

Unpacking



His Master's Voice

A booklet by
Centre for Financial Accountability

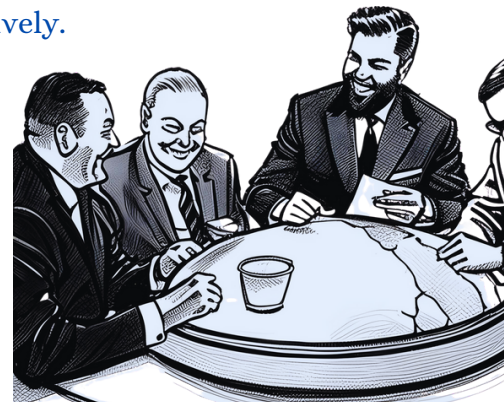
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Introduction

India assumes the G20 presidency in 2023, forming a pivotal part of the existing G20 troika alongside Indonesia and Brazil. This juncture arrives as the post-pandemic global landscape contends with a confluence of challenges: geopolitical tensions, warfare, rising global debt, the impending spectre of recession, worldwide food insecurity, environmental crises encompassing climate and biodiversity, and the erosion of democratic spaces across multiple nations.

However, the G20 proceedings unfold amidst a paradox, ostensibly championing itself as the 'Mother of Democracy,' even as hundreds of thousands are forcibly displaced for city beautification in preparation for the event. This compact booklet endeavours to provide an overview of the G20 and underline the imperative for collective solidarity among people. This solidarity, in turn, serves as a foundation to hold these institutions accountable, enabling them to confront the formidable contemporary challenges effectively.



What is the G20?

The G20 is an intergovernmental forum that calls itself “a premier forum for international economic cooperation.” Formed in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis, the G20 became a platform of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the members to discuss macroeconomic issues to maintain financial stability. In 2008, after the global financial crisis, the G20 was upgraded to a forum of heads of States and governments. Unlike the UN, the G20 is an informal, extra-institutional forum. However, it is an influential group because of its political and economic clout. The G20 members currently represent 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. It makes major decisions that impact the global financial architecture, economies and people’s livelihoods.



Who constitutes the G20?

The members of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States, and the European Union.

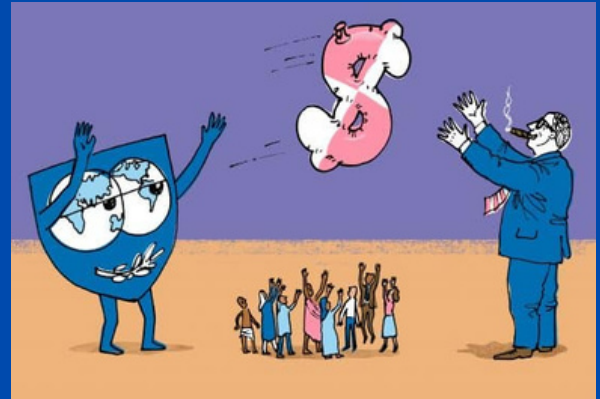
In addition, International Organisations like United Nations, IMF, World Bank, World Health Organisation, International Labor Organisation, Financial Stability Board and OECD along with regional organisations AU, AUDA-NEPAD and ASEAN. India, as G20 Presidency, will be inviting [ISA](#), [CDRI](#) and [ADB](#) as Guest IOs.



Source: Boell.de

How does the G20 work?

In the absence of a permanent secretariat, the G20 meets annually in one of the member countries through a system of rotational presidency. The deliberations take place in two tracks: the Finance Track and the Sherpa track. The former deals with macroeconomic issues and the latter covers issues such as health, education, agriculture, climate, and digital economy, among others. A host of engagement groups (such as CSOs, NGOs and think tanks) and international organizations like the UN, IMF, World Bank, WHO, WTO, ILO, FSB, OECD among others are invited to participate in the G20 events.



The Politics of the G20

Firstly, the G20 is considered as an elite club consisting of the rich G7 countries and emerging economies states such as Russia, China, Brazil and India. Conceived as an extension of the G7 to include chosen countries from the developing world, the G20 provides legitimacy to the neoliberal policy agenda of the developed countries. In short, the G20 promotes capitalism through bodies like the IMF, the Financial Stability Board and multilateral development banks.

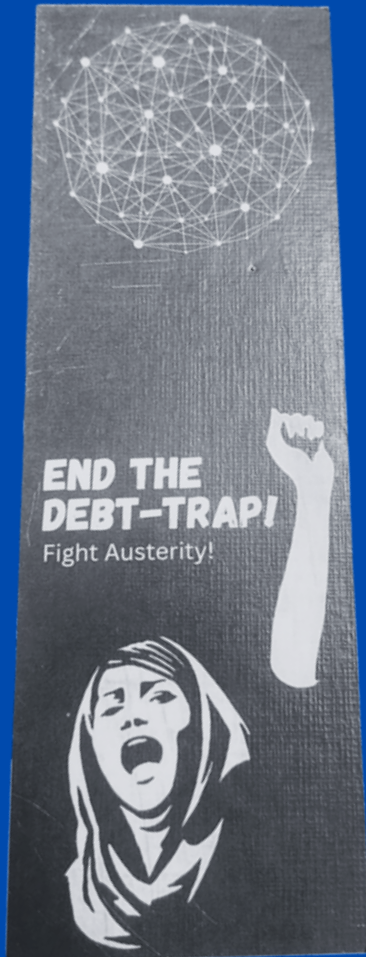
Secondly, the G20 is unrepresentative. The membership of the G20 is exclusionary in nature which is evident from keeping out countries such as Iran, Egypt, Nigeria and Venezuela from the forum.

Thirdly, the G20 has expanded its mandate from deliberating on financial matters to include issues (like international migration, counter-terrorism, and war) to influence the international agenda of political governance.

Finally, the G20's decisions are non-binding since it is a self-appointed group. Over the years, the effectiveness and relevance of the forum have been questioned.



Impact of the G20



The G20's policy recommendations have a significant impact. For instance, the Indian Parliament tabled the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill in 2017. It was a direct consequence of the G20's policy because the bill uncritically included the recommendations of a Financial Stability Board's report 'Key Attributes of Effective Resolution Regimes for Financial Institutions' (2014). The bill aimed to curtail the regulatory powers of the RBI by forming a Resolution Council to sell, merge and liquidate financial institutions including Public Sector Banks, and floated the idea of a "bail-in" provision to deprive the common depositors and make them compensate for the losses emerging from corporate defaults. Since the bill ignored the specificities of the Indian economy, it had to be withdrawn after severe protests.

Similar G20 policies for other sectors (like agriculture, health, infrastructure, education, etc.) and push for increased private finance lead to unequal development, rising inequality, debt distress, financialisation of climate crisis, and global power imbalance.



India & the G20

As the current chair, India is going to host the 18th G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023. The theme and motto of India's G20 presidency are 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' respectively. As the host, India's agenda and focus are: becoming the voice of the Global South, addressing climate finance, ensuring growth, achieving SDGs, promoting digital public infrastructure, reforming MDBs, and fostering women-led development. Amidst a conflict-ridden political environment, India's role as chair is challenging.

However, using a self-congratulatory phrase, 'Mother of Democracy', India left no stone unturned to make this event look good. The urban poor and the marginalized people have been forcibly evicted from their homes in many parts of the country, and millions of dollars of public money have been used for advertisements and beautification drives.

Behind the pomp and splendour, the pressing concerns of the people, like rising inequality, debt vulnerabilities, the impact of the climate crisis, privatization of public services, shrinking of democratic spaces, declining labour rights and social protection, are largely eclipsed.

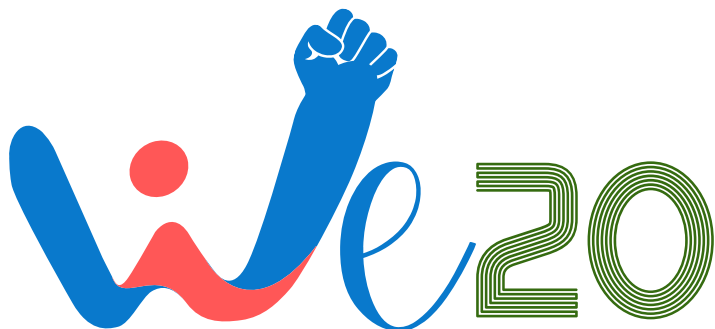
We20: A Peoples' Summit on G20

As India prepares to host the G20 Leaders' Summit, a host of grassroots groups, trade unions, civil society organizations and concerned citizens are coming together to voice the demands of the common people of the Global South. This convention - We20: A Peoples' Summit on G20 - is organised from 18-20 August 2023 at HKS Surjeet Bhavan in New Delhi, to voice the people's concerns on critical issues, including climate change, inequality, agrarian crises, public banking, digital surveillance, and religio-ethnic antagonisms.

We, the people, must come together in standing for justice and equality. Together, we can ensure that the voices of the Global South are heard and that their demands for action receive the attention they deserve. Let us unite as a global community and advocate for a better future for all.



The poster features a central graphic of a stylized 'We20' logo where the 'e' is a blue hand with a raised fist. Below the logo, the text reads 'WE 20: A PEOPLE'S SUMMIT ON G 20' in blue and green. Underneath, it says 'COMING TOGETHER OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS, TRADE UNIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS & CONCERNED CITIZENS TO DELIBERATE UPON KEY ISSUES'. The location and dates are 'NEW DELHI | AUGUST 18, 19, 20'. Contact information includes 'www.wgonifis.net' and 'wetwentysummit@gmail.com'. A trail of colorful footprints (red, green, blue) leads from the top right towards the bottom. At the bottom, a collage of social and economic issues is displayed in various colors: AGRICULTURE, WELFARE, LABOUR, CLIMATE CRISIS, SURVEILLANCE, BANKING, SOCIAL PROTECTION, JUST ENERGY TRANSITION, INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INEQUALITY, DEBT, SOCIAL JUSTICE, DIGITALISATION, SHRINKING DEMOCRATIC SPACES, PRIVATISATION, and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The bottom of the poster shows a crowd of people, many wearing colorful headscarves, with their hands raised in a gesture of solidarity.



Witness Peoples' Movements, Trade Unions, CSOs & concerned citizens coming together to deliberate on key issues and more!

18-19-20 August, 2023

Learn more: www.cenfa.org/g20

Debt crisis Privatisation

Shrinking democratic spaces

Wealth Inequality

Recession

Climate crisis

Agrarian Crisis

Farmer Suicides

