

Failing Aid – India’s Development Cooperation with Fragile States: the Case of Sudan

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India’s engagement in Africa is increasingly gathering attention among policy-makers as well as the academia. As such, it is an often presented criticism that India’s unconditional development aid delayed or even prevented necessary governance reforms in fragile states and, hence, undermined the efforts of the established donor community and their conditionality to push for reforms. Yet, this is a rather intuitive argument as research in this area is hardly available.

This paper therefore tries to examine the role India’s development cooperation plays in the fragile state of Sudan and argues that, driven by its position in the international system and the normative basis of its foreign policy, India is following a multi-pronged strategy in Sudan. A politically stable and prosperous Sudan with a strong and responsive government is, on the one hand, in India’s immediate interest; it can serve as an important energy supplier for India’s rising demands and provide market opportunities for Indian trade. On the other hand, India is for decades an attorney for democracy and international justice. This may in the case of Sudan lead to conflicting interests that need to be balanced to meet India’s own normative and economic demands. First, a very brief historical overview over Indo-Sudan ties is given, followed by an outline of the current trends in development cooperation in a wider sense between these two countries. Then, Indian strategic interests in Sudan and their translation into practice are analysed to draw in a last step conclusions about India’s role in the Sudanese configuration of fragility.