

Looking west 3: Africa

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Introduction

India and Africa are two shore neighbours. It is this geographical proximity, India looking westwards across the navigable Indian Ocean, that made the peoples of the two regions known to each other. Beginning with early colonial days, the free and voluntary relations of the past gave way to colonial needs and preferences. The present relations, one between independent, self-respecting regions, was formally established only after both sides got independence. The 21st century has seen a renewed initiative of India with the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) in 2008. Some similar initiatives have been taken by other Asian countries, like the People's Republic of China, Malaysia and Japan. Many observers call it a 'new scramble for Africa' by Asian countries to acquire African raw materials and energy resources.¹

However, a historical examination of Indo-African relations shows that India's interest and intense engagement is not new; it is multidimensional. Africa is a continent consisting of 54 countries and India's relations with Africa are therefore heterogeneous, complex and diverse. Nevertheless, this chapter will focus on broader aspects of Indo-African relations, in which the historical goodwill of India is being translated now into economic and political co-operation.² In this context, this chapter will discuss Indo-African relations in distinct phases of history and then focus on the emerging areas of present engagement between the two regions.

Historical connections

Shared history embedded in ancient contacts

Contacts between India and Africa can be traced back to ancient times when Indian 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 winds in the Indian Ocean was very helpful for the traders, who utilized it for navigation. The influence of Indian architecture on the African kingdom shows the level of trade development between the two

civilizations. References in Vedic scriptures, as well as the travelogues and navigators' diaries, further attest the fact that strong relations existed between the two ancient cultures. The *Periplus* (a Greek guidebook for sailors written about 2,000 years ago) mentions that trade existed between the Indian shores and Africa. Ibn Battuta in his account observes the presence of Africans known as *habshis* in the imperial armies of the Indian Kings. A large number of Africans came during medieval times and formed a major section of Muslim armies. They reached the highest positions in the army and their own forts. They settled along the western coast of India and were called *siddis*. This African diaspora in India predates the later indentured diaspora of India in Africa.

Colonial expansion and strengthening of India-Africa relations

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 (PIOs) taken to African countries in different capacities—as indentured workers, railway workers, artisans and slaves. This forced migration was part of the British policy to take Indian labourers all over the world to replace black slaves after their emancipation. The people of Indian origin not only greatly contributed to the host country, but also forged an inextricable link between India and Africa. Indian leaders before independence and later in the Government of India actively engaged themselves in the cause of PIOs.

It is in Africa that, for the first time, an Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, raised the issue of discrimination of PIOs in a big way. The discriminatory treatment in a racially structured society of South Africa drew Gandhi into active politics during his stay in Natal in 1893–1914. The period witnessed the first flowering of his approach of *satyagraha*, or non-violent resistance to tyranny. Gandhi's experience of discrimination in South Africa left an abiding influence in the identification of India with the freedom-loving peoples of Africa. His philosophy, which he successfully put into practice to achieve India's independence, inspired a generation of African leaders—including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia—in their own national liberation campaigns.³

Afro-Asian resurgence, anti-colonialism and anti-racism

While Gandhi was a common icon for Indo-African relations, it was Jawaharlal Nehru who gave the relationship its political structure. During his time as Prime Minister, Nehru was instrumental in shaping and defining major policy objectives and commitment to the Afro-Asian resurgence in which India and especially Nehru tried to emerge as a leader of ex-colonial countries. Under him, India took a definite diplomatic stand on many African issues. First, he supported the decolonization of African states, which he considered a continuation of India's own decolonization. It was largely based on his personal commitment to the process of Afro-Asian resurgence. Second, he took a firm stand against racial discrimination in South Africa and broke off India's diplomatic and trade relations with the racist regime. For African countries still under colonial rule during this period, both were relevant to Africa's immediate concerns of decolonization and democratization. The Bandung Conference (1955) and the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Conference of Cairo (1958) demonstrated these Afro-Asian perceptions of each other. India's engagement with Africa, its diplomacy and interactions in the Non-Aligned

Movement (NAM), the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and Afro-Asian organizations were mainly on the lines of anti-colonialism and anti-racism. Nehru also took a categorical stand on issues on people of Indian origin settled in Africa, and made it clear that they must identify with the local majority community and should not seek any special privilege over the natives in the country of their adoption.

The low ebb of the 1960s

However, early hopes of a more intensive Indo-African partnership went into a low ebb in the 1960s. Indian policy was unrealistic, overestimating the role Africa was going to play due to its numerical strength and underestimating the importance and priority which Africans attached to issues like decolonization and racial equality. India failed to realize that such issues like peaceful co-existence, highly relevant and important though they were for India, had to be integrated with African impatience for decolonization. In support for African decolonization, India was branded as having a softer attitude towards colonial powers. Indian insistence on non-violent struggles against colonialism, its advocacy of 'peaceful co-existence' and moderate stand on issues like Mau Mau rebellion, the Algerian war of independence and the Congolese civil war, did not appeal to Africans. On the other hand, the Chinese militancy and advocacy for armed struggle did appeal to Africans.⁴ Furthermore, India's Anglo-centric view resulted in no time limit being fixed for colonial withdrawal,⁵ and the gulf caused between Indian settlers and Africans by colonialist propaganda that India was attempting to end white domination to replace it with Indians, brought differences out into the open. During the Indo-Chinese War of 1962 India was isolated; very few African countries supported India and many adopted an openly unhelpful attitude.⁶ The Cairo Conference of Non-Aligned Countries (1964) exposed Indian isolation, with Africa taking the dominant control of the NAM.⁷

The result of this was that by the mid-1960s India's advantages as a beacon of decolonization in Africa, as one of the founders of the NAM and a leader of Afro-Asian resurgence, had been let down during Indo-Chinese War by those very peoples whose demands it had championed. The situation for India became more alarming when it observed that African countries belonging and professing to non-aligned groups were ready to accept Chinese claims and versions of events.

The issue of India's policy towards Indian settlers in Africa was another factor that did not augur well with African leaders. India had taken the exclusive issue of the discrimination of Indian settlers in South Africa to the UN. Blacks, who suffered worse discrimination in South Africa, were initially not included in the Indian resolution moved in the UN under Article 10 of the UN Charter. This caused great misgivings in Africans. Admittedly, Nehru had made it clear that 'in many parts of Africa – East, West, South – there are considerable number of Indians, mostly business people. Our definite instructions to them and to our agent in Africa are that they must always put the interest of indigenous population first. We want to have no vested interests at the expense of population of those countries'.⁸ However, in the aftermath of the Chinese attack of 1962 he talked of the 'dual loyalty' of Indian settlers in Africa. They were supposed to stand up beside India when India was in crisis.⁹ During the 1964 Africa Safari, Indira Gandhi also called these overseas Indian settlers 'Ambassadors of India'.

By the end of the 1960s India had a tough politico-diplomatic task to overcome the growing isolation in Africa. It was time for India to reconsider its relations with Africa. Its policy-makers in New Delhi adopted a less ambitious national policy, focusing instead on building their country's defence sector and securing its *immediate neighbourhood*.

South-south engagement

In the aftermath of the Chinese attack in 1962, India stopped treating African countries as a bloc and became more selective in its friendship. It started integrating the priorities of African countries and was able to convince African countries, to a certain extent, of the importance and relevance of its own stand and views on different issues. International situations and India's achievements at home played an important role in India's move to befriend African countries. India won the 1971 war with Pakistan, thereby liberating Bangladesh. The Sino-Soviet conflict and the Cold War enabled India to sign the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR. Indian diplomacy scored points by obtaining the support of one superpower against the other without being an ally of either. The success of India's 'Green Revolution' and achievement of self-sufficiency in food grains production demonstrated Indian economic and managerial capability. India's explosion of its nuclear device in 1974 restored its military confidence and raised its status as a military power. The launching of the *Aryabhata* rocket launcher in 1975 again placed India among the leading scientific and technological countries of the world. With newly acquired self-confidence, Indian policy became more proactive towards the African countries. For India it was the planned, systematic and persistent attempt of its policy pursuits that took the problems in its stride and exploited the favourable circumstances that came its way. India again became a power to which Africa turned for help and assistance, and as a model for development.

Under these changed domestic and international circumstances, Indo-African 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. The ever-growing industry and need to keep its balance of trade kept Indian economic diplomacy at the forefront of its foreign policy. Therefore, economic diplomacy, a secondary objective to the political imperatives of the 1960s, became the primary objective by the 1970s. The previous policy to make friends in Africa and to gain their diplomatic support on various issues shifted to the creation and cultivation of gainful economic links. This was in tandem with the increasing realization among developing countries of the need for economic co-operation under a south-south umbrella. India utilized its diplomatic strength in international forums like the UN, NAM and 'Group of 77', to develop south-south co-operation. Both the African states and India underlined the need for economic co-operation among themselves. It was at the Lusaka Summit (1970) that the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, articulated and gave the call for south-south co-operation. She pledged Indian technology and human resources for this. Politically, by the early 1970s most of the African colonies had become independent except Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa. For the newly independent countries, the priority was to consolidate their freedom by accelerating economic development.

On the issue of the struggle for liberation, India worked closely with the African countries in their fight against apartheid in South Africa and Namibia. India accorded diplomatic status to the African National Congress (ANC) in 1967 and the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO) in 1985. Apart from diplomatic support, it added material assistance, but the material assistance remained meagre due to India's own limitation on giving more in those terms. However, the diplomatic initiatives were so vigorously pursued by India that they bridged the gap of less material assistance and projected India as a champion and uncompromising fighter against colonialism and racism. India also made contributions to the UN Fund for Namibia, UN Institute for Namibia, and UN Educational and Training Programme for South Africa. At the Harare NAM Summit in 1986 the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, was chiefly responsible for the establishment of the Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and

Apartheid (AFRICA) fund. The purpose of the AFRICA fund was to enable the NAM to help all the victims of apartheid in South Africa, Namibia and in the frontline states. According to one estimate, India provided Rs36m. by 1977–78, while India's initial contribution to the AFRICA fund was Rs500m., which included private and individual contributions of Rs25m.¹⁰

In the 1970s, on the issue of the Indian diaspora, Indira Gandhi advanced a policy of engagement which was resented by Africans. When Kenya and Uganda initiated the Africanization process, the Indian Government's sympathy and concern for people of Indian origin was resented.¹¹ India's intervention at that time was perceived as interference in internal affairs. This had policy implications. There was a realization of the fact that Africa did not reciprocate India's support for the African liberation movements by giving fair treatment to the people of Indian origin.¹² India had to revert to the policy of disengagement with the PIOs. Subsequent governments until the late 1990s continued this policy. Further, India's hesitation in welcoming the expelled Indians back into its fold, in turn made the PIOs realize the limits of Indian policy towards them and the fact that they were left to their own fates in their adopted countries.

In short, while Indian foreign policy during much of the Cold War did not have significant direct impact on unfolding developments in Africa, its political commitment to the NAM and its emphasis on south-south co-operation led to increased Indian exports to Africa. The balance of trade, which was in favour of Africa, shifted in favour of India until petroleum imports from Africa increased. This was resented by African countries as a new pecking order rather than south-south co-operation. However, consistent diplomatic support for African nationalist movements left India well positioned to take up its engagements across the continent and forge new ties, as it has done in recent years under globalization.

Current dynamics

Globalization: emerging areas of co-operation

In the post-Cold War era, with the end of apartheid in South Africa, one of the major rationales of solidarity no longer exists. The shared ideologies of NAM and anti-colonialism no longer remained the rallying points of interaction between India and Africa. The relationship was being shaped by the fundamental changes that took place in both India and Africa. On the one hand was India's rise as an economic power, its vibrant democracy, its integration into the world economy; on the other hand was a democratizing Africa, its rapid economic growth rates and its continental integration. Their ability to help one another is far greater today than it was in the past. There is a desire to work on their complementarities and build a partnership based on equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit. The focus has now shifted to economic emancipation and collective dreams of sustainable development, and interaction is now moving beyond government to governmental exchange to embrace the people at large.

The move is towards intensifying collaboration on bilateral, continental and global issues. Africa is co-operating with India at a continental, regional and bilateral level. The partnership at various levels is aimed at strengthening south-south co-operation, as there is a desire by both Africa and India to see each other prosper and gain a just place on the global stage. At the pan-African level India stepped up its relations with the African Union (AU), which was formalized by the IAFS in April 2008, and its Delhi Declaration.¹³ The Indian Government argued that this Delhi Declaration and the IAFS was 'a defining moment in the India-Africa relationship'.¹⁴ India views the AU as embodying the spirit of resurgent Africa and has been fully supportive of its programmes and objectives. India is now not just an observer, but a 'dialogue partner' with the AU. Given India's current relations with the AU, there are enormous possibilities for further

co-operation, both economic and political, in the context of a multi-polar and globalized world. The 'democracy deficit' in the UN is clear to both India and Africa. Both India and Africa feel that they deserve permanent representation on the UN Security Council, and would support each other. Both sides have been broadly working together for UN reform and are now ready to strive to make the UN more representative and democratic. They also stand together on other critical issues, such as multilateral trade negotiations, reforms of international financial institutions, climate change and the fight against terrorism.

At the regional level India is engaged in constructing relations of partnership with regional organizations. India made good progress in developing co-operation with regional organizations within Africa like the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and is expecting to make similar progress with others. India has lines of credit available with the East Africa Development Bank, the (PTA) Bank for the COMESA region, the West African Development Bank (BOAD) and, most recently, a line of credit of US \$250m. to the ECOWAS Development Bank in West Africa, to help finance sub-regional projects. At the bilateral level, India is intensifying collaboration with African countries in sectors like agriculture, food and energy security, trade and technology.

Both regions understand the strategic importance of the other. India assumes immense significance for Africa's developmental goals in terms of trade, investment, entrepreneurial skills, military power, educational and research training. Meanwhile, Africa's potential in terms of energy resources, minerals, raw materials and geostrategic location has strategic value for India. Such an understanding has led to emerging areas of co-operation, which include the economic field, energy sector, human resources development and capacity building, security and maritime co-operation.

Economic co-operation

Africa acknowledges India's economic growth and finds the Indian model relevant. India provides Africa with opportunities in different areas, having launched a number of initiatives for closer co-operation with Africa, which include the Focus Africa programme to increase trade with the continent and the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa India Movement (TEAM-9) initiative in 2003 to enhance co-operation with western and central African countries. India's bilateral (non-oil) trade with Africa has grown exponentially, from \$3,000m. in 2000/01, to \$29,300m. in 2008/09. During the 10-year period of 1998–2008, while imports have risen from \$2,900m. to \$20,500m., exports have increased from a mere \$394m. to \$5,400m. What is significant, is that the balance of trade has again shifted in favour of Africa, and Africa's share of India's overall trade has increased from 5.8% in 2002/03 to 8% in 2006/07. A region-wise analysis of India–Africa trade shows that India's trade with the western African region has risen (due to increased imports of petroleum products), followed by southern Africa, northern Africa and eastern Africa. India is, however, mindful of the need to provide greater market access to imports from Africa. In accordance with its commitment at the World Trade Organization (WTO), it has decided to extend a duty free preferential tariff scheme on 92% of import items for the 34 least developed countries in Africa.¹⁵

The Government of India is also working with the Indian private sector in forging project partnerships. The India–Africa project partnership conclaves held over the years reflect the growing investment and trade complementarities. It provides greater avenues for African countries to seek investment flows from the Indian private sector. The Indian Government is

impressing upon Indian industry, Indian entrepreneurs, to have non-exploitative engagements and build new co-operative partnerships with Africa. Indian industry is realizing the importance of Africa, especially in commercial terms. In the last few years private sector investment has acquired much greater visibility. It is giving the relationship a new dimension and advantage. Indian investors are respected because they are known for generating employment, transferring technology, contributing to intra-African trade, fulfilling domestic demand and enhancing foreign exchange earnings through exports. These investment flows are matched by a commitment by the Government of India made at the IAFS 2008 for up to \$5,400m. in new lines of credit over a five-year period. However, there are challenges as to whether the Indian multinationals operating in Africa behave differently from the Western multinationals, and if they can be equal partners in Africa's development process. As far as the Indian Government is concerned, to facilitate economic engagement it has been providing financial assistance to various trade promotion organizations, export promotion councils and apex chambers in the form of market development assistance under the Focus: Africa programme, and even increasing lines of credit for executing projects in African countries.

Human resources development and capacity building

India's technological capabilities and developmental experience are germane to Africa's socio-economic development. One of the strong focuses of the current Indian partnership with Africa is the empowerment of people through capacity building and human resources development, specifically highlighted under the India-Africa Framework of Cooperation agreed at the 2008 IAS. India recognizes Africa's need for human resources development in overcoming the gap for development in indigenous capacities. By adopting a people-centric development approach in Africa, India differentiates itself from other players in Africa: this is an approach that combines the use of lines of credit with deployment of Indian expertise to create assets in Africa. A major issue is how India is going to reciprocate by policy and acts that are qualitatively different from traditional buyers in Africa. India has proposed to support human resources development, market access and food security, which India can provide. Local skills development is part of many Indian projects.

Consequently, India has augmented its development package for Africa. India's support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative since its inception in 2001 is another step indicative of its efforts to assist Africa in achieving its development goals. India has committed \$200m. to NEPAD to increase economic interaction with Africa. The aim has been to forge closer economic co-operation in the fields of mining, agro-processed products, motor vehicles and components, and information and communication technology (ICT). As announced at the 2008 IAFS, India doubled its financial package for development of the continent to \$5,400m. over the next five years. It pledged another \$500m. in projects related to capacity building and human resources development. It increased scholarships and the number of training slots for African students under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. Africa is now the largest recipient of India's ITEC programmes.

The 1,600 training positions offered under the ITEC programme to Africa have become important avenues of capacity building, which in turn contribute to the fulfilment of developmental goals in so many countries. India seeks to establish an India-Africa Institute of Information Technology, India-Africa Institute of Foreign Trade, India-Africa Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, India-Africa Diamond Institute, 10 Vocational Training Centres and five Human Settlement Institutes in Africa. The Pan-Africa e-Network, costing over

\$100m., is a particular project that illustrates India's commitment to share its progress in the information technology sector and bridge the digital divide. The project aims to promote tele-education and tele-medicine in all 53 members of the AU. Senegal has been designated by the AU as the hub for the entire project.

One further high-tech aspect of India's economic co-operation with the African countries has been offering its growing space expertise, technology and facilities at its Thumba launch station. This was shown in the PSLV-C15 Indian rocket being used at Thumba, in July 2010, to launch an Algerian satellite, amidst comments by K.R. Sridhara Murthy (the Managing Director of Antrix Corporation Ltd, the commercial and export arm of the Indian Department of Space) that, 'we are hopeful of tapping the market in Africa as more firms are establishing telecom and television networks there. Our rates are competitive compared to other players in the business of commercial launches'.¹⁶ However, as one Indian commentator noted, 'particularly with regard to Africa, this launch needs to be viewed beyond commercial interests. Africa is a region of special geopolitical importance to India [...] With this launch it could be said that India has started using "space diplomacy" as a foreign tool in Africa'.¹⁷

Energy co-operation

Energy co-operation is now one of the prominent areas of economic partnership between India and Africa. It is one of the prime drivers of the current relationship. India's economy is projected to grow at a rate of somewhere between 8% and 10% annually over the next two decades.¹⁸ Currently, the country is the fifth largest consumer of energy in the world, accounting for some 3.7% of total global consumption. One-third comes from traditional sources of fuel, including wood, dung, crop residue, biogas and waste. However, with increased growth India is expected to overtake Japan and Russia to become the world's third largest consumer (after the USA and China), and these new needs can hardly be expected to be met by the traditional sources used by many households on the subcontinent. India needs to expand its energy supply to sustain its growth levels. In order to diversify its energy sources, it is investing in energy assets overseas. In this context Africa's energy resources are very significant for India. Almost one-quarter of India's crude oil imports are sourced from Africa. The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh Limited (OVL) has large overseas investment of over \$2,000m. in Sudan. It has also acquired stakes in Senegal and other African countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Egypt, Nigeria and Gabon. For its energy requirements India is willing to share with Africa its expertise in exploration, distribution, refining, storage and transportation. Indian investment in this sector directly assists the building of a trained and skilled local workforce capable of efficiently running the assets. Of course, running such assets presupposes state stability, which brings us to the question of Indian support for UN stabilization efforts in Africa through UN peace-keeping operations

UN peace-keeping operations in Africa

India has played an active role in UN peace-keeping operations in Africa since the first mission to the former Belgian Congo in 1960. Since the end of the Cold War, India has put its military at the service of global order, contributing troops to numerous UN peace-keeping operations, many in Africa, and recognized in the appointment in May 2010 of Atul Khare as UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. India has contributed nearly 100,000 troops, who are experienced in low-intensity conflict: in Mozambique (ONUMOZ, 1992), Somalia (UNOSOM, 1993–95, UNOSOMII), Rwanda (UNAMIR, 1994), Angola (1995,

UNAVERM, MONUA) and Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL, 1999–2000). More recently, Indian troops were deployed along the Ethiopia–Eritrea border (UNMEE), in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and in Sudan (2007). India also responded to the call by the UN Secretary-General for increased representation of female personnel in field Missions by providing the first full ‘Female Formed Police Unit’ for peace-keeping work in Liberia in 2007. This Unit has been successful in reaching out to women and children, besides performing its normal peace-keeping functions. The professionalism and involvement of the Indian troops in local community-related projects has been a feature of such operations.

Military security co-operation

Alongside such multilateral UN frameworks, India has been involved in its own bilateral military-security links with African countries. India provides military training to officers of various African defence forces, another important component of India’s Africa policy. Africa lacks military training institutions, having thus to send its military officers abroad for training. Since the 1960s India has provided military training to a number of African countries, primarily from Anglophone Africa. The training covers fields such as security and strategic studies, defence management, artillery, electronics, mechanical, marine and aeronautical engineering, anti-marine warfare, logistics management and qualitative assurance services. During the last decade and a half, over 1,000 officers from 13 African countries have been provided training by the Indian Army.

Maritime co-operation is a noticeable component of India’s current engagement with Africa. The growing concern in the Indian Ocean owing to piracy, smuggling, drugs- and arms-trafficking, and terrorism all threaten the security of the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs). Frequent acts of piracy in the waters off Somalia during 2009–10 made those maritime stretches the most dangerous for merchant shipping in the world, including for Indian ships. At the regional level the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) East Africa/Horn of Africa sub-region has significant importance for India for maritime security in the Indian Ocean. India’s involvement and contribution, particularly in peace consolidation and post-conflict reconstruction in both Somalia and southern Sudan, have been a sign of India’s interest in regional security and stability. India’s deployment, at the end of 2008, of naval ships into the waters off Somalia to combat Somalia-based pirates was another sign of this. This was why Manmohan Singh told the Combined Services Conference in 2004 that ‘our strategic footprint covers the region bounded by the Horn of Africa [...] Awareness of this reality should inform and animate our strategic thinking’.¹⁹

The Indian Navy regularly engages in naval exercises and naval diplomacy along the African littoral, and at the national level over the past few years India has deepened security and diplomatic co-operation with various AU members like South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles. Naval diplomacy and showing the flag has become an established feature of India’s presence along the African littoral during the past decade, with a rising number of units deployed and with greater frequency. Naval involvement in the Marine Electronic Highway (MEH) being set up along the East African littoral from South Africa up to the Seychelles is another way to foster links with those AU members of MEH.²⁰

Links with South Africa have partly been at the commercial maritime end of things. Amidst rising trade (around \$7,500m. in 2008/09), the two countries entered into an agreement in March 2006 to improve co-operation in merchant shipping and related activities, with the agreement providing for the facilitation of Indian companies to establish joint ventures in the field of sea-based transportation and ship-building/repairs. Naval co-operation between India

and South Africa was already apparent by 2000.²¹ The Indian Air Force in 2004 conducted combined exercises with its South African counterpart. Indian Mirage 2000 fighters were deployed from north-central India and flew, aided by newly acquired Il-78 aerial tankers, to South Africa via Mauritius. India and South Africa conducted combined naval drills off the South African coast in June 2005. The formation of IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) saw further trilateral naval IBSAMAR exercises in South African waters in 2008 and 2010.

Given the fact that the African east coast is in India's strategic maritime *neighbourhood*, India aims for greater maritime presence (naval deployments and naval diplomacy), and stronger ties with the African countries to secure those SLOCs.²² In such a vein, four Indian warships—INS Delhi, INS Talwar, INS Godavari and INS Aditya—paid port calls to Mombasa (Kenya), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), other east African ports, Madagascar and Mauritius during a two-month deployment from July to September 2008. Indian naval vessels were deployed off Maputo to provide protection for the AU summit of 2003 and the World Economic Forum in 2004. Such extension was formalized in March 2006 with the India–Mozambique Memorandum of Understanding, under which India agreed to mount ongoing maritime patrols off the Mozambique coast. India set up in Madagascar its first listening post on foreign soil in July 2007.²³ In strategic terms, it could serve as a small base between India and the important shipping lanes of Mozambique.

India currently provides maritime security for AU island states like Mauritius and the Seychelles. Their logic has been mutual interests, as India's naval chief Arun Prakash explained: 'Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros are friendly and well disposed to us. However, their security remains fragile, and we cannot afford to have any hostile or inimical power [China?] threatening it'.²⁴ Indian ships also became a regular feature in Mauritius, with agreement for India to monitor its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in 2003 and 2005. Currently, India is seeking a long-term lease of the Agalega islands in Mauritius.²⁵ Similar arrangements were made with the Seychelles, with their Memorandum of Understanding drawn up in 2003 for India to patrol her territorial waters. This was strengthened in 2010 to include the Seychelles' wider EEZ, increasingly under threat from Somalia-based pirates.²⁶

Thus it was that the four-ship, two-month deployment in August–September 2010 of INS Mysore, INS Tabar, INS Ganga and INS Aditya involved them carrying out anti-piracy duties, patrolling the EEZs of the Seychelles and Mauritius, and visiting Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique, before participating in the IBSAMAR trilateral exercises in South African waters.

Conclusions

India and the African countries are devising new parameters for an enhanced and enlarged relationship appropriate to their new role in a changing world. This new dimension in the India–Africa relationship has been a response to the challenge of globalization, and what has emerged is immense opportunities for mutually beneficial co-operation.

The model of co-operation into which India and the African countries are entering has emerged from the success of the IAFS held in New Delhi in April 2008. The co-operation mechanism is clearly one seeking mutual benefit through a consultative process. India does not wish to demand certain rights or projects in Africa; however, it wants to contribute to the achievement of Africa's development objectives as devised by African partners. Besides the consultative process and the spirit of friendship, sharing knowledge and experience is another aspect that makes many African countries relate to India. The sharing of experience on political institutions and human resources development is an important aspect of India's non-intrusive

support to the development of democratic institutions in many African countries. Such factors may indeed give India the 'advantage over China' in their simultaneous, and fairly competitive, presence in Africa.²⁷

The introduction of multilateralism into Indian-African relations through a multi-tiered co-operative partnership framework has brought transparency in decision-making and reflects India's respect for its African partners. Out of the substantial funds committed for capacity building in Africa at the 2008 IAFS, one-half will be channelled through AU-led decisions and a similar amount is committed to the bilateral and regional tiers. The action through the AU was concretized through the announcement of a Joint Action Plan in March 2010, in which India shared the decision-making on the allocation of resources, the creation of training programmes and the establishment of 19 institutions in Africa with the AU Commission and member states. This is an important feature of India's new model of engagement with Africa.

Indian-African relations over the years have witnessed various changes, moving from a period of high political, emotional and moral solidarity, to a more material, concrete and developmental approach. Indo-African diplomatic relations by the mid-1960s had reached a very low ebb. Indian policy was unrealistic in perceiving both the role Africa was going to play due to its numerical strength and sense of solidarity, and the importance and priority that Africans attached to issues like decolonization and racial equality, though India provided increasing support to African liberation movements both for decolonization and an end to racism. During the early period, India's support was not strong in material terms. Although during the 1970s and 1980s material assistance was added to Indian diplomatic efforts, they remained meagre due to India's own limitation for giving more in those terms. However, diplomatic alertness and initiative were so vigorously pursued that they bridged the gap of material assistance and projected India as a champion and uncompromising fighter against colonialism and racism. However, although Indian diplomacy did succeed in filling the gaps in Indian desires and its effective role in African liberation struggles, how far did it actually succeed in providing a coherence to India's economic relations within the emerging south-south concept?

India had added an economic dimension to its diplomacy and policy toward Africa by the mid-1960s. Selective and aggressive initiatives for friendship through economic diplomacy did help India, and through its ITEC and other programmes, India started to counter the growing Chinese economic diplomacy in the Third World, a competition which has re-emerged in recent years in Africa. Under the umbrella of the NAM, this economic focus became the main policy driver for India, and other diplomatic endeavours became supportive and adjunct to it in Africa. However, the economic relations that emerged in the context of Indian initiatives in the umbrella of south-south links were not very equitable, at least in trade. Indo-African growing trends in economic areas demand that in the light of India's past experiences, India should be sensitive to African concerns and expectations.

The current interactions call for partnership and south-south solidarity, and focus on economic empowerment and sustainable development in Africa. They show signs of both expanding and deepening, but if the growing trends under the Indian private sector in Indo-African economic relations do not distinguish themselves qualitatively from north-south relations, then it will create problems for Indian moves in Africa. The economic relations of India with Africa under globalization are gainful for India, but they have to be qualitatively different from north-south relations as far as African perceptions are concerned. The question remains: can India translate its historical and cultural goodwill along with its credentials as a fast developing ex-colonial country into a competitive edge to push its new economic agenda formulated under the IAFS 2008?

Notes

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- 2 E. Mawdsley and G. McCann, 'The Elephant in the Corner? Reviewing India-Africa Relations in the New Millennium', *Geography Compass*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2010.
- 3 A. Gupta, 'India and Africa South of the Sahara', in B. Prasad (ed.), *India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Vikas, 1979, p.269.
- 4 Tanzania's foreign minister, Oscar Kambona, said in the early 1960s that he and others thought that India's leadership of Asia was decadent and that China was an emergent force. Quoted in D. Kimche, *The Afro-Asian Movement: Ideology and Foreign Policy of the Third World*, Jerusalem: Israel University Press, 1973, p.246.
- 5 During the Belgrade NAM summit India did not want to fix any date for ending colonialism in Africa because it felt it would be unrealistic, while Sukarno wanted it to be two years, Nkrumah insisted on 31 December 1962, and Mali wanted it to be 'immediate'. Later, India suggested it be 'speedy' and improved this to 'immediate', which was finally accepted. See G. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-alignment*, London: Faber, 1966, p.299.
- 6 M. Kumar, 'Reactions and Attitudes of African Countries to the Chinese Aggression on India', in V. Grover (ed.), *International Relations and Foreign Policy of India*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1992.
- 7 Krishna Menon said, 'We became camp followers there [...] Our personality did not make any impact on the conference or on the delegates'. See M. Brecher, *India and World Politics – Krishna Menon Views of the World*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.226.
- 8 See H. Chhabra, *India and Africa. Saga of Friendship*, New Delhi: Government of India, 1986, p.15.
- 9 A. Gupta, 'India and Asians in East Africa', in M. Twaddle (ed.), *Expulsion of Minorities: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, London: Athlone Press, 1975, p.130.
- 10 MEA, *Foreign Affairs Record*, New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, April 1973, pp.161–162.
- 11 See A. Dubey, 'Indo-Africa State Relations', *Africa Quarterly*, Vol. 37, Nos. 1–2, 1997, pp.51–55.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 India-Africa, *Dellhi Declaration* (India-Africa Forum Summit 2008), 9 April 2008, indembkwt.org.
- 14 P. Mukherjee, 'Address by External Affairs Minister at the India-Africa Business Luncheon', 9 April 2008, meaindia.nic.in.
- 15 R.I. Singh, 'India, Africa Ready to Embrace Global Destiny', 15 January 2006, meaindia.nic.in; inc. 'modern India seeks to collaborate with a resurgent Africa to create a new world order. Ideology, redolent of an earlier era of a shared struggle against colonialism and imperialism, has been tempered with pragmatism and a sober realization of new challenges facing both India and Africa as they get ready to take their place under the global sun'.
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- 18 See T. Poddar and E. Yi, 'India's Rising Growth Potential', in *BRICS and Beyond* (Goldman Sachs Global Economics Paper, No. 152), Washington: Goldman Sachs, 2007, pp.9–13. This followed on from D. Wilson and R. Purushothaman, *Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050* (Goldman Sachs Global Economics Paper, No. 99), Washington: Goldman Sachs, 2003.
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- 24 A. Prakash, 'Emerging India: Security and Foreign Policy Perspectives', 1 September 2005, indiannavy.nic.in. For India-China rivalry in the Seychelles and Mauritius, see C. Raja Mohan, 'Circling Mauritius', *Indian Express*, 11 February 2009; 'Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Western Indian Ocean', *ISAS Insights* (Singapore), No. 52, 24 February 2009.
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- 26 'India and Seychelles to Increase Cooperation for Maritime Security in IOR', *Frontier India*, 19 July 2010.
- 27 C. Xavier, 'India's Strategic Advantages Over China in Africa', *IDSA Comments*, 30 June 2010.