32.2% while Indian exports to Africa grew annually at 23.6%. India and china are undoubtedly the harbingers of South-South cooperation in Africa. However, there are some significant challenges to these endeavors. The most important of them is the political instability and social unrest chiefly resulting from economic challenges and resource allocation. Nevertheless, both India and china are aware of the opportunities, and as the economic engagements increase, social, economic and political capacity building and technology transfer will naturally come to the African people.

INDIA-SUB SAHARAN AFRICA RELATIONS: UTILIZING THE POTENTIAL

The 21st century has seen the rise of India as a credible, substantive and emerging partner in international relations. India has also reinvented its role in Africa as the economy has reached new heights. However, there is stark difference in the absolute import export figures between India and China with regard to Africa, nevertheless India is the second most important economic player in the continent. The fact becomes even more relevant when the shift of global power politics in the last two decades is realized. India and China have replaced western powers as majors in Africa. Interestingly enough, this tectonic shift comes with a sensible, need-based and value-oriented engagement with Africa. For example, India views Africa as an Equal partner in the global growth story. Africa has been a promising and reliable partner in energy cooperation with India. Major resource rich countries in the SSA have become a substantial option for India's ever-increasing energy demands. At the same time, Indian investment in SSACs has proved beneficial for the local economy in more ways than one. This fact is illustrated in the fact that Indian exports to Africa are human labor intensive and helps in creating a market which is sustainable and mutually beneficial. The export basket of India to Africa is diverse, proving Africa as a potential market for Indian goods and services. As with any service sector giant, India has also directly and indirectly contributed to knowledge sharing, technology transfer and capacity building among the African youths.

India has recognized that Africa is a long-term plan, where investment today will reap benefits in the long run. Keeping this vision, Indian companies investing in infrastructure projects are receptive, prudent and gradual in their approach. It can be safely said that this partnership is a growth story in the long run. India is not using Africa as a dumping ground for products neither as an experiment for the global market. On the contrary, India is planning to be investment in the development process in Africa. Whether it was the *Focus Africa program* or the *India Africa forum*, India has made its intentions clear. Africa is the future, and they intend to build it together.

A testimony to this was the Duty-Free Tariff Preference Scheme for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Africa. This has increased exports of cocoa, cotton, copper ore, and other commodities from LDCs in Africa to India. The 2015 forum summit focused on poverty alleviation as a major aim in India-Africa relations. Under the international solar alliance program, India has already achieved cooperation with 13 African countries through 23 projects. India has been engaged in various training programs since 1964.

THE FUTURE OF INDIA-SSA RELATIONS

As the new regime in India focuses on enlightened national interest and a multipolar world, India and Africa

relations are set to grow in the near future. However, there are challenges which need constant, prudent and sustainable approaches from both the parties. Neo colonization will only need to conflict, and this has to be realized by all stakeholders in global politics. Since India itself is in the take-off phase of its development story, it will have to strike perfect balance between the present and the future.

MOVING FORWARD

Aid and trade: absolutely, it is not just being critically correct, we are living in a world which is at war with itself. A world which is being torn apart by economic wars and the illusion of self-interests. It's certain that some of the views might be reasonably genuine and others might be a design in order to camouflage an abstract or virtual threat to curb down any prospect progress of Africa. The time has come when the SSACs have to show complete wisdom in approaching the conflicting situation. SSAs might have comparative advantages of abundance natural resources, underemployed energetic population comprising of 75% youth, and non-industrialized, yet the region has very limited foreign exchange rates due to low savings and the cut of support (foreign aid) which makes it a bit difficult for FDI – a situation that's clearly be explained by Harrod Domar in Two-gap Model. Africa has to get focused and cooperate genuinely with credible partner who upholds mutual trust and respect to the agreements.

A holistic analysis between the stringent-attached donations and the state's assets collateral-oriented grants remain prerequisites from the donors once they want to supply SSA with the handouts (aid) and so SSACs need to have a measuring yardstick in place in order to determine an authentic development aid. Gone are the days when information and scientific approach to dilemmas were limited to specific regions, which contributed to the exploitation of the large South. However, it is notably worthy to know that all the preconditions of aid outlined above seem to have both strengths and weaknesses and they need to be given a great deal of understanding before rushing to one as the best to the other. An aid which has the terms and conditions of giving full accountability on how the funds have been used is suitable for SSAs as means of curtailing vicious cycle of poverty and accelerating the pace of economic and inclusive growth. While grants that are given under the conditions of providing donors with state's assets as collaterals look scary only to policy makers who are ignorant of the terms and conditions in the agreements binding the diffident and incompetent states within the region with anxieties of producing the intended project indicators/results can be scared to go for such grants. However, if those conditions are studied, interpreted, understood, skilled and enough human capital with a concerted effort to implement the development projects, the results will be great in terms of investments and exponential economic growth.(Daly 2014)

Unlike China and India that might appear easier to compare and contrast, SSACs have some little bit of complexities because they are a group of countries combined together for comparison making it somewhat difficult for correlation. SSACs is comprised of a number of separate sovereign countries (with varying post-colonial experiences) that are taken as a whole to analyze for the purpose of this paper. SSACs further is composed of a number of regional economic blocs such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the list goes on. Some of these economic blocs have gone ahead to establish free trade areas like the East African Community (EAC) which is made up of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. While South Africa joins the big giants of Brazil, Russia, India, and China to form what is known as the BRICS. Both China and India are now in the forefront.

It's crystal clear that most of the BRICS were colonized but Russia (with the failure of Napoleonic Moscow Campaign), and they went through a similar history of exploitation, liberation struggle, and some common development dilemmas and one of them being the International Aid.(Willis,2005) It can be argued that both Liberia and Ethiopia like Russia were not colonized despite several attempts made by external powers to subdue these African countries but they remained focused on the exit of their foes. The Americans established Liberia for ex-slaves yet wanted to control them but under the Liberian slogan of "Because of freedom, that's why we are here" saved them from the virtually American colonization. Italy was defeated at Adowa but Mussolini revengefully came back in 1939 to colonize Ethiopia yet failed. Some of these countries have fortunately raised the candle of economic liberation, a light that illuminates the path for the SSACs to follow in order to achieve meaningful development.

It is imperative to visit and unwise to leave in the past. In order to keep the track, content, scope, and meaning of this paper flowing to the planned objectives being mindful of the slight differences, the historical trends of SSACs appear similar to the duo Asian giants – China and India. The Asian Dragon has provided a scale, which balances and shapes the global economic order with a more liberal market economy under the 1979 strategic economic reform of opening up its markets to the rest of the world. It is tempting for one to know the kind of economies SSACs have since the departure of the colonial masters latest being South Sudan in 2011 and South Africa in 1994 but on average their exit has lasted roughly fifty (50) years, just like China. SSACs seem to have economies that are photosynthetic to foreign aid and are majorly determined and shaped by external donors at the expense the Sub-Sahara Africa. The SSACs have economies whose walls were brought down

and the ruins were left open since the introduction of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) in the 1980s as one of the preconditions for receiving international development aid. (Lewis and Kanji, 2009) “China spent tens of billions of dollars on a dazzling 2008 Olympics. It has sent astronauts into space. It recently became the world’s second-largest economy. Yet it gets more than \$2.5 billion a year in foreign government aid - and taxpayers and lawmakers in donor countries are increasingly asking why.”(Fernando,2010)

This ‘why question’ should not only be asked by taxpayers and lawmakers in donor countries rather it should be a billion-dollar question in the twenty-first century to all stakeholders (including policymakers, scholars and citizens) in the developing nations more especially the recipient countries in the Sub-Saharan region that are yet to come out of poverty trap. This also remains a tickling question for African leaders who hold the key to major and specific strategic choices that are pivotal in transforming the emerging as well as developed economies in the world. The bottom line for catching is being reflected from the main segments that exist among the SSACs.

The SSACs’ manufacturing sector remains stunted due to a number of factors and the most appalling ones are low processing capital that can add value to the products for export. There is also the likelihood of unconditional convergence once the economies begin to take off. Infrastructural development likewise is a major blow to African investments and prospects of economic growth. The average public investment is in depleting situation with the worst scenario in South Sudan. Most of Sub-Saharan countries have got very limited tax-base to generate revenue with low capacity control and allocation of resources to the sectors that direly need development like the sea and airports such that efficiency in both exports and imports is realized. Customs’ efficiency is the greatest player in the economic development, which should be given priority and attention by the state in order to boost the economic boom that trickles down wealth and has spillover effect.

As modernization theories are predominantly linked to imperialism as well as capitalism (Evans, 1979), alternative development pathways are underway being forged to boost an inclusive and sustainable growth. Besides, a number of economists have issued a wake-up call on the nature of the current economic system that it’s unsustainable. Industrialization, both old and new, isn’t the only means to growth in the twenty-first century. A more service-oriented and knowledge-based economies are taken away and spread over by the winds of globalization and the disruptive technological flow, which challenge the status quo of dictatorship of no alternative that is proving unsustainable. The service-oriented and knowledge-based economies are encouraged especially for the late comers and the SSASs as well.

About the unsustainability of the economy of no-alternative, a remark was made by Paul Tudor Jones, famed hedge fund manager and founder of the Tudor Group at the National Audubon Gala in 2017 in New York that: “We have the strongest economy in 40 years, at full employment. The mood is euphoric. But it is unsustainable and comes with costs such as bubbles in stocks and credit.”) Similarly, Scott Miner – the Chairman of Investments and Global Chief Investment Officer of Guggenheim Partners once said: “The markets are potentially on collision course of disaster...once we reach the peak, we’ll probably see a 40% retracement in equities.”(Ibid) A very unique warning that goes all economists, scholars and policymakers comes from a renowned economist Ted Bausman and his team who amazingly predicted the collapse of 1999 and 2008 argues “there are three key economic indicators screaming sell. They don’t imply that a 70% collapse is looming, it’s already at doorstep.”(Ibid) Finally, the organization for economic cooperation and development gives an empirical finding of the current economic slowdown in the graph below.

Coupled to the above, there are arguments that attribute the insignificant development of the SSACs to the inefficient leadership in the region while other scholars give the economic thought of embeddedness in the poverty trap due to low savings in most of the SSASs. The development theories only help in understanding the different development practices as the nature of the economy can change overtime when there are effective and efficient practices that are guided by policies in conducive environments with well-equipped institutions. As India is being accused of acute corruption and massive income inequalities, both China and Africa are allegedly accused of gross human rights abuses and lack of democracy. However, less is being mentioned about thousands of lives being consumed by gunmen or shooters and suicide bombers elsewhere in the world.

This shouldn’t sound like an excuse or trying to be in favor of any given system of practice, but it is decent to reach fairness in order to bring about a durable solution to unresolved issues. Undoubtedly, democracy is seen as a medium of good governance globally, yet it is a theory and practice, which takes the shape of the local values, norms and beliefs. Democracy in America may not be the same as it is in Europe, Africa or Asia, however, there are always common democratic principles which should be cherished by all such as constitutionalism, liberty, individualism to mention but a few. SSACs do need much more than just economic development; they need a more sustainable development. It isn’t a coincidence that as China strives to walk away from the middle-income trap and India taking over the Global Information Technology market, Rwanda currently prides SSACs when it is being referred to as the Singapore of Africa while Ethiopia is nicknamed the African Tiger.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic reform: The states should adapt economic policies that are suitable to both domestic and foreign investors within and outside the region. This should encompass markets, industrial, natural and human resource and intellectual property rights, subsidy and/or incentive policies so as to offer investors and young entrepreneurs security of their businesses. These policies should clearly indicate the type of economic reform the country is to adapt either gradualism or drastic reform.

Institutional capacity development: Political will and stability (good governance) enshrined within the democracy that matches the local context and suitable to be the bases for institutional capacity building and technology transfer. Institutional transformation begins with peace and goes beyond to combat social problems (poverty, corruption and unemployment) that shake the real foundation of prosperity. Institutions of higher learning have to get budget for research and development (R&D) for advancing technological and national innovation systems.

Infrastructural development: Infrastructure is a prerequisite and remains the spinal cord at the central agenda for an inclusive development to be realized. Just like China and India, the SSACs have to heavily invest in both the physical, human, environmental and institutional infrastructures of their countries. Individual economic independence commences when infrastructure is in place.

Global Partnerships: This cuts across all other suggestions and recommendations of this paper. To find easy economic solutions, SSASs have to collaborate with regional and other global partners in order to achieve not only the sustainable development goals (SDGs) but also to realise progressive development targets. This international cooperation provides a platform for learning new skills and experiences and soliciting for total official support for sustainable development (TOSSD).

Promote economic sustainability: Economy is the subsystem of planetary earth. It is recommendable to keep the earth carrying capacity that is able to sustain the current and the future generations without compromising their needs.

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