

Has India neglected Africa? Is there a gap between commitment and delivery?

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India and Africa - the two big geographic entities: one a country and other a continent- separated by Arabian sea and Indian ocean- have commonalities in development challenges with many issues in common to fight against and fight for. Both boast of an advanced ancient civilization, rich flora, fauna and abundant natural resources and both suffered the worst of European colonisation and exploitation. Getting freedom from their colonial masters in about the same time, India managed to surge ahead under its flourishing democracy, but most of the 54 countries in Africa got bogged down in the quick-mire of dictatorship, corruption, poverty and diseases.

Historically speaking, people of ancient civilizations of Indus valley in India and Egypt in Africa had trade links thousands of years back! Discovery of sea route around Africa by Europeans led to the colonisation of India and Asia by European powers. Many Indians worked as farm laborers in British owned farms in Africa in 18th/19th centuries. Indian soldiers fought wars, bled and perished for the British in Africa. Gandhiji, who successfully led the non-violent struggle for India's freedom, honed his *satyagrah* skills as a Barrister in South Africa.

After gaining independence in 1947, India played a key role in the Afro-Asian summit convened in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 and was in forefront in raising voice in all world fora against imperialism. Many African countries joined the Non-Aligned Movement initiated by Jawaharlal Nehru, PM of India; Tito, President of Yugoslavia; and Nasser, President of Egypt in 1961. The 1st resolution against Apartheid in UN was sponsored by India. But, after this flurry of diplomatic initiatives in the ideological realms in its initial-post-independence years, India's interest in Africa tapered down. Besieged with its own poverty, starvation, internal resources crunch and unhealthy, uneducated large population left behind uncharitably by the British, India rightly started focussing on its own development. After successfully battling these ills and emerging as the fourth largest economy and that too the fastest growing one in the world lately, India has started reaching out to Africa since the last decade, more so with a renewed focus in the last 4 years.

Traditionally, the foundations of India's relations with Africa were built upon trade, migration of people and movements against colonialism and racial discrimination. India supported development initiatives in African countries under the banner of South-South Cooperation. The sense of solidarity, mutual trust and confidence born in the difficult days of the Cold War and presence of large Indian diaspora continues to drive India-Africa cooperation even now. New ties are forged with greater focus on capacity building, development co-operation and economic & technological initiatives. India can contribute its capital, skills and technological capabilities to sustain Africa's growth. Africa in-turn can support India's growth through mutually beneficial resource partnerships and easier access to each other's expanding markets. Africa is already one of India's fastest growing markets and investment destinations.

India now engages with African countries at three levels: bilateral, regional and multilateral, which got into focus in the last decade after a big hiatus.

Multilateral engagement was launched with the 1st India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) in 2008 in New Delhi. The 2nd summit was held in May 2011 in Addis Ababa. These Summits “laid the foundation of a new architecture for a structured interaction and cooperation between India and our African partners in the 21st century”.

The 1st Summit adopted a historic “Africa-India Framework for Cooperation, which sought to foster mutually beneficial cooperation in a very comprehensive format encompassing Economic Political Cooperation, Cooperation in Sciences, Technology R&D; ICT; and in Social Development & Capacity Building. Under Political Cooperation, the framework identified a number of areas where India would support Africa in the latter’s objectives of sustainable development, prosperity and peace. Under “Cooperation in Social Development & Capacity Building” rubric, Education, Health, Water & Sanitation, Culture & Sports and Poverty Eradication are covered apart from Tourism, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment and Media & Communication.

To ensure implementation of recommendations of summits, several conferences and workshops like India-Africa Business Partnership Summit, India-Africa Workshop on Traditional Medicines, India-Africa Conference on Indian Lines of Credit, India-Africa Strategic Dialogue, India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference, Crafts Skill Development Workshop for Women, Special Session on Global Commons & Challenges, Science & Technology Ministers’ Conference, Training programme for Secretary Generals of African Chamber of Commerce and Industry etc were organised between September 2011 and March 2012.

Relationship with Africa which picked up in the last one decade, has been made a top priority for India’s foreign and economic policy in the last 4 years and is reflected in the phenomenal increase in number of high-level visits either side. From little or no high-level interaction with several of these countries for many years, there has been an explosion of visits now. Following an inclusive and continental approach, deviating from the Banjul Formula followed in the earlier IAFS summits, India hosted all 54 countries of the African continent at the 3rd IAFS at New Delhi in October, 2015. This landmark event saw pan-African participation, including that of 41 Heads of State/Government and all Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of Africa and Africa centric organizations like African Development Bank, UNAIDS and countries like UAE and Singapore interested to invest in Africa. Other than the 41 Heads of State/Government who visited India for IAFS-III, during the last 4 years India have hosted over 35 visits by African Heads of State/Government. 7 private visits as well as 2 visits by the African speakers also took place during this period.

In the last 4 years, 29 countries in Africa were visited by Indian Presidents, Vice Presidents and Prime Minister– 10 by Presidents, 10 by VPs and 9 PM and 2 by Lok-Sabha Speaker and EAM. All countries in Africa have been visited at least by an Indian Minister in the last 4 years. The 3 overseas trips of Indian President Ramnath

Kovind's have been to Africa only. In October 2017, Kovind travelled to Djibouti and Ethiopia. In March 2018, he visited Mauritius and Madagascar, and in April, he toured Equatorial Guinea (India's fourth largest oil and gas supplier), Swaziland, and Zambia. Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu visited Botswana, Malawi, and Equatorial Guinea in October 2018. The visits to Madagascar, Swaziland, Djibouti and Equatorial Guinea were the first ever substantive high-level engagements. The visit to Ethiopia took place after 45 years gap; to Kenya after 34 years; to Mozambique after 31 years, to Zambia after 29 years, to Zimbabwe after 22 years, South Africa, a bilateral visit after 10 years.

Government has decided to open 18 new Missions in the African Continent taking the total number of Missions to 47.

During the last 4 years, Government has intensified engagement with Africa at all levels by reviving mechanisms like JCMs, RECs, Foreign Office Consultations, JTCs, Joint Working Groups with many countries apart from engaging with them at multilateral forums like "Indian Ocean Rim Associations for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC), IAFS etc. In the 3rd IAFS in 2015, besides the Summit deliberations, 41 bilateral meetings with PM and 31 with EAM were also held.

India's main instruments for undertaking development initiatives in Africa are: Line Of Credit (LOCs), grants and capacity building programs.

An India-Africa Framework for Strategic Cooperation was agreed at IAFS-III. PM Modi announced LOC worth US\$ 10 billion, grants worth US\$ 600m and 50,000 scholarships for Africa over a period of 5 years from 2015. The grant included US\$100 mn worth India- Africa Development Fund for infrastructure creation and US\$10 mn fund for India- Africa Fund to build capacity by training African Health workers and for researches in Indian hospitals. India committed to continuation of support for expanding the Pan-Africa e-Network Project and institutions of skilling, training and learning across Africa. African countries, in-turn, agreed to support India to meet part of its energy requirements and in its diplomatic aspirations in world fora.

In May, 2017, the meeting of African Development Bank (AfDB) held in Indian for the first time, at Gandhinagar, also saw very high-level participation. Here Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launch of India's latest initiative in Africa, the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), in partnership with Japan an idea crystallised during Narendra Modi's visit to Japan in in November 2016. The AAGC highlights the growing importance of Africa in Indian foreign policy and also signals India's willingness to partner with like-minded countries, such as Japan, in this region.

The AAGC Vision document, prepared jointly by Indian and Japanese think-tanks, states that the main objective of the corridor is to enhance growth & connectivity between Asia & Africa primarily focusing on 4 areas: Development Cooperation Projects, Quality Infrastructure & Institutional Connectivity, Enhancing Skills, and People-to-People Partnership. Agriculture, health, technology, and disaster management have been identified as the main areas of development cooperation. AAGC will work on enhancing skills and

research and development capacities in Africa; to develop institutional, industrial and transport infrastructure in the Asia -Africa region and facilitate greater people-to-people exchanges amongst participating countries.

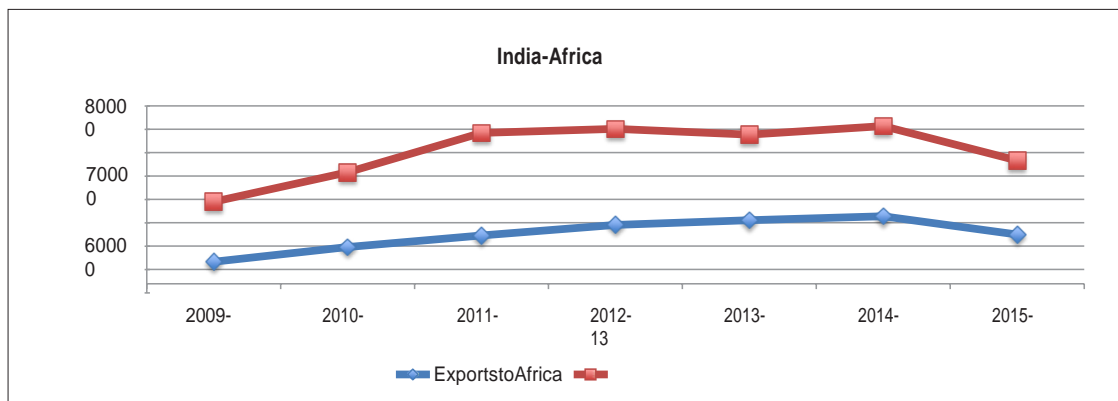
The results of the renewed thrust in the Indo-African relations are visible:

Cumulatively LOC of about USD11 billion has been announced for 141 projects in areas like agriculture, IT etc. for the African nations. Since May 2014, India has approved LOC projects worth USD3.156 billion. For Mauritius, Government of India in May 2016 agreed to provide a Special Economic Package (SEP) of USD353 million.

Trade has seen a 15-fold increase from USD4.5 billion in 2000-2001 to USD71.5 billion in 2014-15, which make 10.6% of India's world trade, and targeting to reach USD500 billion by 2020. Most Indian-owned MSMEs in Africa operate in the manufacturing, textiles, chemical, and food industry, taking advantage of the low labour costs in Africa.

India imported \$ 38.8 billion (8.7% of its total imports and up from USD 1 billion in 1995) from Africa. Major imports are oil, coal, uranium and cash crops. Within Africa, Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco account for 89 per cent of total African exports to India. Their exports are dominated by oil and gas (66 per cent), ores and gold (16 per cent). Outside these six African exporters, India runs a trade surplus with 40 out of the 54 African countries.

Graph highlighting bilateral trade relation between India and Africa (2009-10 to 2014-15)



Source: Indian Development Cooperation Research (IDCR) Program at the Centre for Policy Research

Indian exports to Africa include technology intensive electronic and communication material, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, non-basmati rice etc. Kenya, South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania are the largest importers of processed oil products from India.

India is the fifth largest investor in Africa after US, France, Malaysia and China. Indian Private sector companies have made significant investments in range of sectors like telecommunications, energy, power, health care, ICT, agribusiness and pharmaceuticals. Airtel runs its operations in 17 African countries. Significant bilateral Investments are expected in the fields of agriculture, labor, S&T, coal, mineral resources, oil and gas etc.

Indian investment in Africa is being ramped up, with over 140 Indian enterprises investing over \$4 billion in South-Africa alone. The Indian and South-African governments signed MoUs on IT, communication, tourism, innovation, S&T and cultural cooperation and between the industrial leaders of India and South-Africa in areas of mining and mining equipment, health care, water and waste management, defence technology and railway technology.

African investment in Indian is mainly through one country—Mauritius, a popular tax haven for Indians investing over USD 8.4 billion in 2015-16. 19% of the 21% share of India’s Investment in Africa out of the overall Overseas investment by India during 2008-2016 was in Marutius (USD 47 billion). Marutius also accounts for maximum FDI in India. Given that Mauritius is a tax haven, most of the Indian investments to that country do not contribute to African development and are merely round-tripped back to India.

In the last 4 years, the Electronic Tourist Visa facility was extended to 33 countries in Africa. In the culture front, “Festival of India” was held in 15 African countries, in 12, for the first time. Almost all African countries celebrated International Yoga Day and Indian festivals such as Diwali. A record 11 countries participated in 2018 in Surajkund Mela. (In 2003, 1st Afro-Asian games were held in Hyderabad, I happened to be one of its chief organizers)

Over half of the countries that have joined the Indo-French initiative, International Solar Alliance (ISA) are from Africa.

India’s Technical and Economic Cooperation programme (ITEC), based on a decision of the Indian Cabinet on 15/9/1964 as a bilateral programme of assistance of Government of India and its associated programme, Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme (SCAAP), provide a platform for cooperation programmes conceived in regional and inter-regional context. These include training (civilian and defence), project feasibility studies and consultancy services. LOCs are also offered under ITEC and African nations have been the major beneficiaries. India has involved 50 institutions for conducting more than 275 training courses on subjects which are of interest to working professionals in Africa.

One major India-Africa project under ITEC is the “Pan African e-Network” project, started at the initiative of the then President Abdul Kalam at a cost of \$125 million initially, has now touched over USD 1.1 billion spending by India. This project connects India to 53 African states through a satellite and fibre-optic cables etc enabling India and Africa to share expertise, knowledge and data electronically. It also provides



for telemedicine, tele-education for African students from various Indian Universities etc and is the biggest in Africa in ICT sector. It has helped Africa to overcome the digital divide and won the Hermes Prize for innovation.

In 2005, India became a full member (presently the sole member from Asia) of the AfricaCapacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and was granted observerstatus in COMESA, SADC and ECOWAS. The foundation funds development and capacity building projects and programmes submitted by member-countries and non-state actors at both the national and regional levels. A special outreach toFrancophone Africa was launched through the Team-9 initiative, with a view to promoting India's economic engagement with 8 Frenchspeaking countries. A sum of US\$ 1 million was extended to ACBFtowards its programmes for capacity building sustainable developmentand poverty alleviation. To support the Team-9 initiative a LOCoF USD500 million was announced, along with a \$ 200million credit lineto NEPAD.

India will be constructing convention centres across 21 African countries, beginning with Niger,Western Africa which is hosting the African Union Summit in 2019. India helped to build Presidential Palace and Parliament in Ghana. India is taking up the construction of Parliament building in Swaziland as agreed during Kovind's April2018 visit.

Sub-Saharan African countries have reached out to India to undertake rural electrification – from financing and technology transfer, to detailed project reports and execution.

Since 2014, IT Centers were established in South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Lesotho and Tanzania; a CGARD Technology Centre in Madagascar; Vocational Training Centers in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Burkina-Faso, The Gambia and Egypt, Technology Centrein Zimbabwe.Tanzania and India haverecently signed four investment-related MoUs. In Kenya, India has agreed to extend LOC worth USD44.95million to develop textile sector; to set-up a cancer hospital and donate pharmaceutical and medical supplies. India has agreed to double the import of pulses from Mozambique either through private channels or state agencies tostabilize the supply and prices of pulses in India.

Indianow has a strong presence in the health and pharmaceutical sectors in Africa, which receives nearly 20% of India's pharmaceutical production. India supplied state-of-the-art, Made-in-India medical equipment such as Bhabhatron to Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Madagascar; ambulances to Tanzania, Kenya & Mozambique; and signed agreements on health cooperation with Swaziland and Morocco. India also hosted the first ever India-Africa Health Sciences Meet in September 2016.

India's development programs are based on the principles of non-conditionality, no program prescriptions and respect towards the sovereignty of partner nations. India's engagement with African countries is consultative in nature and is mostly driven by their demands and implemented in a collaborative manner, which has led to an increased demand for Indian development co-operation vis-à-vis Chinese and western development support. Moreover, its cheaper. India's African development outreach is guided by the African Union's

long-term plan; the Africa Agenda 2063, and India's development objectives making India's engagement highly appreciated by Africans reflected in the words of Akinwumi Adesina, President, AfDB, "Indo-Africa cooperation is both a mutual privilege and priority" and that it is a "pleasure to partner with such an inveterate and committed investor in Africa."

Indo-African co-operations can expand significantly in the future in areas like – building infrastructure, financial inclusion, energy source development - alternative energy & renewables and Technical assistance & capacity-building for government officials to health workers. Indian companies have proven/demonstrated expertise in Africa in building and maintaining urban infrastructure at low costs. India's experience in rolling out Jan-Dhan-Program for financial inclusion of millions of un-banked people; providing electricity in rural villages; successful health initiatives in improving MMR, IMR, vaccinations etc would be useful for African countries beleaguered with similar problems. The success of UN's Sustainable Development Goals(SDG) will critically depend upon developments taking place in India & Africa. India led Solar Alliance initiative is ideal for African-countries. Crude oil processing is another area that can grow to benefit mutually. M-PESA, a very successful Kenyan mobile based platform for money transfer revolutionised digital transactions there, may be a solution for India's drive to increase digital monetary-transactions. The proposed African Continental Free Trade Area(AfCFTA) that can boost business and intra-African trade will be beneficial for Indian traders.

India's recent Africa Policy has also a strategy component emphasizing building cooperation in maritime security and Counter Terrorism. India has now institutionalized Defence Cooperation agreements with Egypt, Sudan and Nigeria and all Indian Ocean countries, *i.e.*, Madagascar, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, South-Africa, Mauritius and Seychelles. India has conducted hydrographic surveys for several countries; is assisting to set-up Coastal Surveillance Radar Systems and have contributed immensely to antipiracy efforts off Somalian coast. Recent years have seen establishment/revival of institutional mechanisms such as JDCs and JWG, frequent ship visits, visits by Service Chiefs, participation of some African littoral countries in MILAN and several new initiatives under bilateral and multilateral frameworks such as IORA, BRICS and IBSA. India recently signed a pact for development Assumption island in Seychelles for construction of an airstrip and a jetty for the Seychelles Coast Guard and Indian Navy. The outcomes of Kovind's visits included a USD100mn LOC for defence procurement by Mauritius and greater cooperation in marine resource management & marine connectivity in Madagascar.

Apart from the patent economic and strategic advantages, mutual co-operations also bring in more diplomatic fire-power in dealing with long pending global political issues like reforms of UNSC and Bretton Woods institutions etc.

India had neglected Africa for a period of 40 years from 1960s, busy fighting its own battle to get rid of its hunger, poverty and poor infrastructure. But after it has overcome these challenges and become one of the fastest growing economies in the last decade, it has re-engaged with Africa. Over the last decade, and particularly in the last 4 years, India has walked the talk and has made substantial contribution in supporting the developing agenda of African nations in many ways.

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