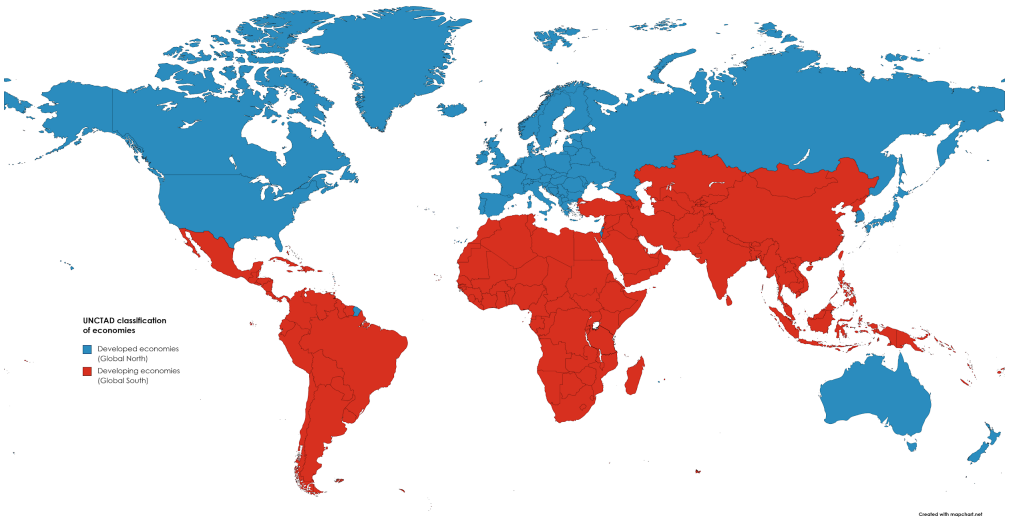
India as a Global North-South Bridge

Why in the news?

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi while addressing the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention stated that "today's India not only firmly asserts its own point but also strongly amplifies the voice of the Global South".

What is Global North-South divide?

- The **Global North-South divide** refers to the economic and political differences between developed nations (Global North) and developing nations (Global South).
- The **Global North** consists of **wealthier, industrialized nations** (e.g., USA, Europe, Japan, Australia), while the **Global South** comprises **developing and least developed countries** (e.g., India, Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia).
- India aspires to bridge this gap by **representing the interests of the Global South** while maintaining strategic partnerships with the Global North.



What are the Causes for the Divide?

- **Colonial Legacy –** European colonialism extracted resources from the Global South, leaving these nations underdeveloped.
- **Economic Inequality –** The **Global North controls most global wealth, trade, and technology**, while the South lags in industrialization.
- **Institutional Disparities – Global financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, WTO)** favor the North, imposing stringent conditions on the South.
- **Climate Change Responsibility –** Developed countries **historically contributed more to carbon emissions**, but developing nations bear the brunt of climate disasters.

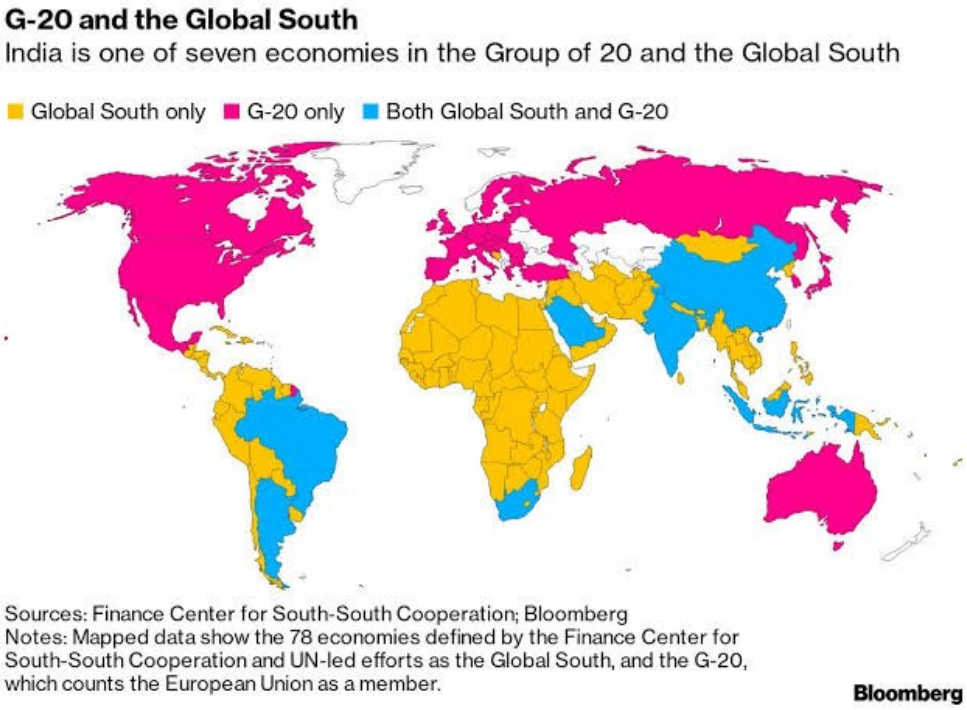
What are the Current Issues that Widen the Divide?

- **Unfair Trade Practices –** Developed countries impose **protectionist measures (tariffs, subsidies, WTO disputes)** against Global South exports.

- **Technology and Digital Divide –** AI, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure are **dominated by Western corporations**, leaving developing countries behind.
- **Debt Crisis in Developing Nations –** Many Global South nations face **unsustainable debt** due to high-interest loans from global institutions.

*India aims to be the **voice of the Global South** and Focus on **economic challenges, debt, and global influence** while strengthening **diplomatic ties with both blocs**.*

What is India's Role in Bridging the Divide?



Geopolitical Leadership

- **G20 Presidency (2023)** – India prioritized **Global South concerns**, pushing for debt relief, food security, and digital inclusion.
- Hosted the **'Voice of Global South' Summit**, amplifying Southern nations' voices in global governance.
- **BRICS & SCO Engagement** – Promotes **multi-polarity**, advocating for reforms in global governance institutions (UN, IMF, WTO).
- **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Legacy** – India continues its NAM stance by **engaging both the West and emerging economies strategically**.

Economic and Trade Partnerships

- **South-South Cooperation** – India strengthens ties with **Africa, Latin America, and ASEAN** through trade, infrastructure projects, and technology sharing.
- Example: **India-Africa Forum Summit** focuses on healthcare, agriculture, and skill development.

- **WTO & Trade Reform Advocacy** – India opposes **Western agricultural subsidies** that distort trade.
- Advocates for **TRIPS waiver on COVID-19 vaccines** to ensure equitable access for developing nations.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat & Global Trade** – India's self-reliance **strategy** aims to boost domestic manufacturing while integrating with global markets.

Climate & Energy Leadership

- **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** – Launched by India to promote **solar energy cooperation** among developing countries.
- **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** – Aims to **climate-proof infrastructure** in vulnerable nations.
- **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) Initiative** – Advocates **sustainable lifestyles** to counter excessive consumption patterns of the Global North.

Technology & Development Partnerships

- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** – India promotes **UPI, Aadhaar, and CoWIN models** for developing countries to adopt.
- **Vaccine Diplomacy (Vaccine Maitri)** – Supplied COVID**-19 vaccines to over 100 countries**, strengthening South-South cooperation.
- **Space Collaboration with Global South** – ISRO provides **satellite technology and remote sensing data** for African and Asian nations.

What are the Challenges in India's Role?

- **Economic Limitations** – India itself faces domestic **challenges (poverty, infrastructure gaps, fiscal constraints)** while aiding others.
- **Balancing Strategic Interests** – Managing ties with **China (BRICS partner) while countering its influence in Global South**.
- Maintaining good relations with **Western allies (US, EU) without alienating developing nations**.
- **Institutional Resistance** – Western-led financial institutions resist **India's push for governance reforms**.

Way Forward

- **India's Unique Position** – As a developing **economy strategically with global influence**, India can act as a mediator.
- **Strengthening Partnerships** – Expand South**-South cooperation, regional connectivity, and development financing**.
- **Leading Global Governance Reforms** – Continue pushing for **UNSC expansion, WTO reforms, and fair financial systems**.
- **Promoting Climate Justice & Sustainable Growth** – Advocate for **equitable green finance and technology transfer**.
- **Significance** – India's leadership in bridging the Global North-South divide is **crucial for a fair, inclusive, and multipolar world order**.

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Reference

The Hindu - India as a Global North-South Bridge

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