

**Rising Asia and Implications to the Development Agenda**

**Quote:**

*“International volunteerism in Asia in the years to come will give opportunities for building the capacities and capabilities of both volunteers and the societies they serve.”*

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**Abstract:**

China and India are among the fastest growing economies in the world today. They are also becoming significant donors of foreign aid. Together with Japan and the Republic of Korea, these four Asian countries seem to be changing the existing models of foreign aid. In their aid policies, they have adopted the approach of minimal intervention in domestic affairs of receiving countries. This is in contrast to the practices of traditional donors which see foreign assistance as an influential instrument of effecting desired economic, political and social development in the recipient states.

Japan and the Republic of Korea used to receive foreign aid in earlier times, and they have eradicated poverty and modernised their economy. China and India are still foreign aid recipients even as they provide assistance to poor countries around the world. The four Asian countries are using their firsthand knowledge and practical insights into the needs and processes necessary for foreign aid to be effective, to offer new policy viewpoints and methods of managing foreign assistance. By doing so, they will transform the aid architecture and landscape, providing recipient countries more policy and negotiating space.

How foreign aid is handled by both donors and recipients is crucial. Donors need to be focused on their commitments to the recipient country and not let global trends or individual country agendas influence aid giving. Asian donors are said to be more receptive to capacity building and sharing experiences with recipient countries. This way, the required capacity and skills at the local level can be developed effectively. At the same time, this approach could reduce the role of non-governmental organisations which are relied upon more extensively by traditional donors.

Concerns have been raised about the value of international volunteers in enhancing development causes. The possibility of volunteers undervaluing local staff, local systems and practices, being inexperienced and reducing the incentive for local governments to set aside appropriate budgets and resources to improve the basic needs of citizens, has been argued as an undesirable consequence of having such volunteers in development projects and aid programmes. Yet, if properly managed, international volunteers can provide substantial gain for capacity building. As Asian donors become more self reliant and prefer to use their own experts and resources, there is also a need for a better understanding of the working culture and style of volunteers from non-traditional donors. A period of adjustment is necessary.