

Independence of Think Tanks in Developing Countries

Experience of Research and Information System (RIS)

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Scheme of Presentation

- Brief overview of historical events
- Key factors for the independence of Think Tanks (TTs)
- Focused areas of activities
- Efforts towards arriving at Southern consensus without invoking N-S conflict

Historical Background

- Need for research and information infrastructure for developing countries – by G77 and NAM
- For analytical support in international economic relations
- Sequence of events on the formation of South-based TTs
 - Colombo NAM Summit in 1976
 - Havana NAM Summit in 1979 – “Policy guideline Reinforcing Collective Self-Reliance between developing countries”
 - Caracas Programme of Action in 1981
 - New Delhi NAM Summit in 1983- “The Action Programme for Economic Cooperation” – proposal for autonomous institution
 - RIS was formed in 1984 by GoI as an autonomous body

Defined Areas for Activities

- Basic objective of RIS to provide analytical support
 - Contributions to the preparedness of developing countries for forthcoming international meetings
 - Improving awareness among policy makers and academia on international economic issues
 - Promoting collective self-reliance among developing countries
 - Institutional networking
 - Expanding activities in various international bodies
 - Developing documentation and data centre
- Limitation of activities to selected activities: International economic relations
- For undertaking similar actions, 12 countries were offered themselves as coordinators- Asia(3), LA(3), Africa (5), Europe(1)

Restoring Independence of Think Tank

- Source of funding
 - Grant comes from the GoI, covering 40% of total financial requirements
 - Remaining part is raised by the institution – sets its own agenda for generating resources, thus no influence from the project sponsors
 - Limited scope for generating resources – choice of funding agencies, strong accountability regarding raising money, pattern of spending and asset creation for the institute
- Strong mandate given by the body of developing countries
- Changing demand for research outputs – but autonomy is fully restored

Major Themes

- Global Economic Governance
- Regional Economic Integration issues
- South-South Cooperation
- Strategic Responses to Globalization

Global Economic Governance

- WTO and Development
 - *World Trade and Development Reports*
 - Substantive studies on WTO Issues
 - Trade and Investment
 - Non-agricultural Market Access
 - Non-Tariff Barriers
 - Agreement on Agriculture: Market Access
 - IPRs: Patents and Innovations, Geographical Indications and Traditional Knowledge
 - S&DT, Transfer of Technology
 - Monitoring and Reform of International Financial Architecture
 - Climate Change and Development

Regional Economic Integration in Asia (1)

- India's approach to regionalism
- At what level? Regional, Bilateral and trans-continental
- South Asian Economic Integration
 - Studies on specific aspects of cooperation, SAPTA, SAFTA, etc
 - Regional Economic Integration in South Asia
 - Extending SAFTA Agreement to cover Trade in Services
 - *South Asia Development and Cooperation Reports*
- ASEAN-India Economic Partnership
 - Vision 2020: Working Together for a Shared Prosperity
 - India-ASEAN Partnership: Towards Operational Steps
 - Mekong-Ganga Cooperation

Regional Economic Integration in Asia (2)

- Towards an Asian Economic Community
 - Broader Roadmap
 - Studies on sectoral cooperation: Trade and Investment (CGE Modelling Approaches), Monetary and Financial Cooperation, Energy Security, Infrastructure, New Technologies
 - Series of Policy Dialogue among the Think-tanks: New Delhi (March 2003), Tokyo (November 2004), 2005: China, New Delhi; 2006: Singapore; 2007: New Delhi
- Monetary and financial cooperation in Asia
 - Regional Mechanism for mobilising Foreign Exchange Reserves
- Bilateral economic cooperation (China, Korea, Japan, etc.)_^
- Sectoral Focus: Energy, transport, food security, IT cooperation

South-South Cooperation

- Emergence of Large Developing Countries: Implications for Other Developing Countries
- Business Potential in India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Partnership
- India-Africa Economic Partnership
- SACU-India-Mercosur Trade Arrangement
- GSTP: Relevance for the South
- IOR-ARC: Institutional Mechanisms for Trade and Investment Facilitation in Strategic Sectors
- Biotechnology and Development
- South-South Cooperation and the Digital Divide

Strategic Response to Globalisation

- Strategic Approach to Strengthening International Competitiveness in Knowledge-based Industries
- Strategy for Export-oriented Manufacturing
- Exports and Job-Creation
- Future of India-China trade and Investment relationship
- Industrial Restructuring and Competitiveness of Textiles and Clothing Sector in South Asia in post-MFA Scenario
- Forecasting of Indian Exports: Macro modeling framework
- Implications of WTO Tariff Proposals for Indian Industry: Case of Paper and Newsprint Industry
- WTO Negotiations and Indian Small-scale Industries
- Structure and Competitiveness of Indian Seed Industry
- FDI quality, growth and competitiveness
- Outward Investments by Indian Enterprises
- Innovation policy

Policy Advise and Consultation

- Ministry of External Affairs
 - Policy notes for the SAARC Summit and SAARC Ministerial Meeting, G-15 Summit, NAM Ministerial Meeting, BIMSTEC Summit, India-China Joint Study Group, India-Korea, a.o.
- Ministry of Commerce
 - Briefing on NAMA negotiations, inputs on rules of origins, lists of sensitive products, export forecasts, for different RTAs/PTAs/FTAs, export oriented clusters, a.o.
- Ministry of Environment and Forests
 - Inputs on ESGs, MEAs, biodiversity related issues
- Industry
 - Briefings to industry on WTO and RTA issues
- International Organizations
 - UNCTAD
 - UN-ESCAP
 - Asian Development Bank,
 - Commonwealth Secretariat, a.o.

Policy Dialogue and Conferences

- High-level Conferences on Asian Economic Integration
- Seminars at Global events e.g. IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting/GDN/WTO Public Forum/ WOT Ministerials
- India-China Policy Dialogue
- ASEAN-India Network of Think-Tanks
- SAARC Conferences in Dhaka and New Delhi
- International Conferences on Biotechnology and Asian Development
- WTO Conference in Visakhapatnam
- National Workshop on Competitiveness in Knowledge-based Industries
- Seminar on the Agenda of UNCTAD XI
- Seminar on WTO's July Framework
- Seminar on the Agenda of G-8
- Seminar on National Innovation System in Asia
- Seminar in preparation of WTO Ministerial Conferences

Training and Capacity Building

- ITEC Programme on international economic issues and development policy
 - For nationals from other developing countries
- GRECI Programme for officials of East Asian Countries
- Short-term Training courses for Government Officials

Outreach and Networking

- Consultative/ Observer Status with international organizations:
 - UNCTAD, WTO, NAM
 - Sessions organized at Summits/ Ministerial Meetings
- Joint studies/ collaborative events with like-minded institutions abroad as well as within the country
 - UN-ESCAP, UNCTAD, IFPRI, ADB, ICTSD, South Centre, IPS, ISEAS, MIER, CSIS, SACEPS, Centre for SAARC Studies (AU), Commonwealth Secretariat
- MoUs with a important policy think-tanks in developing countries:
 - e.g. DRC, IITD, NAM-CSSTC, CRRID, EDRI, IUCN-Asia, IPS, KIEP
- Active participation in regional research networks
 - SAARC Network, India-ASEAN, New Asia Forum, ARTNET, ERIA

Publication and Dissemination

- Flagship Reports
- Books and Monographs
- Policy Briefs
- RIS Discussion Papers
- RIS Journals
 - *South Asia Economic Journal*
 - *Asian Biotechnology and Development Review*
 - *New Asia Monitor*
 - *Mekong-Ganga Policy Brief*
- Newsletter
 - *RIS Diary*
- *RIS websites:*
 - *www.ris.org.in*
 - *www.newasiaforum.org*

Concluding Remarks

- Policy independence of Think Tanks can be restored
- Strategic linkages with developed and developing countries need to be maintained
- Areas of research need to be focused
- Financial autonomy of Think Tanks
- Outreach of Think Tanks should be widened to have wider consensus on specific themes

Thank you