

# Are Bottom-Up Approaches in Development More Effective than Top-Down Approaches?

*Journal of Asian  
Social Science Research*  
2020, Vol. 2, No. 1: 91-109  
<http://jassr.cassr.web.id>  
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## Abstract

This article analyzes both the top-down and bottom-up approaches of development interventions in the Global South with reference to historical backgrounds and particular case studies. It is a fact that channeling Western financial aid by using the top-down approach has not been successful when compared to the results of poverty reduction programs in poor Southern countries over the past decades. As a result, bottom-up institutions like NGOs and bottom-up development programs like microfinance emerged in the late 80s and have become popular across developing countries. However, recently, the performance of NGOs has been questioned and it is perceived that they have lost their roots. Moreover, the bottom-up NGOs seem unable to flourish further without financial aids although bottom-up development approaches seem to be more effective than top-down development approaches as they ensure people's participation and right to choose. Hence, this article argues that no single development approach is more effective than another. In the globalized world, there are no scopes to justify isolation from each other since countries in the Global South still approach South-South Cooperation and also receive financial aid from the Northern donors. Although there are some gross failures of past top-down development approaches, then, not all the bottom-up approaches are fully successful. This article maintains that to ensure cohesive development works, the global world needs both development approaches.

## Key Words

Top-down, bottom-up, development approaches, foreign aid, poverty reduction

## Introduction

In today's globalized world, nations are divided based on geographical locations that determine their economic power and poverty situations. Despite having mixed geographical hemispheres of countries, the world

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is sketched as “North – the economic powers” and “South – the poor developing countries” (Chisholm 2009). Apart from this North-South division, there are still other spheres that differentiate the nations around the globe into developed, underdeveloped, and developing countries. There are also such terms as First World, Second World, and Third World countries. Even though we look and yearn for one globalized world without poverty, the notions of division in terms of economic advancement had been evident in the history of civilization along with the continuation of “development” interventions.

The history of development cooperation in the globe denotes North-South development cooperation in a top-down way. Since the end of World War II, the notion of socio-economic development from the North has enhanced to effect changes in the lives of the millions of poor in the Global South. On its own, the Northern notion of development has characteristics that derive from its historical evolution —starting with the industrial revolution and colonial expansion. The Marshall Plan was the initial development cooperation after the Second World War to assist in reconstructing the war-devastated economies of the European countries. This plan of development cooperation became successful and created a belief that foreign aid will be effective to reduce poverty and flourish the economies of the global Southern countries. There was also a belief that the countries in the Global South lacked capital resources and technical skills, which are the vital tools to combat poverty. These lacks created the notion of “underdevelopment” in those countries, and the Northern countries, according to the former US President, Harry S. Truman (as cited in Rist 2009), had to effect bold programs in the form of economic, financial and technical assistance to help and lift them from miseries.

Over the last fifty years, more than US\$ 2 trillion of financial aid has been transferred to the poor in the Global South. Yet, this money has failed to bring “sustainable economic growth” and “poverty reduction” in those countries (Moyo 2009:29). Such failure of their top-down planning has brought the term “development” under threat. Also, it led some post-development thinkers to write the “obituary” of development as it is “outdated” (Sachs 1992:1). However, critics of development or post-development thinkers have failed to suggest concrete alternatives to development. This ultimately legitimates the notion of “development” despite having its gross failures over the past several decades. Matthews (2004) asserts that “development” is a malfunctioning lighthouse which is yet to be replaced.

Boldly, the traditional top-down ways of North-South development cooperation have been criticized because of their political motivation

since the end of World War II. Escobar (1995) says that the creation of development is nothing but for “making of the Third World.” At the same time, national states were used along with support from outside donors as the primary vehicle for the execution of development policies, programs, and projects in a top-down way (Uvin and Miller 1994). Some authors have noted (Edwards and Hulme 1997; Salamon 1994) that the systems of the state were inefficient to deliver the promised services, which led to problems in the top-down ways of development. Particularly, the state as an institution was too far from the population of its development programs as they were planned and implemented by the bureaucrats.

Of course, there are some successes in the top-down approaches of development. The poor in Southern developing countries have enjoyed the benefits of financial aid to some extent. Easterly (2007) sees reducing mortality rate, vaccination campaigns, and combating of some deadly diseases at the global level as some of the successes of top-down planning of development. Again, some countries in East Asia like South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore achieved tremendous economic development with the magic formula from the Bretton Woods’s institutions along with top-down government market interventions (Brett 2003). Nevertheless, these top-down approaches to development have been proved unsuccessful and ineffective in most of the developing countries, particularly in Africa.

In the last three decades, there have been substantial changes in the approaches of development initiatives to the Global South. The Northern-based donor institutions like World Bank and IMF are encouraging bottom-up ways of poverty reduction which emphasize participation, empowerment, and more accountability. This is due to bottom-up development initiatives from NGOs which are becoming more popular and are used widely in poor Southern countries to fight extreme poverty even post-development critics agree on the fact that traditional approaches to poverty reduction have limitations and they have failed mostly at the bottom. Now, a new approach has emerged, which is known as “bottom-up” development with an emphasis on local initiatives and control in the direction that development should take (Parfitt 2002:32; Matthews 2008).

There are growing debates among scholars, development practitioners, policymakers, government agencies, and NGOs to choose the best approach for development interventions in poor countries. Whether solely top-down or bottom-up approaches should be used to fight against poverty or a mixture of both top-down and bottom-up approaches is still a debate. While both can bring more effective results, decisions vary from country to country, and project to project. It is perceived that the bottom-up approach

is the best one as it is directed by the poor themselves and it emerged after the failure of past top-down approaches. However, most bottom-up approaches usually do not thrive without top-down financial aid.

This paper examines both top-down and bottom-up approaches to development from different perspectives using particular case studies. It argues that no single development approach is more effective than another. To ensure cohesive development works, the global world needs both development approaches.

### **Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Development: What Do They Mean?**

Top-down approaches to development are planned by “experts” or “technocrats” at the top level in any development projects. At the global level, such a situation can occur in projects undertaken by big donor agencies like the World Bank, IMF, or UN agencies located in developed countries. At the local level, such development initiatives can be seen as central to the government of a developing country where the public bureaucrats are the principal decision-makers. In the top-down method of development projects, there are very few opportunities for people’s participation in the formulation process and, as a result, they are marginalized (Kothari 2001).

The top-down planning to tackle poverty stresses on economic growth, income distribution from the macroeconomic perspectives, and it refers to “everyday development talk” as well as “international institutions” (Pieterse 1998). Easterly (2007) terms the top-down initiatives and the Northern aid-agencies as “Planners” who seek solutions to poverty through economic development. Even in the field of development practitioners and experts, we see academics like Paul Collier of Oxford University and Jeffery Sachs of Columbia University’s Earth Institute who support top-down ways of providing more financial aids to poor countries to tackle poverty.

However, after the failure of past top-down development approaches, new vocabularies of development emerged: bottom-up development, self-reliant development, and development from below. Each of them suggested an element of dysfunction in the modern formal economy. Bottom-up approaches to development underscore the need for “participation” of the local community for whom the development projects are undertaken. In these approaches to development, the community can select their own goals and the means of achieving them in any development project (Kothari 2001). Along with participation, bottom-up approaches ensure community ownership, commitment, and accountability to the development project as it seeks development from below (Pieterse 1998).

With this approach, local people are considered “searchers” and are given an opportunity to help themselves (Easterly 2007). Unlike Paul Collier and Jeffery Sachs, William Easterly of New York University and Dambisa Moyo, former World Bank official, are some of the academics who argue for more bottom-up ways of poverty reduction than top-down solutions. The bottom-up approach seeks micro-level solutions to poverty. At the global level, the cooperation between the developing countries in the South can also be termed a bottom-up development approach as they are seeking the solution to poverty within themselves. For example, the cooperation among China, India, and other developing countries as the effect of power relations is mostly equal in such endeavors in comparison with power relations between developing countries and the developed countries and traditional Western donors.

Now, the bottom-up approaches to development are crucial elements in development projects as there is no scope to undermine the views of poor people for whom the projects are planned. Chambers (1994:963) puts the example of bottom-up approaches like Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) where he sees “richness of knowledge” and “creative and analytical ability” of poor villagers. Similar to bottom-up thinking, Sen (1999) sees “development” as freedom where the poor will shape their destiny, and they will not just be “passive recipients of ...cunning development programs.”

### **Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up in the Development Discourses**

In the history of development, the need for people’s participation has always been undermined. In most development discourses, either the state or the market has been considered more important than the people’s choices and voices. In modernization theory, “local knowledge” is considered as a constraint to development while the dependency theory recognizes that local knowledge is “powerless and sidelined” (Sillitoe 2002:3).

The failure of top-down development approaches led to concepts such as anti-development, post-development, and alternative development. Some scholars like Wolfgang Sachs even claim that development should be abandoned as it does more harm than good (as cited in Parfitt 2002:4). Parfitt (2002:9) as a critic of post-development theory admits the faults of top-down approaches that undermine “local societies and cultures” with “development” that is “repressive and disruptive.” Parfitt has come forward to salvage the term “development” seeing it as centrally concerned with emancipation. He proposes a solution that endorses the freedom of the community and social groups to determine their own projects thereby

avoiding harmful “development” such as that sketched out in top-down approaches (Parfitt 2002:6).

In this light, Pieterse (1998:347; 2000:181) sees similarities among “post-development theory,” “dependency theory,” and “alternative development” as they all emphasize bottom-up “self-reliance.” In relation, Parfitt endorses the bottom-up approach as a remedy for failure caused by the “traditional top-down” ethnocentric and technocratic approach. Parfitt argues that the solutions of development lie within the “development discourse,” and there is no need to go for “Post-Development” (Parfitt 2002:32).

Still, whether it is “development,” “alternatives to development,” “alternative development,” or “reflexive development,” the need and importance of bottom-up elements have been recognized. Escobar (1995:215) looks for “local culture, knowledge, grassroots movements” for post-development, and Rahnema (1997: xiv) sees the same as “people-centered.” Meanwhile, Parfitt (2002) and Pieterse (2000) look for “popular participation” in alternative development. In between “alternatives to development” and “alternative development,” Jakimow (2008:314) underscores the “creation and actualization of different approaches at the local level” for “reflexive development.”

### *Successes and Limitations of Top-Down Development Approaches*

After the Second World War, development was perceived as the ideology of the superpowers in the globe. The rise of anticolonial movements in different countries of the Global South shaped the ideology of development cooperation. The Soviet bloc saw the very notion of development as a form of socialism that leads to ultimate communism. On the other hand, the United States and capitalist movements perceived the development as economic development. The provision and distribution of Northern aid were mainly shaped by the political interests of the donors. The pressure of the Cold War between the superpowers in the globe created a realization that the withdrawal of aids to autocratic countries means losing clients in the competition of the Cold War (Dunning 2004: 411). Coyne and Ryan (2009) put an example that the worst dictators in the world received US\$105 billion under the guise of official development assistance.

Concerning the amount of top-down financial aid that had been channeled to the developing countries over the decades, the successes of such plans are very limited. This is mostly because this type of top-down planning was out of touch with the poor at the bottom. The Northern countries and aid agencies always believed that the solution to poverty is in

their hands as they see poverty as an “engineering problem” which can be eradicated with a “Big Push” of financial aid from the top (Easterly 2007). They prescribed solutions without focusing on the problems of poverty at the bottom. All of the projects and programs that were undertaken by the agencies were based on decisions and suggestions of experts and bureaucrats in their offices back in Northern areas. Meanwhile, the poor masses at the bottom do not participate enthusiastically as they feel these projects are imposed on them because there were no scopes to address their genuine needs in the formulation of those projects (Parfitt 2002). Also, their apartness from the bottom situation at the Global South and failure to respond on time worsened the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the globe. To this, Easterly (2007) argues that the situation could have been controlled better if there were prior attention given by Western donors in time. He further argues that the planners at the top were “out of touch” with the tragedy at the bottom.

It should be noted that some of the aids are given to the poor developing countries in the form of loans rather than direct grants. There is a possibility that these poor countries may find themselves getting into increasing debts. Besides, a major portion of money provided in the form of aid to the development projects in the developing countries is swallowed up in payments of experts on technological issues, salary payment of local staff of donor countries, expatriate staff’s housing, transportation, and other allowances for their dependents. Eventually, financial aid which has been channeled in a top-down way to the developing countries tends to be consumed by the urban-centered bureaucrats, policymakers, and politicians on many occasions. The poor people in remote areas hardly benefit from such development efforts.

Still, Easterly (2007) sees the goodwill behind the attempts to combat poverty by the Northern countries and their donor agencies. But, the big problem is that they tend to use the same plan to achieve the same objectives repeatedly despite previous failed attempts. They do not go for a new way to accomplish their objectives (Easterly 2007; Ferguson 1994). Again, sometimes the top-down planners try to achieve what is beyond their capacity while they neglect what they can achieve. Perhaps, this can be blamed on the common lack of accountability in the top-down traditional development approach. In the past, many goals were set by the big aid agencies to be achieved at a global level. For example, Easterly (2007) cites the goal to achieve “universal primary school enrolment” and “universal access to water and sanitation” before the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. Unfortunately, due to the absence of accountability, nobody had been held accountable for the failure of meeting those goals.

Furthermore, some global programs initiated by the Bretton Woods's institutions failed to bring changes to the lives of the poor of the global Southern countries because of their top-down approaches. "Structural Adjustment Programs" (SAPs) is a good example of such programs that failed to bring the promised economic growth in developing countries by removing barriers to the operation of free markets (Parfitt 2002). In some situations, SAPs even created more critical problems in some countries. Easterly puts the example of Ivory Coast which experienced "one of the worst and longest depressions in its economic history" as a result of a Structural Adjustment loan which led to anarchy in the country (Easterly 2007:58). In the same vein, women in the developing countries where the SAPs were implemented faced tremendous discrimination in male-dominated market economies in Africa and the Caribbean (Thomas-Emeagwali 1995; Mohan, Brown, Milward, and Zack-Williams 2002).

Apart from aid interventions, there are some successful examples of Southern countries that gained tremendous economic growth by using the state machinery in a top-down way. China and India are two examples of the present global economies where states build foundations for the success of liberalization and market forces with a top-down approach apart from the developmental states in South-East Asia. Measurable economic growth by these countries reinforces the role of the state as a "top-down" institution and brings it back into the development mainstream once again.

Despite the epidemic of HIV/AIDS in developing nations, the past top-down development efforts made some remarkable progress in health issues. Cosbridge (1999:145) puts the example of an "unprecedented increase in life expectancies for men and women" across the globe because of previous development efforts undertaken by Western countries and their donor agencies. Also, while we have witnessed numerous occurrences of natural disasters like cyclones, earthquakes, and floods in many poor developing countries, the channeling of Western aid saved millions of lives in the aftermath of these natural disasters. The earthquake in Haiti, the flood in Pakistan, and the cyclones in Bangladesh are some examples. In such situations, top-down development efforts are time and cost-effective in relief operations and emergencies (Kabusimi 2007).

### *Strengths and Limitations of Bottom-Up Development Approaches*

Development projects must ensure the participation of the poor for whom they are aimed at in the developing countries. It has now been proven that the true success of development projects happen only when the poor drive these projects through their participation. Lewis and Uphoff (1988) concur

that bottom-up approaches make development projects cost-effective, sustainable, and replicable. Unarguably, accountability, feedback, and transparency are also crucial to the success of any development projects. The bottom-up approach to development promotes these components as the people accept and participate enthusiastically in any bottom-up development projects.

It should be stated that the formal economy of a developing country cannot provide opportunities that the poor can avail themselves of to change their standard of living. This is because they do not have access to the formal economy due to a lack of capital, formal education, and collateral for securing loans from banks. So, to bring about positive changes and also end the cycle of poverty, they do not have any alternative but to do something about their own livelihoods. Given such situations, the state-led top-down approach is not adequate as the macroeconomic development efforts play very little role in the lives of poor people at the bottom. Narayan *et al.* (2009:337) argue that the national economy is good, but because of wider differences among localities, they hardly benefit from the growth. Hence, any bottom-up local opportunity creates a great difference for them.

Following the failure of top-down North-South ways of development cooperation and state as an organization, the emergence of NGOs has become remarkable in the global development arena since the 1980s. NGOs have become an indispensable part of development paradigms because of their alternative ways of development approaches and acceptability by the poor people in remote areas. Although in recent decades the influence of NGOs has reduced, no discussion of poverty, inequality, or development is complete without considering their bottom-up roles. In many developing countries, “the resources of NGOs, domestic and international, exceed those at the disposal of government” as they have become “major channel of development co-operation” (Pieterse 1998:350). BRAC is such an NGO from Bangladesh, which has grown up with the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country. Bangladesh is no longer a “hopeless basket” as world-renowned NGOs like BRAC, and Grameen Bank enabled Bangladesh to reach the “first rung of the ladder of development” (Sachs 2005:14). White (1999) further argues that success in the development of the field of Bangladesh is because of contribution from the NGOs, not by the state.

Remarkably, the bottom-up development approach using “microfinance” has proved successful in eradicating poverty in developing countries. The recognition of microfinance as a tool to combat poverty “from below” was endorsed when the Nobel Peace Prize was given to

the pioneer of microfinance, Dr. Muhammad Yunus with his brainchild, Grameen Bank. Notably, microfinance, in the form of small loans, is helping millions of poor people in the Global South create self-employment opportunities.

Moreover, faith-based organizations are working to serve humanity with their widespread networks across the globe. Amidst secular “development” doctrine, they are combating poverty from the bottom as most of the religions in the world teach the notion of helping those who are in need. Ter Harr and Ellis (2006) put forward the example of Poland, South Africa, and the Philippines as countries where the faith-based organizations contributed significantly to their political development. Still, bottom-up faith-based organizations are working in conflict areas in many parts of the world. They are trying to build peace, provide education, and health facilities in many poor countries.

However, bottom-up efforts in development projects also have some shortcomings. In an unequal society, there are limitations to implementing bottom-up development projects as the local elite may dominate the whole process. For this reason, Mansuri and Rao (2004) suggest the need for an “enabling institutional environment” for the sustainability of bottom-up community-based initiatives. Bottom-up approaches to development cannot be replicated at a large scale as the success of such an approach mostly depends on “local cultures and social systems”. This ultimately fails to generate a “coherent body of theory” in the development field because of such dispersing nature of bottom-up approaches in the form of “alternative development” (Pieterse 1998). Still, there are fewer negative aspects of bottom-up development than of top-down development. Bottom-up development has several unique challenges such as how the programs can receive funding without losing their autonomy and how to make a bottom-up project reaches more beneficiaries without becoming less participatory, more bureaucratic, and disconnected from the people it serves.

### **Alignment of Top-Down and Bottom-Up in the Development Interventions**

During the 1990s, there were significant changes in the approaches to development interventions offered by aid agencies. The need for more participation on the part of the poor people and their empowerment had been felt widely amid the failures of traditional top-down ways of development. As a result, the World Bank and its presidency began to listen to the voices of the poor in their projects during the tenure of James D. Wolfensohn. As part of its participatory approaches to development, “Voices of the Poor

(2000)” recorded the voices of more than 60,000 poor women and men from 60 countries to understand poverty from the perspective of the poor themselves (Narayan, Pritchett, and Kapoor 2009). Hackenberg (2002) reports that the effort of development activities by the World Bank was “from the below” and that of incorporating the “bottom-up” development process.

However, as Pieterse (2000: 180) states, the World Bank stories are not the same because there had been “tremendous discontinuities” of the bank’s development approach over time. Another is “The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005” and “Accra Agenda for Action 2008” by OECD that aim to improve the quality of aid, ensuring increased participation, and accountability (Hayman 2009).

Nowadays, it is very difficult to distinguish bottom-up “alternative development” from the top-down “mainstream development.” A sharp line of boundary between these two approaches to development is difficult to establish because many components of the bottom-up alternative approach have already been incorporated into the mainstream development initiatives by the aid agencies over the years. Pieterse (1998:344-350) termed this mixture of the two development approaches as “mainstream alternative development (MAD)”.

### **Sustainable Development Goals and the Challenges Ahead**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed upon in 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations and to be achieved by the developing countries in 2030. Years after, many developing countries are still lagging behind in the race despite completing a previous cycle of achieving similar global development goals of “Millennium Development Goals” (MDGs). Sub-Saharan African countries, in particular, are not doing well. There is no doubt that financial aid is needed to achieve the SDGs. It is also important to incorporate other developing countries in the development of developing countries lagging behind.

However, global development goals are not free from debates because of the nature of their formulation and implementation process. Bond (2006:339) calls to “debate the top-down approach and go for solutions emerging from below” in achieving such goals as he sees one of the top-down characteristics of such goals as its origins within the United Nations and other top-down agencies. Global cooperation for development is necessary for attaining the SDGs within the deadline. This is particularly important during this unprecedented time of global virus pandemic which has caused negative impacts on the global economy.

Meanwhile, climate change, global warming, and frequent natural disasters have become threats to the development initiatives in recent years; and the poor communities in the developing countries have become more vulnerable. Yodmani (2001: 486) argues that the traditional top-down management was not fully successful in meeting the needs of vulnerable communities. Therefore, the bottom-up approach to disaster management has been widely recognized because the communities are involved in what they are the best judges of, dealing with their vulnerability and putting the best solutions on the ground (Yodmani 2001:486). Corell and Betsill (2001) see NGOs working in the field of environment as potential partners in implementing projects which are meant to tackle climate change because they can link international and local level with the local popular movement.

### **The Momentum of South-South Cooperation and Triangular Development Approach**

For several decades, development assistance in the globe acted as a top-down, one-way street – from North to South. In the 1970s, the countries in the global South formed a new alliance to enhance cooperation within themselves and to strengthen their capacity to negotiate with the North. These countries were neither part of communism led by the former Soviet Union nor capitalism led by the United States. Following the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement and its later manifestation known as the Group of 77, the global South began to realize the potential for collaboration within and across developing nations as a way to offset the imbalance created by the North-South divide. This new form of cooperation has been seen as South-South Cooperation (SSC). At the initial stage, the cooperation did not speed up so strong and failed to draw the attention of those around the globe. However, the end of the Cold War and prolonged debt crisis in the 1980s created a platform for the countries in the global South, which enabled them to deal with their counterpart in the West effectively.

Since the 1990s, the world scenario has changed significantly. Today, there are new winners and losers in the global economy, and surprisingly, most of these winners are from developing nations. Particularly, the rise of new economic powers such as China and India from the South has changed the notion of South-South Cooperation. Their increasing cooperation and investment in other developing countries, particularly in Africa, have created a new dimension in the South-South Cooperation (UN 2010).

South-South Cooperation (SSC) can happen in the field of technologies, services, trade, infrastructures, and even in the poverty reduction programs. SSC aims to strengthen the notion of “self-sufficiency among southern

nations and promote trade, economic ties among themselves whose market power is more equally matched than in uneven North-South relationships". The UN is also prioritizing SSC and establishing new innovative programs. SSC is relatively easy among the poor developing countries. It has little or no policy conditions along with procedural conditions (UN 2010). Much of its disbursement and procurement are simple and fast. The bottom-up ways of development cooperation in the countries of Global South believe and see the people as partners in development, respecting them as the primary authors and actors of the work to end poverty; awaking them to the possibility of a better life and self-reliant actions. This bottom-up cooperation is cheap and the learning from one developing country to another is more relevant than traditional top-down ways of learning on poverty reduction. However, there are growing criticisms in such cooperation amongst the developing countries. Especially, China's involvement and development assistance in the African countries are not free from criticism and scrutiny (Naím 2007).

Furthermore, triangular development cooperation is a newly added concept in global development cooperation. It is a kind of development cooperation that connects three development partners. When a donor from Northern countries is involved in the development of a developing country with the technical knowledge and expertise from other developing countries, it is called triangular development or North-South-South Cooperation -a mixture of both top-down and bottom-up development approaches. Triangular cooperation refers to the partnership between traditional donors and Southern partners to implement development projects or programs in beneficiary countries (UNCTAD 2010). Triangular cooperation often consists of a financial contribution from a "Northern donor" together with technical skills from a Southern donor, which is then implemented in a partner country. A good example of triangular development cooperation can be the works of a Bangladeshi NGO, BRAC, in African countries. Since 2002, BRAC has been engaged in transforming the lives of millions of poor in many African countries with its successful poverty reduction models from Bangladesh and necessary funding support from developed countries (Smillie 2009).

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, two different development approaches have been analyzed with reference to historical backgrounds, current development practices, and future goals along with the challenges ahead for the nations. They are, however, not outright solutions to poverty because both of them have their strengths and shortcomings. Top-down approaches are not always synonymous with failure, nor are bottom-up approaches always successful.

Top-down efforts of development have failed to bring significant changes in the lives of the poor compared to the time and money spent over the decades. The underlying need for “participation,” “ownership,” “accountability,” and “empowerment” for successful completion of a development project was undermined in the past top-down development efforts. Subsequently, these important ingredients were incorporated by the development agencies and state-led development projects. These shifts further prove that solely top-down development efforts are not successful.

Likewise, bottom-up institutions like NGOs and civil society organizations are not successful in all parts of the world like in Africa. From this point of view, the state as a top-down institute can facilitate and significantly promote the growth of bottom-up institutions like NGOs and civil societies. NGO’s position as “favorite child” to the donor organizations has become narrowed over the years because of disillusionments in their performances and disconnection from their roots.

Therefore, both types of development approaches are needed to tackle poverty, and it is possible for “coexistence and continuity” of both development efforts as we have seen in earlier years. Development is a multidimensional process that has social, political, or economic aspects. Hence, development efforts should be carried out in all parts of society for greater benefit. To do this, we need to use both top-down and bottom-up approaches to “promote interaction and dialogue among all levels”.

No single development effort, either top-down or bottom-up, is effective in the long run. Even in the globalized world, the dependence on the very notion of South-South Cooperation cannot be the only means to break the cycle of poverty in the Global South. There are needs for both North-South and South-South Cooperation or North-South-South cooperation in the globalized world. At the same time, it is important to have a mixture of both top-down and bottom-up approaches to development. This is applicable both in the global development cooperation and in the development projects undertaken by the states in the global south.

As a debate on “development” continues, the poor and third world states at the bottom cannot wait for any solidarity or consensus which will bring a unanimous effort. The continuation of both top-down state responsibilities and bottom-up individual capabilities are important for the development of the poor in the Global South. Attaining SDGs, tackling climate change, and possible financial downturns are major challenges coming ahead for the developing nations where the states are required to bargain and negotiate at the global level for mutual benefits, accountability, risk reduction, and vulnerability. At the same time, the citizens, NGOs, and

civil society organizations at the bottom must cooperate with the state in utilizing their potentialities and capabilities.

In the new era of development, “state” is back again. It has proved successful in the developmental state economy as well as building foundations for the success of liberalization and market forces in China and India. What is now needed is an “inclusive we” for the development. This “we” includes both “top-down” and “bottom-up” forces and attempts put together in a state. At the global level, both North-South and South-South cooperation or North-South-South triangular cooperation are required. It should be emphasized that given this situation of interdependencies, complex nature of development, and global character, it is not possible to ascertain which particular development approach is more effective than the other.

### **Funding**

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **Acknowledgments**

A newspaper op-ed was published based on some components of the article in *The Daily Star*, leading English daily newspaper in Bangladesh. The link to the editorial is <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-252290>.

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