

## India-Africa Emerging Political-Economic Relationship

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### Abstract:

India's relation with Africa date back several centuries. More concrete relation between India and Africa begins to emerge during the Islamic age which is evident through the accounts of Venetian traveller Marco Polo. Political connection during the colonial era was linked through MK Gandhi, who began his Political career in South Africa and established Indian National Congress in 1894. After India's independence, it raised voice for Africa liberation. India was a forerunner as a champion of the interests of the developing countries from Africa, particularly through the group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). It is the sense of solidarity, mutual trust and confidence born in the difficult days of the cold war which continues to drive India-Africa cooperation to this day. Africa is the fastest growing countries of this decade such as Rwanda, Tanzania and Senegal etc making it one of the growth Pole of the world. India engagement at all levels with Africa has increased in the last two decades, with a huge number of public and private sector companies, investing in Africa. Duty free tariff preferential scheme by India for Least Developed Nations (LDCs) launched in 2008 has benefited 33 African states. India's engagement with African Nations remains at three levels: Bilateral, Regional and Multilateral.

**Keywords:** Africa, Economic cooperation, Relationship.

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### I. Introduction:

Africa is a continent of many countries, big and small. At present the continent consists of 54 countries (48 countries on the main land and 6 Island countries). Nearly 1.2 billion people accounting for 70% of the total population of the world live on the continent. The land area of Africa as a percentage of the earth's land is about 20.39%. This makes Africa the second largest continent after Asia. Africa contains some of the finest varieties of word culture, tribes, contrasts and contradictions. When India got independence there were only four independent countries in Africa. By 1963 when the organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established their number shot up to 32 with the and dependency of these colonies and countries of white in the southern peninsula including Zimbabwe and Namibia, the number of independent countries rose to 52. After the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia, and the fall of Apartheid in South Africa there are 54 independent countries on the continent.

### II. Background:

India and Africa are two shore neighbours. It is this geographical proximity, India looking westwards across the navigable Indian Oceans, that made the people of the two regions known to each other. India and Africa shared history embedded in ancient contacts. Contacts between India and Africa can be traced back to ancient times when India merchants from its Western seaboard traded along the Eastern littorals of Africa. The Indian Ocean was the connecting factor in this trade relation. The seasonal reversal of monsoon wind in the Indian Ocean was very helpful for the traders, who utilised it for navigation. References in Vedic scriptures, as well as the travelogues and navigator's diaries, further attest the fact that strong relation existed between two ancient cultures. The periplus (a Greek guidebook for sailors) mention that trade existed between the Indian shores and Africa about 2000 years ago.

The phase of European colonial expansion in Africa and India, however brought an end to this traditional long range trading system. This period of shared colonial rule led to migration of a substantial number of Indians, with a large number of people of Indian origin taken to African countries in different capacities as indentured workers, Railway workers, artisans and slaves. The people of Indian origin not only greatly contributed to the host country, but also forged an inextricable link between India and Africa.

The discriminatory treatment in a racially structured Society of South Africa drew Gandhi into active politics during his stay in natal 1893 – 1914. The period witnessed the first flowering of his approach of Satyagraha or non-violent resistance to tyranny. He inspired a generation of African leaders including Kwame Nkrumah of Tanzania, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, in their own National Liberation campaigns. While Gandhi was a common icon for Indo -African relations, it was Jawaharlal Nehru who gave the relationship between its political structure during his time as prime minister. Firstly, he supported the decolonization of African states, which he considered a continuation of India's own decolonization. Secondly, he took a firm stand against racial discrimination in South Africa and Broke of India's diplomatic and trade relations with the racist regime. India and Africa relation are very historic. We can study modern History of India Africa relation in distinct phases;

### **1st Phase (Relation until 1960):**

In this phase India's engagement with Africa, its diplomacy and interaction in the NAM, the United Nation, the Commonwealth and Afro-Asian organisations were mainly on the lines of anti-colonialism and anti-racism. However, early hope of a more intensive Indo-African partnership went into low ebb in 1960. There Indian insistence on non- violent struggles against colonialism. India was branded as having a softer attitude towards colonial power. On the other hands the Chinese militancy and advocacy for armed struggle did appeal to Africans.

### **2nd Phase (1970s-1990s):**

In 1971, India won the war with Pakistan and make a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation with USSR. India's Green Revolution, explosion of its nuclear device in 1974. Aryabhata rocket was launching in 1975. With newly acquired self -confidence, Indian policy becomes more productive towards the African countries. India again becomes a power to which Africa turn for help and assistance and as a model for development. Under these changes domestic and international circumstances, Indo - Africa relations showed noticeable changes compared with the earlier period. The most important change was in the field of India's economic diplomacy towards the African States. Economic diplomacy, a secondary objective to the political imperatives of 1960s, become the primary objective by 1970. It was at the Lusaka Summit (1970), that the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi articulated and gave the call for south - south cooperation. At the Harare summit 1986 the Indian prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi was chiefly responsible for the establishment of the action for resisting invasion, colonialism and apartheid fund.

### **3rd Phase (1990s onward):**

This is the phase of reengagement with Africa. However, lead taken by private sector, rather than government. Private sector of India should be given credit to push attention of Government of India towards the region of strategic and economic importance. Since 2008, India and Africa relations have been institutionalized. India has started engagement with African Union, so far three summits have been organised under the aegis of India Africa forum summit. India's engagement with Africa throw Pan African level engagement, Partnership with Regional organisation, Development partnership through IBSA and BRICS, Bilateral engagement with countries, Involving Indian communities and Indian diasporas.

### **India-Africa Economic Relationship:**

People often considered Africa as an unexplored continent, as if it had no history, no culture and no achievement. But Africa has its own history and civilization. Modern Africa is not stagnant. it has formed different regional and economic organisations like AU (African Union), common market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), economic community of West Africa state (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). Through these organisations Africa interact not only within the continent but with the outside world as well. Africa is enjoying its best period of sustained economic expansion since Independence. Most important was the economic growth of the continent that is estimated to be 3.2% in 2018. It also houses six of the world's fastest growing economy- in the World bank estimates Ethiopia will grow at 8.2%, Ghana 8.3%, Ivory coast 7.2%, Djibouti 7%, Senegal 6.9%, and Tanzania 6.8% in 2018.

India and Africa vary in size, but both have many commonalities on the demographic front, such as they have equal population of around 1.3 billion and together form one third of the Global population with almost 200 million people aged between 15 to 24 years. Africa has the youngest population in the world. Similarly, India to has around 18% of population in this segment. So, India and Africa both have the huge human resources. Both regions have great potential to fulfil their own economic diplomacy goals. This relation is mutual beneficial and have great potential. African can learn from the India's development experience.

Africa has rich minerals resources based apart from gold and silver, crude oil, imports form the basis of trade relationship between India and Africa. In May 2015, Nigeria becomes largest Oil exporter to India replacing Saudi Arabia. At present, around 26% of India's crude oil import from Africa primarily lead by Nigeria and Angola. ONGC Videsh Limited, International arm of ONGC, has presence in the 5 African countries- Libya, Nigeria, Sudan, South Sudan and Mozambique which show deepening relationship in exploration and production. Further Africa's capabilities as the next global provider of rare earth minerals will also help India to fulfil his economic diplomacy goals. The trade with Africa increased by 20 times in last 15 years. It is way behind the stipulated USD 100 billion targets set for 2015. In the comparative sense, even the USD 100 billion trade target is far less than China's USD 250 billion trade partnership with Africa. It is expected that urbanisation rate will be high in Africa as compared to India till 2050. So Africa emerged as one of the prime destination for Indian made goods due to improving living standard and quality of life in the continent. Bilateral trade jumped from USD 5.30 billion in 2001 to USD 12 billion in 2013 USD 70 billion in 2015 which is greater than India's bilateral trade with USA. During the side line of world economic forum 2012 held in New Delhi, African leaders and Indian industrialist announced their joint vision to achieve USD 500 billion trade between Africa and India by 2020. This is almost 5 times more than that was projected for 2015. African market is expected to expand USD 1.4 trillion by 2020 up from USD 860 billion in 2008. **In 2021, Africa's GDP at USD 2.6 Trillion. Bilateral trade was at \$15.5 billion in 2014-15, \$10.8 billion in 2019-20 and valued at \$55.9 billion in 2020-21. Total investment over 25 years (1996-March, 2021), are \$70.7 billion, which is about one-third of China's investment in Africa.**

#### **Vaccine Maitri and COVID 19:**

The Vaccine Maitri initiative has been launched in line with India's philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), as flagged by Prime Minister Modi during the Vaccine Summit in June 2020. As the largest vaccine producing country of the world, India has gifted millions of doses of the Covid vaccine to countries across the world, including Africa. Africa has around 3.9 million confirmed Covid-19 cases, as of March 11, 2021. From the outset, India maintained contact with countries in the region, and exchanged information on the management of the Pandemic. India supplied Paracetamol, Hydroxychloroquine tablets, test kit and other medical equipment for about 90 countries, including 25 in Africa. Under Mission Sagar-I and Sagar-II, Indian Naval Ship, sailed to Sudan, South Sudan, and Eritrea with medicines and material to support their flight against natural calamities and COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has brought misery to Africa. African have been deeply affected and remain ill-equipped.

### **III. CONCLUSION:**

The increasing influence of other power in the continent specialist China hyperactive engagement. China established the forum on China Africa relation in 2000 to increase its involvement with Africa. China trade with Africa is four times more as compared to India. In the presence of China in Africa India needs to widen of trade engagement in the reason. New Delhi focus on development and deepening with Central Africa and East Africa. Government of India needs to strength its political relation with African countries on the bilateral level. This poses great opportunities for both India and Africa to boost trade and investment relations. The current level of trade is widely seen as way below the potential between India and Africa. Indian government making sure that African country to properly utilised the duty-free tariff reference scheme (DFTP) to boost trade between two regions. For India huge investment opportunities in sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing and energy. The Foreign minister's visit to Kenya has helped to re-establish communication with Africa at a Political level. It is time to seize the opportunity of economic engagement with Africa. The Fourth India-Africa summit is pending since last year, should be held as soon as possible. Fresh grants and concessional loans must be allocated to Africa.

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