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Capacity Building in Education Sector: An Exploratory Study on Indian and African Relations

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Abstract

South-South Cooperation is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, sub-regional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts. Looking at the past two decades there has been a surge in South-South economic cooperation— including trade, investment, development assistance and other financial flows. Furthermore, China, India and Brazil are also increasingly active as so-called ‘emerging donors’, both in Africa and in their respective neighbourhood, and the past years have witnessed an unprecedented growth of what can be called ‘South–South aid.’

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1. Introduction

A working definition of capacity and its dimensions is needed before understanding different options Africa has to address in building academic capacity. Capacity means having the aptitudes, resources, relationships and

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facilitating conditions required to act effectively to achieve specified mandates. Capacity is conceptualized at three levels—individuals, work environment or organization, and institutions.

Around the world, some 75 million children – more than half of them girls – have no opportunity to attend primary school. One in three children's in Africa that are enrolled in school drop out of primary education. In most developing countries, the budgets allocated for education are too low to meet requirements and to achieve the goal of universal compulsory school attendance. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), developing countries spend an average of 4.4 per cent of their national income on education. The United States and countries in Western Europe invest 5.5 per cent on average; some countries even invest more than 8 per cent on education. Bad governance, high staff turnover, inefficient use of funding, corruption and lack of management and organizational skills are other obstacles to the universal provision of education.

Across the board, there's increasing concern about the sky high rates of graduate unemployment on the one hand - and the shortage of specialist skills on the other. In fact, the skills shortage has been identified as one of the biggest obstacles for the government to reach its economic growth targets. Nearly two and a half million young South Africans are currently out of work and not in school – with staggering socio-economic implications. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the development in education sector in terms of entrepreneurship and skill development.

The education sector has a critical role to play in any country's development but the role is particularly acute when it comes to those countries that are at the start up or take off stage of development, or those that are seeking to recover from periods of stagnation and slow pace of development. In the case of Africa, many countries are celebrating 50 years since independence, and are in the process of taking stock of what has been achieved. Some countries in Africa have done very well becoming now the group of countries "to watch" with high growth rates. Between 2001 and 2010 there were six African countries that had the highest growth rates including Angola at number one, Nigeria at number four, and Ethiopia at number five. The Economist projects that between 2011 and 2015 there will be seven African countries in the top ten fastest growing economies in the world, with countries like Mozambique, Tanzania, Congo and Ghana entering the top ten. While a lot has been achieved in Africa, it is not universal, and indeed a number of challenges remain. Furthermore, new constraints have emerged on the horizon, many of which are reliant on or derived from academic capacity or the lack of it.

While there are many issues that impact on education capacities, four aspects stand out—

- i. How to finance education?;
- ii. The policy reforms needed for an effective functioning of education systems;
- iii. How to enhance research capacity?; and
- iv. How to support innovation in education?

This paper would discuss: (a) India's role in the evolution of development landscapes in Africa over the past decades; (b) As a provider of development assistance, the distinguishing features of India's development partnership approach; (c) Suggestions to evolve partnerships for inclusive development, especially with objective of innovating South - South Cooperation.

2. Methodology

Qualitative method of enquiry has been employed for investigating the available information and the conclusions drawn are only propositions (informed assertions). Also, as the purpose of the research is to gain familiarity and gain insight into the Indo-African relations in the Education arena, and find answers to 'why', 'how' and 'when', exploratory research design (also known as formulate research) has been used. As the analysis of Social and Economic changes were to be understood, available secondary data was scanned to capture the policy changes in the Indo-African education arena.

3. Discussion:

3.1. Role of academic capacity:

Countries need to address how the education system can generate the types of people and research needed to resolve the challenges facing Africa. Particularly, what areas to prioritize in **building capacity** for new and emerging

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