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## **Conceptualising the Roles of China and India in Africa: History, Contemporary Realities and Future Scenarios**

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# *Alternation*

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**Conceptualising the Roles of China and India  
in Africa:  
History, Contemporary Realities and  
Future Scenarios**

Guest Editors  
*Anand Singh*  
&  
*Nandini Chowdhury Sen*

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# Editorial

**Anand Singh**

**Nandini Chowdhury Sen**

Understanding the inroads that are being made by China and India into Africa requires investigation at a level that goes far beyond the recent and contemporary realities. It is about understanding the emergence of a new world order where both these countries have to be taken more seriously than the other Asian success stories of the 1980s and the 1990s. Japan in the 1980s was experiencing such rapid levels of economic boom that it was being touted as an emergent super-power that was going to join the ranks of the then USSR and USA. Much of its boost came from their automobile industries, especially Toyota, Nissan and Suzuki. But super-power status was widely defined as having demonstrable nuclear and military capability as well, from which Japan had backtracked after the Atom-Bomb destruction in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While this failed to materialise, by the 1990s it was countries such as South Korea and Taiwan that were creating ripples through the hegemonic position that Western Europe and the North Americas enjoyed. Bandied about as the ‘Tiger Economies of the East’, economic growth in South Korea and Taiwan unfolded new types of scenario building among the world’s topmost economic players. While Taiwan somewhat receded into the background after several years of incipient popularity, several South Korean companies catapulted into the international arena with a force that remains, for now, difficult to challenge. In the domestic appliances, wireless technology (mobile phones) and personal notebooks (laptops) industry, companies such as LG and Samsung have not only made their presence felt, but dominate in ways that have outdone numerous industries in the west with similar products. Canadian based Blackberry (mobile phones), and the Swedish Nokia for instance, have been outdone by Samsung to an extent that has virtually obliterated them from the international market. The

American I-Phone almost lost its market share too, save to say that some quick thinking by its engineers brought it back to a competitive international level. But the idea of South Korea possibly being touted as a future super-power did not arise, bearing in mind the constrictive situation with Japan in the 1980s.

With China and India however, the situation is different for at least three reasons. Firstly, unlike Japan, China and India have among the biggest militaries in the world, both have achieved nuclear capability, and both have acquired permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council. India is the most recent addition to this small group of nations. Secondly, as the two most populated countries in the world, with growing energy needs that cannot be met by their own reserves, both countries have to look outwards for sustainable supplies. Each of these countries' survival will be determined by the extent to which their respective governments meet their needs in uninterrupted ways. This can best be achieved by maintaining strong and capable military forces that will ensure sustainable supplies over time. The need to upgrade their military hardware and software will eventually bring them in line to the current most respected super-power in the world viz. the USA. Their sheer population sizes and economic needs will demand this of their governments. And thirdly, the economies of both countries have experienced growth rates over sustained periods that have been virtually unseen in the world before. Their failure to sustain these growth rates can be the catalyst for radical changes in governments, if not policy directions at the very least. Growing middle classes in China and India is tantamount to growing consciousness, a feature that will put both governments at severe risk of survival if social service delivery programmes are not carried out in uninterrupted ways. What they can eke out of the African continent will certainly impact upon the ways in which they meet the expectations of their commitments in office.

The first paper in this edition by Anand Singh, introduces China and India in Africa, contextualising each country's rise to prominence in the measures that they took to liberalise their policies and integrate into the global economy. Both countries view their historical ties to the African continent with a nostalgia that is applied to justify their re-ignition over the last three decades. The papers by Ashwin Desai and Nandini Chowdhury Sen provide perspectives of China in Africa that are consistent with issues that are of concern or interest with researchers throughout the world. While Desai

views China's role in the broader context of BRICS, which he sees as 'sub-imperialist' and somewhat functional to capitalism, Chowdhury Sen argues that China's engagement in Africa is mutually beneficial and challenging to the hegemony of the west. Such juxtaposing positions bode well for a healthy debate about China's role in Africa, although further discussion on the issue must be more evidence based. The next four papers by Goolam Vahed, Mohammed, Jamal Moosa, Adaora Osondu-Oti and Abhay Chawla bring India's engagements in Africa into the spotlight. Vahed's coverage of Jawaharlal Nehru's role in fighting colonialism and racism through international forums such as the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement demonstrates the appreciation and confidence that African countries have in the Indian leadership. His coverage is supported by Osondu-Oti's brief discussion of India's role in supporting Africa against colonialism and racism and appreciation that Nigeria showed in return when they supported India's sovereignty against China's invasion of their territory in the early 1960s. Chawla deals with India and China's engagement in Africa. He discusses the role of mobile phone companies and the investment of the two Asian giants in Nigeria. Interestingly, as the USA establishes greater reliance on their own sources of energy for their domestic requirements, India is beginning to take its place as the biggest purchaser of Nigeria's crude oil.

The last papers by Bobby Luthra-Sinha, Kalpana Hiralal, Sultan Khan, and Shanta Balgobind Singh bring different perspectives to the presence of India in Africa. Each of the papers is restricted to South Africa, but brings one common issue that is gaining increasing momentum in academia to the fore viz. social memory. Luthra-Sinha's paper captures patterns of illicit trade between India and South Africa since the 1970s, referring to it as the 'narcotics bilateral', in which Indians are the suppliers and South Africans of Indian descent are the middle and end users – women and male youth respectively.

Hiralal's paper shifts from this economic perspective to not just India's role in the political emancipation of Africa, but also the role that several important women played against twin enemies of colonialism and racism. While Sarojini Naidu and Pandita Ramabhai broke from patriarchal tradition in India where politics was viewed strictly as a 'man's game', their assertion over their rights to publicly challenge colonialism and racism indirectly entrenched an Indian influence into South Africa's polity. The last

two papers by Khan and Singh are about reflexive memories and histories of ancestral roots in India. Both papers bring to the fore how indentured labourers from India brought with them a work ethic, commitment and loyalty to colonial masters that have eventually translated into two significant lessons to South Africa's population at large. First, were the issues of endurance and perseverance that took them from nothing to well established upper-middle class statuses in the enabling environments in which they found themselves. And second, this very spirit of hard work now serves as instructive lessons to the working classes in South Africa, where opportunity and positive economic possibilities still prevail.

These papers will undoubtedly add value to the discourses about China and India in a changing and challenging global scenario.

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# **Contextualising China and India in Africa: History, Contemporary Relations and Future Possibilities**

**Anand Singh**

## **Abstract**

This paper covers three crucial issues that contextualize the presence of China and India in Africa. The first is the issue of historical relations of the two countries with the African continent. There is a tendency by both to justify their surge in trade, investments and loans to the African countries on the basis of economic ties that predate colonialism. There is a tendency to blame this historical era for the break in these multiple ties with Africa against the review of the irreversible global linear time line within which the world functions. Second is the flourishing diplomatic relations that is currently facilitating economic and political alliances with the purpose of closing the gap in the schematized relations that arose since the advent of colonialism in Africa and Asia. And third is the all-important question of sustainability of relations into the future among Africa, China and India as an emerging economic triad. Both China and India are active role players in the formation of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), and Brazil, India and South Africa are common denominators to IBSA, an earlier formation to BRICS. As two of the most populated countries with the fastest growing economies in the world both have to conduct their relations in Africa in ways that do not compromise their positions within IBSA and BRICS. The discussion in this paper illustrates how the liberalization of the Chinese economy since 1979 and the Indian economy since 1991 has not only integrated these countries into the global economy, but they have also rapidly produced sizeable surplus capitals that now provide each country with the means to profitably trade and invest in Africa. The sustainability of their

future relations however, would lie in how China and India divert from the exploitative past of European colonialism in Africa by ensuring that Africans en-masse are treated as equal partners in mutually beneficial relationships.

**Keywords:** China in Africa, India in Africa, Contemporary relations, future possibilities, Africa's energy sector, history

## **Introduction**

The increasing presence of China and India in Africa is an issue that is yet to be fully understood. As their roles in the continent begin to unfold there is a concomitant interest in understanding how different each country's engagement will be in comparison with their previous hegemonic forces such as European colonisers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the rise of American influence after World War Two. There are crucial questions that need to be answered as the entrenchment of China's and India's interests in Africa is consolidating. What are the conditions that turned each of these countries from being relatively poor agrarian societies to major world economic players in a relatively short space of time? What are the conditions that arose within each of these countries to instigate an outward drive towards Africa? And what is it that Africa has to offer China and India in this era of globalization?

There are at least two opposing views about the value of Africa's connection to the global economy. One is an optimistic and favourable one that points towards significant upward economic mobility across at least 10 of the 57 countries, while the other is a patronizing condescending one that still places the continent in the throes of sheer darkness. A 2012 KPMG report lists in order: Mauritius, South Africa, Rwanda, Botswana, Ghana, The Seychelles, Namibia, Zambia, Uganda and Kenya – as the 10 countries in which there is relative ease in which to do business. However, ease of doing business is not the same as the potential for investment in African countries. While some countries still in the list of the 10 African countries as viable investment options, the order is changed and half are excluded: South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana, Botswana, Mauritius and Kenya. Those excluded from the first category above are Rwanda, The Seychelles, Namibia, Zambia and Uganda. Five factors have

been identified by the team that identified these two categories viz. ‘the availability of electricity, how easy it is to register property, what investor protection is available, what taxes are involved, how effectively contracts are enforced, how insolvency is resolved, whether construction permits are difficult to obtain, as well as the other intricacies involved in starting a business and employing workers’ (KPMG 2014). Ten out of 57 countries in Africa constitutes less than 20 per cent of the number of countries that make up the continent. This is hardly an impressive figure. Energy issues are of such a dire need at present that the Africa Progress Report (APR: 2015) estimates that 2 out of every three Africans, totaling almost 600 million people, are without access to electricity. This deductive assumption emerges out of the estimation that this many people die from household pollution annually in Africa.

The current aim in Africa is to skip a generation of conventional type power supplies that are characterized by green-house gas emissions and reliance upon fossil fuels for energy requirements. Their attempt is to embark on an ambitious goal of linking development carbon free energy supplies that take them directly in line with first world standards. But in order to achieve this the APR has highlighted a range of issues that are fundamental to ensuring the spread of wealth before policies and their implementation reach those for whom they are intended. A dire situation currently prevails in some of the listed countries that are considered to be promising investment areas in Africa. For instance, the cost of energy in a country such as Nigeria is astronomical even when compared to first conditions in the northern hemisphere:

Energy-sector bottlenecks and power shortages cost the region 2-4 per cent of GDP annually, undermining sustainable economic growth, jobs and investment. They also reinforce poverty, especially for women and people in rural areas. It is indefensible that Africa’s poorest people are paying among the world’s highest prices for energy: a woman living in a village in northern Nigeria spends around 60 to 80 times per unit more for her energy than a resident of New York City or London. (Kofi Anan 2015: 12).

In these kinds of conditions there is unlikely to be much respect for a country that is generously endowed with fossil fuel deposits that annually earns for

them billions of American dollars in foreign exchange. Similar conditions prevail in other oil rich states such as Gabon, Angola and the DRC. The failure to redistribute wealth and create conducive conditions for broad based upliftment of their populations has generated widespread negative perceptions about Africa's ability to rise above the extensive poverty and inequities that currently characterizes the continent.

Reliable, affordable energy and safe socio-economic environments for investments are crucial for the creation of conducive investment spaces. But in some of the most renowned of the 10 countries in Africa conditions are widely perceived by the international world as inhibitive at the least and almost prohibitive at worst. The abiding threats by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the endemic crime in South Africa, coupled by the lack of capacity to generate electricity uninterrupted in a 24-hour cycle even in the most developed of industrial and commercial areas in South Africa have become major hurdles to greater potential for investments in these countries. While the think-tank led by former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Anan is serious about tackling issues of poor political leadership, redistribution of wealth, attending to rural development and linking Africa's development agenda to safe energy provision, no report about a single country in the continent that serves as a true role model for democracy is actually conspicuous by its absence. Although the recent nearly violence free general election in Nigeria in 2015 and the replacement of Goodluck Jonathan by Muhammdu Buhari serves as a positive sign in Africa's biggest economy and most populous country. It was the time first that a President in Nigeria stood for re-election and not only lost, but willingly conceded defeat. The replacement of leadership in African countries when their terms of office run out is a perennial problem, often stifling input of fresh and stimulating ideas on how best to infuse their economies with more positive approaches towards enhancement of economic performances. The APR recognizes these issues, but for as long as governments in all African countries do not correct their internal relationships within their own parties and with opposition parties, Kofi Anan's dream of integrating Africa into the global economy in more meaningful ways will remain a wish list.

Yet the continent is endowed with significant mineral deposits, fossilized energy reserves in countries such as Nigeria, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and growing middle class segments with increasing purchasing power. While the United States is reeling back towards

its own resources for fossilized fuels and depending less upon Africa, new clients through China and India are beginning to show an increasing interest in the continent. Their increasing interest in Africa is not a new phenomenon. Both in fact determine their contemporary interests on the basis of their historical connections, and both see sustainable relations emerging over time in ways that will gather even greater momentum over the next few years.

## **History**

China's and India's current engagements in Africa often not only find justification in their historical connections to the continent, but to the fact that it predated European contact with it. Numerous archeological findings and documentary evidence points towards contact with Africa that began prior to the European age of discovery, colonization and mass exodus of people to other parts of the world. There is a growing detest among Chinese, Indians and Africans that the former two countries are 'mere' newcomers to the continent, exhibited through increasing publications that demonstrates otherwise.

## ***China***

Most literature about China's early contact with Africa dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, although there is inconsistency in how far back we can reliably go back. The Moroccan scholar Ibn Battuta's travels to China have been commented on by Keat Gin Ooi (2004) as one of the early middle-easterner's to travel there. There is some evidence to suggest that the contact between China and Africa can be back-dated to between 202BC to 202 AD, although the discussion flounders here on possibilities rather than uncontestable and convincing evidence. It was mainly the Chinese coins and some archeological evidence that were found in parts of east African countries that provide an inkling about pre-Christian trade links between the two parts of the world. Li Anshan's (2012) seminal work on early Chinese contact with the African continent dates the earliest Chinese contact with Africa to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. His presentation is given a tag of remarkable resourcefulness that draws from various academic backgrounds that include economic history, social history, international relations and migration studies. Kurtis Abraham's (2015)

account of 'China's Long History in Africa' pointedly remarks about their historical ties: 'Despite the current frenetic media salvo unrelentingly declaring China's 'new inroads' into Africa, nothing could be further from the truth. China's presence in Africa dates back centuries and spanned a number of ancient dynasties'. Referring to Zheng He, a eunuch administrator during the Ming Dynasty in China (1368-1644) in the fifteenth century, Abraham locates Zheng He's travel to Africa in 1405, which is 93 years prior to Vasco da Gama's first contact with countries outside Europe. His contact with Africa spanned over a 28-year period, ending in 1433. One of Zheng He's documented highlights was in 1418 when he led a fleet of 62 ships carrying 37 000 soldiers across the Indian Ocean. Drawing from the work of the late Dutch sinologist Jan Julius Lodiwijk Duyvendak (China's Discovery of Africa), Abraham noted that the fleet was especially motivated by the Yongle Emperor's: 'real need of overseas products felt particularly at Court, and the desire to increase his own prestige, and to re-establish the overseas renown of the Chinese Empire' (Abraham 2015: 2).

Trade in those early days was not based on established reciprocal principles that tied Africa and China together in binding ways that ensured regularity of visits and ongoing examination of policy issues. At best it was ad hoc based long distance trade visits that can be put down to early informal methods of laying the foundations for what is emerging justifications and now as just established patterns of international relations.

## ***India***

India's contemporary presence in the African continent is rooted in its history of trade links and interest in Africa on global level. The current trend among Indian writers who are working on Indo-African relations is to raise the issue of India's historical linkages with the African continent. Over the last decade Indian scholars interests in this part of the world have developed a body of literature that describes Indo-African interactions in reasonable detail. Even when the issue is not about history per se, mention in made of the historical links. For instance, Nandan Nilekani's (2008) rapid rise in fame through the Information Technology (IT) industry from Bangalore, for which he is viewed as almost singularly consolidating it throughout India, mentions India's relationship with Africa in passing in his seminal publication about

India's IT industry and its contribution towards changing conditions in India over time. He begins from an historical perspective and in his mention of Africa he emphasised the fact Indo-African relations predates European colonialism in Africa. For Nilekani, India's multinational companies in Africa must be viewed against its centuries old trade relations and the new wave of interests that are being awakened through the changing global order in international trade relations. For him, India's thrust towards re-establishing its lost glory must begin from the admission that the entire is on a mission towards 'renwewal'. It is a renewal that must be located in the rapidly changing IT industry but which consolidates in its age-old value systems of family, community and nationhood.

A similar trend has been by successive interests among Indian scholars. In a book edited by Kenyan scholar Mwagiru and Indian scholar Biswas (2012) on India's growing trade relations with East African countries, all of the Indian contributors began their papers with an historical perspective that locates Indo-African relations in an historical context. Biswas (2012: 140) for instance locates India's commercial links with East African countries to several thousand years before Christ. She provides an elaborate description of their historical links through reference to archeological and documentary evidence. Citing the works of Robert Gregory (1971) and R.K. Mookherjee (1957), Biswas draws attention to Indian trade with Babylon that began as far back as 3000 B.C., supported by the findings of Indian archaeologists in the 'Ruins of Ur'. Evidence suggests that Indian maritime activities with Babylon and Egypt acquired greater heights by the era of the first millennium B.C., for which maritime records are convincingly clear.

Four other papers in the same book provided complimentary perspectives on Indian historical engagements with East African nations. The contributions by Ray (2012), Pathak (2012), Sahu (2012) and Sudhakaran (2012) provide insight into a complex and established partnership of a somewhat enduring relationship, entrenched in mutually beneficial ways over centuries of friendly contact. Each of the four papers attempts to articulate historical engagements to contemporary developments in relations between Indian and East African nations. Countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and South Sudan prevail as a strong economic bloc to India whose increasing relations are essentially a manifestation of post-colonial re-establishment. It was colonialism that severed these century old ties between India and East Africa, but which is now beginning to re-emerge in ways that are presently

viewed as altering the West European and North American grip in Africa *per se*, and in the global economy more broadly. As politicians, journalists researchers and academics increasingly talk about a catharsis in the world order, the engagements by China and India demonstrates a concomitant rise in their presence in Africa.

## **Contemporary Relations**

Understanding Africa's emerging relations with China and India requires some insight into how these two Asian countries 'rose from the ashes' to suddenly become major world economic players. Both countries went through extremities in the nineteenth and major part of the twentieth centuries, almost to the point of virtual collapse. Much of this had to do with colonial abstractions that were ruining their economies, their social fabric and political stability. Both China and India, after the Second World War, adopted policies that forbade the presence of foreign capital, as well as restrict the flow of their resources to international destinations. In China, Communist Party leader Mao Zedong's leadership style is believed to have caused the deaths of at least 30 million citizens. Although Zedong allegedly started the process of annihilation of forces opposed to his 'Cultural Revolution', the escalation of deaths is now being blamed more on his wife and the corrupt communist radicals than himself (Perry 1999). The Cultural Revolution was indirectly responsible for widespread starvation in China during the 1950s and 1960s. In India starvation in Bengal was a direct result of Churchill's policy of redirecting food from that part of India to British soldiers fighting in the Second World War. Colonial policies in other parts of India such as Bihar were equally responsible for the famine that wreaked havoc with the local populations of those regions. A determination to rebuild India from within led to serious undermining of the country's economic policies as well as the leadership of Indira Gandhi in the 1970s – when she felt compelled to institute a state of emergency and contain rising opposition to the Congress Party. Gandhi's particularistic style of socialism led to the burgeoning of regionally based opposition parties, thereby loosening the hold that her Congress Party once had over Indian politics.

But from the beginning of the 1990s both China and India began liberalization programmes that were intended to integrate their economies



into the global markets. While China remains a one party state with selective methods of encouraging ‘free market’ entrepreneurship, India continued to relax its already established but selective methods of free enterprise too. Economic liberalization generally refers to central governments adhering to neo-colonial measures of deregulation, apparently reducing the amount of government controls, permitting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), reduced taxation, and expanding privatization through reduced state intervention. There are strong and convincing arguments that deregulation is another form of ‘re-regulation’ in disguise, which in many instances could be demonstrated to be true. But this is a matter for another paper. The two sub-sections below provide a brief insight into their histories and how their changing policies propelled their appearances onto the world stage.

## ***China***

In 1978 the Chinese Central Committee reached a decision to rapidly increase market mechanisms into their economy and simultaneously reduce government planning and direct control. Their initial reform was a bold and innovative step towards merging the macro with micro – that was to open up trade with the outside world through the household responsibility system in agriculture. This was overseen by the establishment of the ‘Town-Village-Enterprises’ (TVE) which allowed farmers to sell their surplus crops in the open market. The emphasis here was to ensure that local needs and requirements were met first before surpluses could be declared for wider distribution, including international markets. This policy was supported by the Communist Party’s notion of a ‘Dual Track System’ that introduced the *Yuan* as its foreign trade currency and the *Renmenbi* as the Chinese domestic currency. Neither of these however were allowed as ‘free floating’ currencies, because the Chinese state preferred to impose control over it as a regulatory and stabilizing mechanism to their economy. This reform had to be overseen by the Four Cardinal Principles upholding the Chinese version of the state viz. socialism, the people’s democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Marxist-Leninist-Marxist Thought. However, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) enjoyed lower prices than goods produced through private enterprise. Barely a year later, in 1979, Deng Xiaoping introduced an essentially capitalistic law on Sino-Foreign Joint

Ventures, marking the official welcoming by the Chinese of foreign investment into their country. By 1980 this law paved the way for the People's Republic of China (PRC) becoming a member of the world's most profound capitalistic institution viz. The World Bank. While the system increasingly surged towards principles of free market economy, opposition to the generally strict control by the central state rose to the point of a mass demonstration against it in June 1989. The massacre of protesting students and pro-reform citizens became a blotch on China's restructuring process. While the country survived several internal and international upheavals it realized the need to play by international rules in the global economy. By 1994 China allowed their internal currency, the *Renminbi* to enter into a managed exchange-floating rate system. In the process of all of this, the Chinese state promoted the manufacture of cheap attractive goods for every conceivable use, but often of inferior quality. Their low prices serve as attractions in the global market, however short their life-spans, and have earned for the Chinese government massive amounts in foreign currencies. By the middle of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century China and the USA began talks on Sino-US Strategic Economic dialogue; and by 2008 the state made a commitment to invest US\$586 billion in infrastructure and social welfare and to deliver by the end of 2010. To the credit of the Chinese authorities most of this had been accomplished.

This massive economic muscle that it built over the last twenty five years helped to increase the population's standard of living, literacy and level of personal freedom. Mao Zedong's successor, Deng Xiaoping brought about a radical shift away from the ideological 'correctness' in China to greater emphasis upon economic performance. His oft quoted phrase of: 'to catch mice' – became the driving force behind China's rapid development. (Weiss 2003: 39). The surpluses that China has been able to produce have found new niche markets in other parts of the world, including the African continent. More than 2000 Chinese companies have invested in Africa over the last two decades. Most of these investments are in four major sectors viz. energy, mining, construction and manufacturing. In 2007, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China purchased 20 per cent of South Africa's Standard Bank for US\$5.5 billion, after which it rolled on to increasing financial sectors of African countries. There is however still a lack of clarity among scholars and journalists about the nature of Chinese investments in the African continents. The turgidity in the understanding between what

constitutes Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and loans given to African countries still requires some clarification. In mid-2012, Chen Deming, China's Minister of Commerce stated that between 2009 and 2012 China's FDI increased by 60 percent, exceeding US\$14.7 billion. Around the same time China's ambassador to South Africa, Tian Xuejun stated that 'China's investment in Africa of various kinds exceeds US\$40 billion, among which US\$14,7 billion is FDI. However, he stopped short of explaining what he meant by 'various kinds of investments'.

However, some of the issues might be, China's sudden rise in investments in Africa is phenomenal, although not without its problems. The recent global recession impacted upon China's economic performances too, slowing it down to a point of curbing more investments especially of political instability in regions is forcing China to slow down its investments in Africa. For instance, attacks on Chinese operations in Ethiopia's Ogaden region, in Sudan's southern Kordofan region and the imperative to evacuate 35 000 Chinese workers from Libya, has forced the Chinese state and their private companies to reassess the risks that they are willing to take in Africa (David Shinn 2012).

## ***India***

Since India's independence in 1947, there was an adoption of a Soviet based centralized planning model, with five-year plans that were intended to allow for measurements of progress over time. By its very nature centralized planning requires stringent control measures through an extensive bureaucracy and red tape, and a plethora of regulations that are often more inhibitive than progressive. In the situation of India, the reasons for this are understandable. After more than 700 years of Mughal exploitation and plundering of the country's resources, followed by a similar pattern of ruthlessness through British colonialism, the thinking by the first post-colonial government in India was to turn within and endorse the maximum number of protectionist policies that it possibly could. The purpose was to especially protect what was left in India from the new international forms of exploitation that were bound to emerge after colonialism, as well to alleviate the endemic poverty that was so rife across the country. India had the added burden of having to maintain, if not renew and build afresh a significant part of its infrastructure. Buildings, roads and railways required an enormous cost

to be kept sustainable, without having to attract new forms of technology that were virtually unaffordable in the years soon after independence, exacerbated by the cost of partition of the country. But the protectionism of the Indian government's approach to consolidating an all-Indian programme towards economic independence was more counter-productive than beneficial.

The virtual monopoly of political power by the Congress Party constrained new and fresh ideas about how to proceed with economic policies that could produce more rewarding outcomes. Since the first election in 1951-2 the Congress Party won five successive elections with clear majorities nationally. But during their reign numerous incidents cost the country dearly, impacting severely upon the country's resources. Among them were the Sino-Indian war in 1962, and two wars against Pakistan in 1965 and 1971. These incidents rapidly escalated their defense budgets as well as alienated India from funding and new technology by countries such as the USA. By the decade of the 1970s the intra-insular approach to upward economic mobility was clearly failing. India's annual economic growth rate of 3 to 3.5 per cent and the capital growth rate of 1.3 per cent per annum was insufficient to meet the demands of the nation. India still faced widespread food shortages because they failed to meet their agricultural production needs and industrialists were constricted by the burden of licensing requirements, infamously known as the 'License Raj'. India's then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, allegedly lost her constituency election in 1975 and was subsequently charged with electoral fraud. But the charges were lowered and she was convicted on the trivial accusations of building a dais to talk to her supporters from a position that undermined her opposition. Ongoing agitation against Gandhi led to her declaring a state of emergency in June 1975, a decision that brought more criticism than praise to her. It was also a period that witnessed the gradual erosion of confidence in the Congress Party and the equally gradual rise of the Hindu nationalists Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

By the early 1980s India's balance of payments for both export and import of goods, services and capital, suffered severely. The country was unable to pay for essential imports, it ran a high deficit, and borrowed from external funders to finance the deficit, against a rising and damaging period of inflation. Then Prime Minister Chandra Sekhar went to the extreme of pawning India's gold reserves airlifted to London as collateral for loans from the IMF. By 1990/1 this situation brought about a realization within the Congress Party that circumstances necessitated a change in the country's

macro-economic policies, especially since the socialist worlds of the whole of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union met a sudden and rapid demise. The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi coupled with the persistence of a fixed exchange rate of the Indian rupee, brought about a worsened rate of economic deterioration. With just three weeks left for the withdrawal of the last part of the IMF loan, Narasimha Rao took over the reins as Prime Minister of India. At the time Manmohan Singh was an apolitical employee of the World Bank. Singh's expertise of neo-liberal economics and the benefits of a liberal economy brought Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to make a special appeal to him to take on the mantle of Minister of Finance, deliberately avoiding the appointment of a party based politician. Preliminary reconceptualization of the country's economic policies began entrenching from 24<sup>th</sup> July 1991, popularly referred to since then as the 'Economic Liberalisation of 1991'.

Thus began a series of relaxations that radically shifted India's pattern of centralized control towards de-regulation in numerous areas that were crucial to its future survival. Their goal was essentially five-fold viz. to obliterate constrictive bureaucratic controls, abolish industrial licensing, permit cities and towns with less than one million people to set up industries without the need of government permits, to attract foreign capital and technology through the removal of inhibitive regulations, and to make poor performing parastatals more accountable. However, these measures were not without the paradoxical emergence of legitimate fears of neo-liberal economics and political gerrymandering by opposition parties. The state had to embark on an exhausting drive to assure farmers that they would be protected, and that contrary to worker retrenchments there would be guarantees for worker protection. These measures produced astounding results – the Indian economy frog-leaped by 7.5 per cent of the GDP, radically uplifting their performance from US\$130 million in 1992 to US\$5 billion in 1996. This accomplishment, although based on revolutionary ideas that were incrementally introduced, were classically visionary. They brought about an exponential growth in India's capital markets and the number of company listings in their stock exchange.

India's rise in economic performances over the last 25 years has created added needs for outward investments as well as for resources that are crucial for their sustainability. The search for new investment arenas stems from the three issues viz. the amassing of need surplus capital by profitable Indian companies, the need for energy resources as their economy improves

and their middle class requirements for sustainability, as well as sharing of development experiences emanating from the moral responsibility that India showed over the post-World War Two decades towards previously colonized countries. India's multinational corporations have excelled immensely over the last few years and have begun investing in Africa in relatively sizeable proportions. Africa's dire need for affordable generic medicines is often met by India's pharmaceutical companies cheaper but equally effective products that are produced by western companies. By 2011 India's trade in pharmaceuticals in Africa have reached 17.7 per cent, with Nigeria alone being the major purchaser to the value of US\$384 million by the end of September 2014. While China's share too is growing it was substantially lower at 4.1 per cent of the pharmaceutical market (Ford 2014). India's share in the global generic market over the last 30 years began from virtually nothing to 20 percent of the world's share of high quality generic drugs – after it acquired World Health Organisation (WHO) certification by meeting its requirements for generic drugs. The pharmaceutical industry in India now carries the tag of being about the most respected in the developing world (Greene 2007). In the agricultural sector, petro-chemicals, rural infrastructural development and in fertilizers, interests in Indian products and expertise in Africa is growing at a rapid rate. The agreements that some African countries are entering into with India are of stark mutual benefit to each other. For instance, in Kenya there is a keen interest to learn from India's experiences in capacity building, development, knowledge transprogrammes, use of hybrid seeds and joint learning programmes (ScienceDev.Net 2014). Together with Uganda, Kenya is keen to attract Indian farmers to work their land as entrepreneurs and improve their annual agricultural outputs.

These are but two examples of the Indian thrust into the African continent. Since 2003 India's trade with Africa became increasingly visible. Within a decade the extent of their trade with Africa increased 15 fold, attributed to what the Indian state referred to as the 'adoption of organic measures'. There emerged a commitment by the Indian government to tap deeper into the African potential to trade with them, causing them to set a new benchmark of US\$70 billion by the end of 2014. The potential for further trade, investments and 'soft-loans' for entrepreneurs to engage with Africa extends over several areas viz. Information technology, opening up of pharmaceutical production centres, hospitals, fertilizer plants, seed

developments, oil and gas extractions, infrastructural development and agricultural entrepreneurs. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

## **Conclusion**

The current trend of engagement by China and India in Africa is an indication that both countries see greater potential for deepening and more extensive relationships over time. There are several reasons why future possibilities with the continent will have to grow, more by virtue of need than by opportunistic design viz. the history of contact by China and India with Africa is more than mere nostalgia. It refers to a period of rich and rewarding exchanges and relationships that were believably based upon mutual respect. Rekindling historical relationships is an attempt to also break loose from the shackles of their colonial past, presently manifesting as neo-liberalism by colonial powers of the past. While this might be a justifiable position to take, there is also the possibility that such a position emerges out of sheer romanticism of history than realities that are brought about by economic deals between countries. Chinese companies tendencies to arrive with capital, technical expertise, and manual labour, and leave with untaxed profits back to China is already an issue that has become a source of concern to many recipient countries. The Economic Freedom Front (EFF) in South Africa is already on record chastising Chinese business practice in the country. Others in Ghana, Nigeria and Mauritius, to name a few, are beginning to raise questions about the same issues.

The second and perhaps more important issue stems from improved middle-class conditions in China and India. A greater demand for more energy resources such as fossilized fuels, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and coal are concomitant needs that arise out of improved living conditions. Neither country is self-sufficient in these resources, necessitating a consolidation of bilateral relationships that diverts from the exploitative tendencies of western countries.

Improved trade relations with Africa and improved living conditions within partner countries have the positive spin-off for improved trade relations. As middle class populations grow, so too does the purchasing power of such segments increase. Bilateral relations that are based on mutual respect and mutual gains can only help to consolidate the productivity and cordiality that emerges out of it.

At present both China and India are being welcomed into Africa because of shared experiences in their agrarian pasts as well as present efforts in agriculture. Their extent of poverty and changing conditions for their nascent middle-classes serve as promising examples to African countries that are on the mend and improving conditions for their populations. Food security in Africa is a nagging contemporary problem, but one which by their own admission can only be resolved through increased dialogues of shared experiences and capacity building exercises that will improve conditions over time. Uganda and Kenya have already made such a start with India and others are likely to follow. The improvements can only be consolidated if the roads and railways that the Chinese are building in Africa are going to facilitate agricultural developments. It is in these sentiments and actualities that future sustainable possibilities in Africa with China and India can grow.

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# Chinese Walls, BRICS and the Scramble for Africa

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## Abstract

This article explores the relationship between China and Africa in the context of BRICS (a bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). BRICS has been touted in some quarters as offering an alternative anti-imperialist road to the dominance of the North (the United States and the European Union) as well as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO). On the other hand, it has been argued that rather than challenging the present trajectory of global capitalism, BRICS acts in a sub-imperialist way, furthering global capitalism through its own regional alliances and often allying with economic super-powers. This article explores the debate, paying particular attention to the role of China in Africa.

**Keywords:** BRICS, sub-imperialism, anti-imperialism, China in Africa

## Introduction

What potential does BRICS have and what are its future prospects? Can it really emerge as a collective that will reject the current neoliberal order and seek to promote a much more welfare form of capitalist development that might unleash a dynamic much more conducive to the emergence of more progressive social and political forces whose

pressure from below can take a more radical anti-capitalist direction? Will it seriously challenge the existing world order where the imperialist behaviour of the US continues to be highly, sometimes decisively influential in shaping the course of events? Or are these governments headed by elites whose principal preoccupation is forging a more cooperative system of global management of a world capitalist order in which their voices will be more seriously listened to and in which their own rankings in the global pecking order of elites rise much more significantly? (Vanaik 2015: 261).

Vanaik elegantly summarises the possible potential and pitfalls of BRICS as a force to change the balance of forces in the global economy, a system marked by huge inequalities.

In order to get a grip on the uneven playing field of the global capitalist system and numerous attempts to chart alternate paths, a possible starting point is the anti-colonial movements that gathered force in the second part of the twentieth century. This saw the colonial powers of Europe lose their grip on an increasing number of colonies worldwide.

As liberation movements assumed power, they faced the challenge of taking charge of economies that were tied to the old colonial powers. Despite the rhetoric of nationalism, many African governments tied themselves into trade and military dependencies on the old overlords. However, alongside this, concerted attempts were made to build a ‘non-aligned’ movement, where African and other ‘Third World’ governments would chart a middle path between the duelling Western and Soviet blocs. This would encompass both an ideological and economic mix, adopting heterodox policies deemed to work best under local conditions. But these attempts soon fell prey to the Cold War, the demands of transnational capital and the powerful reach of a Western imperial system. The fall of the Berlin Wall saw the world facing the prospect of a unipolar global system under United States hegemony (Hobsbawm 1995).

Seen by many as foisting economic adjustments functional to Western financial interests upon national economies across the globe, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were

ubiquitous. It is in the context of NATO military supremacy, the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the ubiquity of neo-liberal economic precepts that Francis Fukuyama was to write of the 'end of history' and the triumph of liberal capitalist democracy (1993). For Fukuyama, with only one protagonist left standing, the dynamic of rising and falling empires, classes and economic systems that drove history had surely ended.

During this period, under-valued if not unnoticed China, underwent some incredible and far-reaching changes. These involved audacious experiments in tying a burgeoning economy onto an autocratic state, whose control over state entities was loosened in order to play the market. China jettisoned the communist rhetoric against profit and the middle class but without ceding much in the way of personal freedom or civil rights. In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution and under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, much emphasis was placed on an economic programme that would make China globally competitive even if this meant the spread of market relations. This was epitomised by Xiaoping's famous statement: 'It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice' (quoted in Brautigam 2009: 9).

This was Socialism, or Capitalism if you prefer, with Chinese characteristics. It was an experiment at the level of growth, inventive and vociferous trade and global reach that reaped tremendous rewards. The Chinese attempt at market and planning or, to use the more official language, 'socialist market economy', emerged at a time of great turmoil and realignment in global politics towards the latter part of the 1990s. A weakened and demoralised Russia felt threatened by NATO and the European Union, India was bursting at the seams with a middle class consumer market that strained against an economy beset by rules and regulations, and Brazil elected a once trade union leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as President, who sought to marry the goals of redistribution with global competitiveness. In the background soared the eagle of the United States' continuing power and dominance of the dollar.

Bolstered by a huge population and unfettered by onerous labour standards or enforcement of patent rights and environmental laws, China's growth rate hit double digits for a decade. It ran trade surpluses with many countries across the world, making things that did not last, but cheaply and to order. Cities sprang up everywhere as peasants flocked towards wages and away from rural drudgery and near starvation. Suddenly, in terms of Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) size, the US and indeed the entire West, had a contender. Soon, China began making subtle geo-political moves too, seeking to rally other non-Western powers into a bloc (Ferguson 2012).

How would struggling economies play out their politics? Would they simply play by the rules, hoping to slowly move up the pecking order from emerging to developed economies or would they seek to chart an alternate path? Ironically, it would take a person from the lofty heights of financial capital to hint at a possible realignment.

BRICS was first mooted in 2001, by Jim O'Neill, then chair of Goldman Sachs Asset Management. He authored a piece for Goldman Sachs' in-house journal, entitled 'The World Needs Better Economic BRICS'. O'Neill was referring to the so-called emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China, and advocated them as the economic 'future' of the world-economy. In time, the small 's' would become a big 'S' with the addition of South Africa. This was reward for South Africa's changing foreign policy during the Mandela years. In the beginning, the ANC government sought to develop a 'two China policy' (Barber 2004: 107). Their support for Taiwan, it was rumoured, was helped by a hefty donation to the ANC's election coffers. But in November 1996, Mandela announced the dropping of Taiwan and the singular embrace of China (Marais 1995).

Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa. These five countries occupy different continents geographically and in some instances, different continents economically. Despite this, they have come together in an uneasy alliance under the rubric of BRICS<sup>1</sup>. BRICS has been trumpeted in some quarters as potentially sowing the seeds of an anti-imperialist bloc, challenging the United States, Europe as well as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). It would do so by being the axis of an alternative site of joint economic might and, perhaps even hegemony. In other quarters, it has been touted as sub-imperialist or even inter-imperialist.

In the sections that follow, I attempt to tease out these various positions.

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<sup>1</sup> China and India in particular do not make for easy geo-political partners, due to disputes over Tibet and Pakistan, as well as the fact that China accuses India of closing the doors to Chinese trade and vice-versa.

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## **The (Rail)road of Friendship<sup>2</sup>**

Arguably one of the most spirited defences of BRICS as a potential radical force was articulated by South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Nkoana-Mashabane in 2013 in Durban:

What make Brics timely and historic are few factors which I wish to emphasize. Firstly, is the common history that brings the Brics countries together. This is a history that distinguishes the Brics countries from the traditional powers. It is a history of struggle against colonialism and underdevelopment, including the spirit of Bandung. Circumstances of history have put these countries on the same side.

Secondly, the Brics countries have common challenges as developing nations. Here at home, we speak of the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment....Other Brics member states are dealing with similar challenges that, however, differ in scale and degree.

Thirdly, we are driven by shared interests not only in the definition of our respective national interests as individual Brics countries. We also share a common vision of the world of the future.

Fourthly, each of the Brics countries works for a true partnership with Africa and this resonates well with us because Africa is the centre-piece of our foreign policy (Nkoana-Mashabane 2013: 7).

With this common vision in mind, increasing trade and political ties between BRICS countries began in earnest. Strategic trade and bi-lateral agreements between China and South Africa in particular catapulted Chinese investment in the country to the fore, a pattern which has been replicated across Africa. South African government trips to China increased, with President Zuma leading a high profile delegation to the country in December 2014, his second state visit. In terms of trade, China is South Africa's single largest trading partner, while South Africa is China's largest trading partner on the continent.

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<sup>2</sup>A television series entitled *The Road of Friendship* was shot to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Premier Zhou Enlai's visit to Africa (Cheun 2008: 71).

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China's total trade with South Africa rose from approximately 'R190-billion to R270-billion in 2013, and is rapidly approaching R300-billion' (*South Africa Info*, 16 April 2014).

South Africa's bilateral trade with China increased by 32% in 2013 to R270bn...China became South Africa's single-largest trading partner in 2009, but the trade balance has been in favour of China, with South Africa's trade deficit increasing from R36bn in 2012 to R38bn last year. 'The composition of our bilateral trade remains a concern. Over 90% of South Africa's top 10 exports to China are in raw materials while 100% of our top 10 imports from China are manufactured products' according to the Minister of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies (*Business Day*, 12 March 2014).

Across Africa, it is a similar story. Indeed, 'over the past decade African trade with China has risen from \$11 billion to \$166 billion' (*The Economist*, 2 March 2013). Chinese money is being used to rebuild railway lines across Africa, airports are springing up at a rate of knots and infrastructural development is heavily financed by Chinese money. In January 2015,

China inked a deal with the AU that commits to a staggering plan to connect all 54 member states through a network of modern highways, airports and high speed railways. The Chinese Special Envoy to the AU Zhang Wing said: 'This is a very grand and ambitious project but it is a feasible project. Secondly, the African economy is taking off and is in the early days of industrialization ... and there is a huge demand on Africa's part' (*Mail and Guardian*, 15 February 2015).

Other deals in the pipeline include a \$12 billion deal between Nigeria and China Railway's Construction Corporation to build 870 miles of railroad in the country, linking Lagos to Calabar in the east.

Increasing trade in many African countries is the spur for this expansion, as the chief executive of Rift Valley Railways, Darlan Fabio de David, points out: 'The demand [for freight transport] is huge. Railways are key to increasing regional trade' (*Financial Times*, 27 November 2013). Rift Valley Railways is a private equity-backed company which is rehabilitating

the Mombasa to Kampala line built originally by British rulers between 1896 and 1901.

In South Africa, plans are afoot to build a high speed monorail between Durban and King Shaka International Airport as well as a bullet train between Durban and Johannesburg that is estimated to make the journey a mere three hours. Talks between China Railway International Group and provincial government in December 2014 put in motion the rail links and will come at a cost of 530 billion dollars (*IOL*, 10 December 2014).

In Ethiopia, a railroad between Addis Ababa and Djibouti is being built to link the two cities at a distance of 756km. Again, the project has majority financial backing from the Export-Import Bank of China. This frenetic development in transport infrastructure on the part of Chinese companies is matched by an equally hefty investment in presidential palaces and government buildings across Africa. Presidential palaces have been built by the Chinese in Sudan, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, Malawi, and Sierra Leone – the list trundles on like the proverbial railroad.

## Cat and Mouse?

There has been an insistent argument from the Left that BRICS, rather than acting as a magnet for anti-imperialist forces, is actually sub-imperialist. Luce (2015: 29) presents a sophisticated analysis of the idea of sub-imperialism:

... sub-imperialism has to be understood as a hierarchical level of the world system and at the same time as a stage of dependent capitalism (its highest stage) out of which some socio-economic formations are transformed into new links in the imperialist chain without ever leaving the condition of economic dependency. Besides transferring value to imperialist centres, they also move into appropriating the surplus value of weaker nations for themselves. The socio-economic formations that ascend to the sub-imperialist condition succeed in displacing the very conditions of dependent capitalism in a way that ensures expanded reproduction and mitigates the effects of dependency through forms that are specific to the pattern of capital reproduction and a policy of antagonistic co-operation with dominant imperialism in different situations; they claim relative autonomy for



the sub-imperialist State without, however, questioning the framework of dependency.

Accumulation of resources, raw materials and the ties that bind political and governmental elites to new waves of external investment ultimately lead Africa down a similar trajectory to that of its colonial past. It seems that the continent is the new resource hunting ground. Gold, platinum, diamonds, oil, offshore gas – the abundance of the African continent has long been a source of vast wealth and there is always a hungry predator waiting to pounce and extract for their own benefit.

Baruti Amisi, arguing from an African context, explains why BRICS could be viewed as sub-imperialist, laying out what he sees as four similar characteristics. Through mega projects targeting mineral extraction, BRICS countries attract vital foreign direct investment and

impoverish the same people that they should empower. Impoverishment occurs through dispossession of natural resources with little or no compensation, unequal shares of the costs and benefits of mega development projects, repayments of debts incurred to build these projects, and structural exclusion from accessing the outcomes of these initiatives.

BRICS countries share the same *modus operandi* at their different stages of imperialism, either as countries which have been active in Africa for a very long time (Russia and China); newly arrived (India); or playing their traditional sub-imperialist countries (Brazil and South Africa). Accumulation by dispossession occurs through the abuse of local politics, national elites, warlords, and war economies.

BRICS countries share the same interests in natural resources including but not limited to mining, gas, oil and mega-dam projects for water and for electricity to meet their increasing demands for cheap and abundant electricity. They are also actively involved in the search for new markets, and hence they promote construction of roads, railways, bridges, ports and other infrastructure. But this infrastructure is often indistinguishable from colonial-era projects, meant to more quickly extract primary products for the world market.

BRICS countries have poor records of environmental regula-

tion. There is virtually no commitment to mitigate climate change and invest in truly renewable energy, to take environmental impact assessments seriously, and to consult with and compensate adversely affected communities (Amisi 2015: 98).

This has been the case with regards to China in Africa, with environmental degradation, pollution and instances of worker exploitation being significant factors.

There are also warning signs on the horizon for the BRICS alliance. Following the financial and economic crash of 2008, BRICS countries have faced up to a precarious future. Politically volatile actions by Russia recently, the annexation of Crimea and ongoing support for a separatist movement in Ukraine, have caused concern amongst the alliance towards Russia and may lead to increasing isolation. China also reported a trade deficit in February 2014 with many major industrial companies reducing their production. The price of important commodities, such as copper and iron are falling as a result. New markets for trade, along with cheap energy through oil, coal and hydroelectricity are vital.

### **‘Once more unto the breach’: The Counter-argument**

The sub-imperialist position has been forcefully countered by Minister Nkoana-Mashabane who stated that:

There are those who do not have a positive appreciation of Brics because they believe that its continued existence will threaten the status quo and tamper with the current international balance of forces .... These critics talk of what they call a ‘new scramble’ for Africa, comparing the growing interest on our continent by Brics countries to the late 19th century when European colonial powers partitioned Africa among themselves.

What these two groups of critics have in common is their lack of appreciation of multipolarity for the geopolitical health of our international system. The first group views multi-polarity in a negative sense -as a threat; while the second group would rather

remain in the old system than to see it being shaken by emerging players from the South.

To see BRICS countries as ‘sub-imperialists’ is the result of a dogmatic application of classical notions of imperialism and Immanuel Wallerstein’s centre-periphery model to a situation that is fundamentally different from what these theories were trying to comprehend and explain. Our scholars have to be innovative and courageous enough to develop new tools of analysis and theoretical models when history challenges us to do so (Bond 2013: 6-7).

For some writers like Alden (2008: 4), the story of China in Africa is more than a simple fable of exploitation:

For in addition to new public buildings serving the needs of politicians and bureaucrats in African capitals, these same Chinese construction firms were building dozens of hospitals and schools and, most of all, hundreds of miles of tarmac and railway tracks...As communication networks spread and infrastructure projects continue to upgrade communities and link rural areas, Chinese involvement, far from being a curse, had actually been the catalyst for development and, with that, a new level of improved livelihoods such as Africa had not known for decades.

President Hu Jintao, defending China’s role in Africa, argued that:

China has never imposed its will or unequal practices on other countries and will never do so in the future. It will certainly not do anything harmful to the interests of Africa and its people. China respects the political systems and paths to development independently adopted and pursued by the African people that suit their national conditions (cited in Alden 2008: 120).

In particular, the hallmarks of colonialism– the ideology of a ‘civilizing mission’, the accompanying territorial imperative and forging of exclusionary trade relations– are distinctly lacking in China’s Africa policy. The close proximity between Chinese economic engagement and African elites, however, especially those characterised as ‘pariah regimes’, will influence

attitudes both in Africa and the West to China's underlying aims and ambitions for the continent (Alden 2008: 127).

Central to understanding the possibilities of BRICS is to come to terms with the fact that the key is China.

## **China – Big Cat**

There have been some questions raised as to whether this new bloc can remain together due to an array of differing agendas and internal economic pressures. Moyo and Yeros (2011: 19) summarise this dilemma:

Some are driven by private blocs of capital with strong state support (Brazil, India); others, like China, include the direct participation of state-owned enterprises; while in the case of South Africa, it is increasingly difficult to speak of an autonomous domestic bourgeoisie, given the extreme degree of de-nationalisation of its economy in the post-apartheid period. The degree of participation in the Western military project is also different from one case to the next although, one might say, there is a 'schizophrenia' to all this, typical of 'sub-imperialism'.

As Moyo and Yeros (2011: 19) point out, there is great diversity in the BRICS approach to investment. But there is also great diversity in the relative strengths of the different BRICS economies and the way they are inserted into the global economy. Leading the BRICS pack is China by a long shot.

China's economy is two-and-a-half times bigger than India's and four times bigger than that of Brazil or Russia. Moreover, its growth rates have been much higher and its accumulated reserves far surpass the sum of all three of these nations combined. These distinctions are compounded by a very different insertion into the international economy. While China directly impacts the flow of the global circuit, these other countries have only a secondary influence (Katz 2015: 76).

In terms of differentials in the volumes of trade in Africa between China and

India, China is now Africa's largest trading partner, surpassing the United States a few years ago. Contrary to early estimates (which suggested that China Africa trade had reached USD200bn in 2012), last year China-Africa trade reached USD169bn, a 1.8% lift from USD166bn in 2011. Interestingly though, in the first six months of 2013, China-Africa trade totalled USD105bn, compared to USD79bn in the first half of 2011 (*Standard Bank BRICS-Africa Trade update*, 8 October 2013).

Trade between Africa and India also continues to increase steadily,

In 2012 India-Africa trade lifted by 11% from USD63.1bn to USD 70.3bn boosted by a steady rise in both Indian imports from Africa (from USD39.8bn to USD43bn) as well as Indian exports to Africa (USD23.3bn to USD27.3bn). Last year India accounted for one-quarter of total BRICS - Africa trade, up from one-fifth in 2007 (*Standard Bank BRICS-Africa Trade Update*, 8 October 2013).

China is the only country in BRICS that has a chance of entering the ranks of developed country. Brazil, South Africa and Russia in this model would be seen as part of the semi-periphery with no chance of catching up with developed countries. This intermediate position supports the idea of a tri-polar order postulated by world systems theorists and their characterisation of the semi-periphery as a segment which serves as a buffer between the two poles of global capitalism. This group is currently playing a leading role in creating the bifurcation which traditionally separates the emerging economies from their under-developed peers. This is how the trajectory followed by countries who, through contradictory periods, cross over from proximity to the centre to convergence with the periphery, is repeated.

As Ho-fung Hung (2015: 224) points out:

While China's export expansion led to the deterioration of the US current account deficit, China's large trade surplus enabled China to accumulate substantial foreign-exchange reserves. It devoted most of these reserves to the purchase of US Treasury bonds, turning themselves into the largest creditor to the US. Their financing of the US fiscal deficit allowed the US government to expand expenditures while cutting taxes. It fueled the American appetite for Chinese exports, and the resulting increase in China's trade surpluses leading

to yet more purchases of US Treasury bonds. These constituted two mutually reinforcing processes of increasing Chinese exports to the US and increasing Chinese holdings of US public debt, continuously deepening the market and financial dependence of China on the US. China's massive investment in low-yield US Treasury bonds is tantamount to a tribute payment through which Chinese savings were transformed into Americans' consumption power. In 2008, China surpassed Japan as the biggest foreign holder of US treasury bonds, and its holding continued to escalate despite the financial crisis that broke out in Wall Street in 2008 .... Though China has the geopolitical autonomy that theoretically enables it to end its dependence on the dollar and even end the dollar standard, in reality, it has been helping perpetuate the standard, and hence US geopolitical dominance, through its insurmountable addiction to US Treasury bonds caused by its export driven growth. Compared to China's 1.2 trillion holding of US Treasuries, the BRICS bank forex reserve pool of 100 billion and China's pledged contribution of 400 billion is little more than a drop in the ocean.

What will happen to others in the semi-periphery? Katz's views here are apposite:

Many analysts estimate that these countries will tend to converge in common blocs in order to contend with the central powers. However, clear indications of this coming together are few and far between, and the disparate treatment meted out to each by imperialism only makes this convergence less likely .... They accept free trade, the primacy of the transnational corporations, and the continuity of cross-border financial flows. In contrast to what occurred during the 1930s, there has been no attempt to erect protectionist networks, nor to construct militarist coalitions. All the players have agreed to work within the existing international organisations to reinforce their own influence. They promote reforms to the voting system within the IMF and propose the creation of global reserve funds in hopes of gradually replacing the dollar .... Some members on this fringe compete among themselves on various economic terrains and others still maintain old

border disputes. And, many times, their strategic priorities do not converge (Katz 2015: 78).

Katz's view of the potential for an anti-imperial politics to emerge from the loose economic bond formed by BRICS economies is a sceptical one. It seems there is little appetite for anti-imperialist politics. The attitudes of the ruling classes are dominated by the bond they develop with big capital.

They are bourgeois and have discarded the old pretences of the anti-imperial projects of the 1960s and 1970s. A 'Non-Aligned' bloc or a summit like the one celebrated in Bandung<sup>3</sup> are beyond their horizons. They play their part on the neoliberal stage alongside the multi-millionaire elites who are deeply integrated in the global club of the most powerful (Katz 2015: 79).

Given that both the ruling classes and those who challenge them from the Left often use Wallerstein's world systems theory as a starting point, what does the grand old man of social science have to say about BRICS?

## **Wallerstein**

In a typically nuanced analysis, Wallerstein argues that if the litmus test for anti-imperialism is decreasing the power of the United States, then one could see BRICS as 'an anti-imperialist force', especially in its efforts to create an inter-bank system. Samir Amin (2010: 13) makes a similar point:

For its part, China has begun to build - in a gradual and controlled manner - alternative regional financial systems free from the US dollar. Such initiatives complete on the economic level the promotion of political alliance within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (Seo), which is a major obstacle to NATO's belligerence.

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<sup>3</sup> The Bandung Conference was a meeting of newly independent Asian and African states held in Indonesia on 18-24 April 1955.

It should be noted that this point has been challenged by Patrick Bond, who argues that China is reinforcing the power of the dollar rather than building an alternative and that the BRICS bank

*amplifies* IMF power. If a BRICS borrower wants access to the final 70 percent of its credit quota, the founding documents insist, that loan can only come *contingent* on ‘evidence of the existence of an on-track arrangement between the IMF and the Requesting Party that involves a commitment of the IMF to provide financing to the Requesting Party based on conditionality, and the compliance of the Requesting Party with the terms and conditions of the arrangement’ (2015: 290).

The BRICS Bank thus partially imports into its assessment the creditworthiness of potential borrowers, whatever structural adjustments the IMF might see fit to impose. Wallerstein’s main focus though in seeking to understand BRICS is not whether it achieves an anti-imperialist badge by specifically undermining the United States. It lies elsewhere. He argues that we must go below the ruling classes to the class struggles that unfold inside BRICS countries, tracking the way BRICS view each other and other non-BRICS countries in the South. Wallerstein argues that on these matters, ‘the record of the BRICS is murky, to say the least’ (2015: 272).

Economic relations between BRICS and their relations with other countries in the South are highlighted as being not necessarily ‘sub-imperial’ but rather of an ‘imperialist’ nature. This, coupled with the fact that these countries are struggling with high degrees of poverty and inequality, makes one wonder whether BRICS will hold. As Wallerstein points out, it is only Brazil which has made any significant inroads into reducing the degree of polarisation. On top of this,

The world-system’s structural crisis is moving too fast, and in too many uncertain ways, to assume sufficient relative stability to allow the BRICS as such to continue to play a special role, either geopolitically or economically. Like globalisation itself as a concept, the BRICS may turn out to be a passing phenomenon (Wallerstein 2015: 273).



## **Mao, Mau Mau and Mice**

Without contextualising China in the neoliberal global order, it is too easy to single out the country without addressing the structural and institutional forces that are driving not only China, but also other more recently emerging powers, to look with covetous eyes at Africa's natural resources and markets. We therefore have to identify the forces driving the Chinese government and transnational enterprises to pursue their aggressive resource extraction strategy. We have to consider whether this strategy is specific to China or whether it is developmentalism and the neoliberal globalisation system that are actually shaping exploitative relations towards Africa. It is not only China that is eyeing the natural resources of the Africa continent; it is also other emerging powers in the South and even within Africa. If the problem is more about the institutional and structural forces of globalisation that are being inflicted on the ecology and people in the Africa continent, the issue should be about regulating globalisation rather than China (Cheun 2008: 14).

We live in the age of global capitalism. This system harbours a number of different styles of governance and ways of doing international trade. What has remained generally in place is a Northern dominance of the global economy. There has been shakiness in Europe but this has not dented the power of the European Union. The United States too has had to contend with its inability to dominate the Middle East, but this has not damaged its overall military hegemony. Indeed, the chaotic violence that has ensued in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Iraq is so severe that it has denied China or Russia any real foothold in territories that were in any event inclined against the United States. The United States' strategic opponents in the wider Asian region, such as Iran, are spending so much on proxy wars of their own that, aside from an occasional shipment of weapons, they make for poor trading partners.

In this context, China has developed and maintained a sound relationship with the US and both countries have built a mutually reinforcing developmental partnership, give or take a few episodes of cyber-war or the buzzing of a spy-plane over disputed islands in the South China Seas. But

perhaps the most powerful alliance lies with China and Russia, as a recent article in *The Guardian* newspaper (7 July 2015) attests:

Both countries share a desire to limit American power; they enjoy a burgeoning trade relationship in which, in essence, hydrocarbons are swapped for cheap consumer goods; and they have a mutual interest in promoting an alternative model to western diplomacy.

Trade has increased six-fold over the past decade. Last year they trumpeted the biggest gas deal in history. At the same time, China has sought new markets both to invest in and for its huge energy and mineral needs. Africa has become an important site for those activities. Across the African continent, China is buying oil and minerals and building infrastructure to facilitate the movement of precious resources back to China. It's a cat with a voracious appetite and many kittens to feed.

BRICS at one level is important to China. It provides a sense of commitment to building an alternative bloc to Northern interests and allows for a credible anti-imperialist posturing. This it does while at the same time rescuing US capitalism and siding up to the European Union, its second most important market. In everyday political life though, China acts like any other state in the global capitalist system. It seeks markets for its goods and capital and opportunities to import scarce resources at low prices.

African ruling classes on the other hand rely on primary products to fuel their economies and do not have the wherewithal to bargain for more. The failure of African economies to develop, through law or policy, a secondary manufacturing sector to benefitiate their rich raw material base is a complaint that is as long-standing and frequent as it is ignored. It is also fuelled by an internal bourgeoisie that seeks to make a quick buck rather than dig in for forms of investment that allow for inward industrialisation. The idea of a patriotic bourgeoisie in Africa was dead before it was born.

The internal class struggle inside of BRICS has not threatened the ruling classes and, in any case, is nowhere near charting a road out of the global capitalist system. The nation-state remains the ceiling of most African aspirations. As long as this is the case, African countries will continue to seek advantage as discreet entities in the global economy. Given this context, Wallerstein is absolutely right that BRICS is a passing phenomenon. At the same time, it is instructive that BRICS from below never got above the

ground. Meanwhile the Big Cat, sometimes white, sometimes black, will continue to prowl the continent and have willing mice to sustain it.

From the days of the anti-colonial struggles and the coming to power of national liberation movements, African leaders have harboured incredible dreams of what could be achieved. Remember Nyerere's *ujamaa*, Kenyatta's indigenous capitalism, Machel's Marxist-Leninism (Amin 1976). Whatever road was taken, well-travelled or less taken, it was always motivated by Nkrumah's injunction of seeking the political kingdom first and all else will follow (1965). The Left too always saw Africa as a possibility. The Argentinian Marxist revolutionary, Che Guevara came to Africa in 1965 to offer his experience to the Congolese guerilla movement. Left intellectuals flocked to the Frelimo cause, not to mention the fantasies of the ANC being the harbingers of socialism in the South. This optimism is still with us, whether through Africa Rising or Africa Uprising.

In apartheid South Africa, there used to be a very popular TV advert for Black Cat Peanut Butter. A bather, acting as a bully on the beach, picks on a small nerdy-looking guy. Then the well-built main guy arrives and throws the bully to the ground. The hero is seen cradling a bottle of Black Cat in his hand. All the people in the advert are white. In post-apartheid South Africa, the hero has mutated into a truly Black cat. Nobody seems to ask if the ownership of Black Cat Peanut Butter has changed. What matters is that the hero is a satisfying, polar opposite of the previous hegemon.

Today in Africa, political power rests in the hands of Black people. But economic power has never been its preserve. Once, its fertile fields were the hunting ground for big cats with European stripes. Today, there is a new cat with Chinese characteristics scrambling across Africa.

In assessing the role of China in Africa, its role in Zimbabwe is instructive. After President Robert Mugabe instituted policies of radical land redistribution, with the majority of white owned farms expropriated for resettlement by landless Blacks, agricultural production plummeted. For a decade, the narrative was of a breadbasket country in dire straits. Then some agricultural economists noticed an up-turn in the yields of certain farms now run by Black Zimbabweans. This was celebrated as a sign that radical redistribution might create a temporary jolt for the economy and improvement was just around the corner (Hanlon *et al.* 2013).

The increase in agricultural yield was overwhelmingly noted in the

tobacco industry, a cash crop. The yields were not of ‘A’ grade tobacco demanded by Western consumers but a grade of leaf suitable for Chinese consumption. Chinese businesses invested resources, training and equipment in improving the yields of black farmers, not out of philanthropy or anti-imperialism. Rather, it was to meet the desperate need for tobacco back home. In the process, they distorted the local agricultural economy by abandoning maize as a crop in favour of better paying tobacco. According to Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Agriculture, tobacco earnings contribute nearly 20% of Zimbabwe’s GDP and the crop alone accounts for 40% of exports (*Financial Mail*, 30 April 2015).

In this, the economy of Zimbabwe became linked to consumption in China (Alden 2008: 64). As Dubosse (2010: 81) points out:

Chinese development assistance appears to create space and provide leverage for African countries to negotiate with western donors. However, Chinese grants and loans are linked to commodity production (e.g. oil in Angola, and minerals and tobacco in Zimbabwe) and include the requirement of a minimum of 50 per cent of all project procurement from Chinese companies. This has resulted in little employment creation, few backward linkages, a disruption in local trades and no evidence of technology transfer.

This brings Luce’s point about the principal trait of sub-imperialism in appropriating the surplus value of weaker nations back into focus. It also squares with Wallerstein’s narrow definition of imperialism proper. If the appropriated surplus value, as in the case of China, is used in large measure to shore up the economy of the United States by buying Treasury bonds, China achieves a rare feat. It is sub-imperialist, an aspiring imperialist and imperialist proper all at the same time, while often earning kudos as an anti-imperialist force.

The only difference with colonialism, and it is symbolically an incredibly important one, is the absence of overt political meddling and an overbearing civilising mission. One is reminded here of Magdoff’s evocative phrase, ‘imperialism without colonies’ (1978).

But is a cat any less a cat if it eschews looking down upon the mice at

its feet and studiously avoids meddling in rodent affairs? It meows: As long as the mice feed it, it will be their friend. The cat will respect the political systems and paths to development independently adopted and pursued by mice that suit their local conditions, creating a sense for local elites of increasing margins for manoeuvre, while for discontents, the incipient possibility of escape. The Big Cat, it insists, will not seek to civilise or dictate. It is simply here to increase its' own feed. But what happens when the cat asks for more?

It is only then that it will dawn that while you were playing with the cat, the cat was preying on you.

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# **The Dragon in Africa: A Study of China's Trade Links with Africa**

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## **Abstract**

The Modern day trade and bilateral relations between China and Africa made its first formal presence felt in 1955, and since then China has become a major actor with vital interests in the continent. While China is perceived as a global giant whose inroads into Africa reeks of a certain kind of colonialism, I argue that it is a relationship of mutual gain. Though apparently it seems that the Dragon is the driving power and is using the raw materials of Africa ruthlessly, it is interesting to see how the African countries are driving a hard bargain as well. In the long run no partnership can be based merely on trade link ups. It is the people to people contact which can bolster any kind of relationship. The recent migrations have seen a spread of Chinese cuisine, establishment of China town and even setting up Chinese schools in the African sub- continent. The Asian connect and contact is seen by many as hugely beneficial to both continents and the hegemony of the West stands challenged.

**Keywords:** China, Africa, Trade, Bilateral Relationships

The Modern day trade and bilateral relations between China and Africa made its first formal presence felt in 1955, and since then China has become a major actor with vital interests in the continent. The greater part of Sino-African interaction occurred from 1960-65-a high point of African decolonization and a time of Sino-Soviet conflict. From 1965-70 Chinese-African interaction coincided with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. It was post-independence for most African nations and a time of the Chinese retreat. Since the 1970s onwards China has re-emerged as a major actor in



Africa. There are three major aspects to China's role in Africa: the Chinese model, the superpowers, and its Third World policy. The call to liberation struggles has long been a hallmark of Chinese policy. For years it has stood by African countries during their struggle for liberation. The Chinese model also relates to China's developmental experience. China has stressed struggle against the superpowers, the U.S. and Soviet Union, identifying with the Third World against them. There can be no doubt that Africa occupied a central place in the Chinese foreign policy; and the U.S. and Soviet Union were important factors in it. China can expect to retain its presence in Africa if it responds to Africa's changing situation. Trade between China and Africa increased by 700% during the 1990s and China is currently Africa's largest trading partner. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was established in October 2000 as an official forum to strengthen the relationship (Dubosse 2010: 56).

China has gradually emerged from the shadow of an ideologically inspired closed economy to become a powerful global economic player in the age of globalization. Its economy has grown at an average of 9 per cent per year for more than two decades. At the end of 2000, its foreign reserves stood at US\$165.6 billion; in 2008, they were more than US\$1.5 trillion (Gaye 2008); and by July 2011, they surged to US\$3.1975 trillion (Brautigam 2009:78).

While China is perceived as a global giant whose inroads into Africa reeks of a certain kind of colonialism, I argue that it is a relationship of mutual gain. Though apparently it seems that the Dragon is the driving power and is using the raw materials of Africa ruthlessly, it is interesting to see how the African countries are driving a hard bargain as well. In the long run no partnership can be based merely on trade link ups. It is the people to people contact which can bolster any kind of relationship. The recent migrations have seen a spread of Chinese cuisine, establishment of China town and even setting up Chinese schools in the African sub- continent. The Asian connect and contact is seen by many as hugely beneficial to both continents and the hegemony of the West stands challenged.

## **China in Africa: A Brief History**

As opposed to the current understanding of the situation and the wild media frenzy discussing China's inroad into Africa, historical evidence shows that

China has been in Africa for a very long time now. It is important to see the historical links of this alliance to appreciate fully the current linkages in trade and commerce. The Western History records Vasco Da Gama's travels which resulted in the opening up of the sea route to Eastern Africa and the years of colonialism that followed. Curtis Abraham points out that Zheng He, a eunuch administrator and diplomat during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) in Imperial China, arrived on the East African coast several decades earlier than Vasco da Gama. Zheng He's maritime travels took place from 1405 to 1433 and it is documented that in 1418 he led a vast fleet of no less than 62 ships ferrying 37,000 soldiers across the Indian Ocean (See <http://newafricanmagazine.com/chinas-long-history-africa/>).

Chinese knowledge about East Africa during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) comes primarily from the Ching-hsing Chi ('Record of Travels') and Yu-yung Tsa -tsu ('Assorted Dishes from Yu-yang'). During the Sung Dynasty (960-1279), most of the information was recorded in the Chu-fan-chih ('Gazetteer of Foreigners') and Ling-wai Taita ('Information from Beyond the Mountains'). The record of the Ming (1368-1644) naval expedition into the Western Indian Ocean is preserved in Wu-pei-chih ('Notes on Military Preparedness'), Hsing-ch'a Sheng-lan ('Triumphant Vision of the Starry Raft'), and Ming Shih ('History of the Ming Dynasty'). However in spite of the long and enduring history no lasting friendships were forged. In the words of Curtis Abraham,

In the absence of any written or oral history, it is impossible to know what Africans in antiquity thought of these early Chinese travellers. What is known, however, is the Chinese attitudes towards Africans. The dynastic Chinese viewed black Africans with racist stereotypes that echo, sadly, down the ages. They saw Africans as lacking the 'moral virtue', which they (the Chinese) saw themselves as possessing in bucket loads. But during this era, official and private contacts between Africa and China increased, according to archival documents and archaeological findings (See <http://newafricanmagazine.com/chinas-long-history-africa/>).

## **The Trade Links**

As pointed out before, China's involvement with Africa dates back to the an-

cient times. The relationship has developed since then to its modern avatar of mutually benefiting each other. The contemporary phase of the Chinese engagement with Africa began during the Bandung Conference of Non-Aligned Nation in 1955. There was a substantial improvement in the relationship towards the end of 1950s as a result of its worsening ties with the Soviet Union. China, at that point of time, was looking for allies in Africa to establish a counter balance weight to the Soviet hegemony and Western imperialism. The relationship with Africa plummeted in the 1980s when China shifted its focus to the domestic economy development.

China's engagement with Africa is largely driven by the following key considerations: Primarily China needs resources - notably crude oil to power its modern, growing economy and to support its expanding industrial base. The rapid growth of its manufacturing sector has also created increased domestic demand for natural resources including oil and gas, precious metals, aluminium, copper and iron ore. These are natural resources that Africa has in abundance. Secondly, Africa's population is seen as a potential market for Chinese products. While Chinese growth relies heavily on the manufacturing sector, it needs a new and dependable consumer market to sustain its steep developmental trajectory. Thirdly, African manufacturers and other industries had enjoyed many years of monopoly and protection. The economic reforms of African countries liberalized the protected market and opened up the door to increased economic activities from other players elsewhere. Many firms which had hitherto been shut out of the market are now interested in the new markets, including the Chinese firms. Fourthly, the privatization of publicly owned enterprises in China feels the need to scout for new investment opportunities outside China to complete their transition from the state-owned enterprises. To do this, the privatized enterprises needed to step up entry into international market such as Africa. Supported by China Exim Bank with annual disbursement of \$4 billion in 2000 to \$15billion in 2005, Chinese firms are ready to seek opportunities in other countries. Finally by establishing its presence in Africa, China wants to project the image of a global super-power. Moving out of its region, China wants to demonstrate that it could also compete on the world stage with the United States and countries in Europe. Of course, this reason seems to have gained currency given the investment portfolio of Chinese state-owned and private firms across Africa and elsewhere in the world. By implication the US has been forced to recognize China's immense economic power and political influence

in the world (Dubosse 2010: 76).

China's investment and aid on the continent has increased manifold. From \$20 million a year in the 1990s, the FDI jumped to \$100 million in 2000 to \$ 400 million in 2005. It reached \$1billion in 2006 – a growth rate higher than Chinese FDI in any other part of the world. China's foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa is also growing. According to China, in 2012 its FDI in Africa reached US\$2.52 billion, reflecting annual growth of some 20 per cent since 2009. Facing a shrinking labour supply, excessive industrial capacity, and a state-led push to upgrade and internationalise the national economic model, in Africa Chinese firms can gain an international foothold and outsource labour-intensive manufacturing. In 2013, China's state media announced a plan to invest a further US\$1 trillion in the continent within a decade.

There are an estimated 800 Chinese corporations doing business in Africa, most of which are private companies investing in the infrastructure, energy and banking sectors. Unconditional and low-rate credit lines (rates at 1.5% over 15 years to 20 years) have taken the place of the more restricted and conditional Western loans. Since 2000, more than \$10bn in debt owed by African nations to the PRC has been cancelled (Chuen 2008:54).

During the year 2011, trade between Africa and China increased a staggering 33% from the previous year to US \$166 billion. This included Chinese imports from Africa equalling US \$93 billion, consisting largely of mineral ores, petroleum, and agricultural products and Chinese exports to Africa totalling \$93 billion, consisting largely of manufactured goods. Outlining the rapidly expanding trade between the African continent and China, trade between these two areas of the world increased further by over 22% year-over-year to US \$80.5 billion during the first five months of the year 2012. Imports from Africa were up 25.5% to \$49.6 billion during these first five months of 2012 and exports of Chinese-made products, such as machinery, electrical and consumer goods and clothing/footwear increased 17.5% to reach \$30.9 billion. China remained Africa's largest trading partner during 2011 for the fourth consecutive year (starting in 2008) (Chuen 2008:57).

## **China's Gift to Africa**

China supported the African Independence Movements and gave aids to se-

veral newly independent nations in the 1960s and 70s. One of its early projects was to build the Tazara Railway linking Zambia and Tanzania. By 1978 China was giving more aid to the African nations than USA. China has also been involved in 'health diplomacy'. Between 1960 and 2005 15,000 doctors from China have been sent to Africa. The medical teams known as yillaodui have treated more than 170 million patients. In 2001, the member nations of G8, formed the United Nations-backed Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria with an initial budget of \$10 billion. In 2007, another additional \$1.1 billion was approved in Kunming, China, of which 66% was dedicated to Africa [44]. In September of the same year, China promised the Democratic Republic of the Congo to build 31 hospital units and 145 smaller health care centres, a project due to be completed in March 2010 (Chuen 2008:54).

## **Infrastructure**

'China's gift to Africa' - The new headquarters of the African Union, a towering 20-storey building in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is so called because China picked up the \$200 million tab for the state-of-the-art complex. Ethiopia's tallest building, completed in December 2011 in time for an AU summit the following month, includes a 2,500-seat conference hall. The gift prompted Ethiopia's late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to refer to Africa's current economic boom as a 'renaissance,' due partly to China's 'amazing re-emergence and its commitments to a win-win partnership with Africa' (Chuen2008:58).

China's largess to Africa is not new. Previously China had either donated or assisted in building a hospital in Luanda, Angola; a road from Lusaka, Zambia's capital, to Chirundu in the southeast; stadiums in Sierra Leone and Benin; a sugar mill and a sugarcane farm in Mali; and a water supply project in Mauritania, among other projects. At the fifth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, held in Beijing in July 2012, Chinese President Hu Jintao listed yet more, including 100 schools, 30 hospitals, 30 anti-malaria centres and 20 agricultural technology demonstration centres. Recently China's Exim Bank has announced financial assistance for the development of a solar power plant in Kenya. A 50MW solar PV Power Plant planned for execution in the Kenyan city of Garissa will receive debt financing from the

Bank. This is expected to be the largest solar power plant in Africa (Chuen 2008:54).

## **China's Gain**

One has to understand that China is not on an altruist mission. Obviously the gains from Africa are enormous which prompts China to invest there. China's biggest interest is in the oil – it buys more than one-third of Africa's oil. In addition, China's industries are getting raw materials such as coal from South Africa, iron ore from Gabon, timber from Equatorial Guinea and copper from Zambia. Chinese products have flooded markets in Johannesburg, Luanda, Lagos, Cairo, Dakar and other cities, towns and villages in Africa. Those goods include clothing, jewellery, electronics, building materials and much more. 'Even little things like matches, tea bags, children's toys and bathing soaps are coming from China,' says Bankole Aluwe of Alaba market in Lagos, Nigeria. African consumers like Chinese products because they are affordable.

## **Largest Trading Partner**

In an article in 'This Is Africa', a *Financial Times* publication, Sven Grimm and Daouda Cissé state that in recent years China's economy at times has grown at more than 10 per cent a year, while cheap labour has helped reduce production costs — hence cheaper products. They also note that 'The low level of the yuan [the Chinese currency] compared to the other major world trading currencies such as the US dollar, the euro and the yen' attracts African importers.

China's give-and-take relationship also plays out in other forms. Chinese construction firms are acquiring enormous construction contracts. The China Railway Construction Corp. (CRC) signed a \$1.5 billion contract in September 2012 to modernize a railway system in western Nigeria. That same month, China South Locomotive and Rolling Stock Corporation, the largest train manufacturer in China, signed a \$400 million deal to supply locomotives to a South African firm, Transnet. In February 2012 the CRC announced projects in Nigeria, Djibouti and Ethiopia worth about \$1.5 billion in total (Chuen 2008:56).

## **Criticism against China**

China has been perceived by the Western media as being excessively aggressive in its marketing strategy. China has come under criticism when the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo leased thousands of unutilized hectares of land to ZTE International, a Chinese company, in a deal that Oxfam, a UK charity, and others have labelled a 'land grab.' The furore over land adds to growing criticisms of the manner of China's aggressive Africa penetration. Many Africans often refer to the poor quality of Chinese products and blame their low prices for the collapse of local industries. Comatex and Batexci, two leading textile companies in Mali, have been severely affected by cheap fabrics from Asia (Brautigam 2009:80).

Performance assessments of some Chinese investors have not been stellar. The managers of Chinese-run mines in Zambia have been accused of not taking adequate safety measures for their local workers. A Chinese oil firm is exploring in a Gabonese national park, angering environmentalists.

In the face of a shrinking labour supply, sluggish growth, and excess industrial capacity and savings, China is pushing to upgrade its own economic structure and to increase outbound investment. Prominently, China has promised to massively increase its trade and investment ties with Africa. Understanding these trends and their domestic drivers offers insight into the direction and speed of China's economic reforms and these particular pathways of China's own economic internationalisation. This can also better inform Sino-African policy-making (Brautigam 2009:80).

## **Criticism from the West**

In the view of David Shinn, former US ambassador to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia, the West is nervous about China's activities in Africa. Mr. Shinn adds that China's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of African countries and its fast approach to aid delivery makes it more attractive than the Western donors, whose aid often comes with demands to improve human rights and democracy.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently warned against a 'new colonialism in Africa', in which it is 'easy to come in, take out natural resources, pay off leaders and leave.' It was a veiled jab at China, according to the Guardian, a UK newspaper. But Ms. Clinton's point echoed across the continent, and it appears that African leaders are now treading cautiously.

South African President Jacob Zuma warned in July that the current ‘unbalanced’ trade pattern is unsustainable. He was referring to the tendency of Africa to export raw materials to China while largely importing only cheap manufactured goods. Maged Abdelaziz, the UN Secretary-General’s special adviser on Africa, told Africa Renewal that the continent must develop a strategy for its dealings with emerging economic giants such as China, Brazil and India.

Along this line, talks began in South Africa in June 2011 to merge three regional trade groupings (the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Southern African Development Community) into a ‘grand free trade area’ incorporating 26 countries with a combined gross domestic product of \$1 trillion. Such a combined strength could give Africa a more assertive voice at the negotiating table (Brautigam 2009:83).

## **Conclusion**

It is quite clear from the above mentioned arguments that China is here to stay in Africa. The relationship is mutual and largely beneficial to both. One also has to remember here that Africa is a vast continent having 57 countries. China’s dealings with one would be largely different from the other. Andrew Kennedy in a study conducted on 3 countries of Africa and their negotiation with China – Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania points out that it has been largely beneficial all round. He has a word of caution for the African countries. According to Kennedy, China’s investment is not altruistic. It is geared towards profit making. The African countries can be largely benefited from this Asian giant if their governance is sound and if they are capable of driving a hard bargain during negotiations (Brautigam 2009:89).

The underlying theme of recent investment is that China is now beginning to see Africa as a real business opportunity as opposed to just using these infrastructure packages as a means to get access to the natural resources. As Grimm states, ‘having a much longed-for business partner instead of a donor, requires African actors engage with these partners at the level of business, not aid’.. (Chuen2008:57). This is shown with the kind of investment we are seeing China make in Uganda where it is investing in the refinery plant to allow Uganda to supply refined oil to domestic customers



and countries in the region. This must be the preferred option for any country looking to gain foreign investment, which is to use this money to take advantage of the natural resources in the market and get their national contribution as far up the value chain as possible. At the same time the country concerned must be realistic that there needs to be some benefit to those looking to invest, in other words the relationship is moving onto a proper business footing as opposed to the rapacious colonial behaviour which China has been accused of undertaking.

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# **‘Nehru is just another coolie’: India and South Africa at the United Nations, 1946-1955**

**Goolam Vahed**

## **Abstract**

From 1860, when the first indentured Indians arrived in Natal, through Gandhi's stay in South Africa between 1893 and 1914, and the appointment of an Agent-General in 1927, India took a deep interest in the affairs of Indians in South Africa. This formal link came to an end in 1946 when India withdrew its High Commissioner (Agent-General) from South Africa in response to segregationist legislation, and pursued the matter of the country's treatment of its black citizens at the United Nations. By the time of the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, 24 resolutions had been passed condemning South Africa's racial policies. At the same time, Nehru, India's first prime minister, urged South African Indians to embrace the majority African population and integrate fully as South African citizens. India remained at the forefront of international pressure on South Africa to dismantle its apartheid policies and also provided valuable moral and material support to the anti-apartheid movement in response to heightening state repression. Formal ties with South Africa were only resumed after the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. This article examines how this issue played out at the United Nations in the period from 1946 to 1955, when relations between the South African and Indian governments rapidly ruptured. India's strong anti-apartheid stance helps to explain why the African National Congress government in South Africa made the establishment of ties with India a priority once majority rule was achieved in 1994. The country's contribution to South Africa's development historically transcends trade relations and economics. The roles played by Indian political organisations in South Africa

and the Indian government contributed towards a rich tradition of intellectuallism, enhancing South Africa's status in contemporary global politics.

**Keywords:** Nehru, Jan Smuts, United Nations, Indian diaspora, Apartheid

Nehru is just another coolie .... There are some non-whites who, with White education, have made White moral principles their own. One example of this is Booker T. Washington .... There is another sort of non-White – you get them on the west coast of Africa but particularly in India, who accompany a great amount of book learning with a total lack of moral responsibility. An outstanding example of this undesirable type is the Prime Minister of India, Mr Nehru. He knows the West, is a good speaker and a sharp debater, but immediately he opens his mouth it is all too clear he is only a coolie.... We should not help to make the coolie even important by criticizing him (Oswald Pirow, South African Minister, *The Leader* 28 May 1953).

India and China, two potential economic superpowers, are competing for natural resources to fuel their growing economies, while multinational companies in both countries are scrambling for business opportunities outside of their borders. This competition is played out in many parts of the world but especially in Africa, a continent that has enjoyed reasonable and sustained growth over the past decade. Anand (2012) has described India and China as 'Postcolonial Informal Empires' in the emerging global order. Their rivalry is especially manifest in South Africa, which boasts one of the largest economies in Africa, and which has witnessed a large influx of Indian and Chinese migrants in the post-apartheid period. This article focuses on the historical links between India and South Africa because of the large diasporic Indian population in the country, and the mid-twentieth century rupture in these relations. One of the key issues examined is how India's role in South Africa transformed over the course of the twentieth century and why it was so well placed to forge a strong relationship with South Africa in the post-apartheid period.

## **Indian Settlement in South Africa, 1860s-1940s**

Just over 152 000 indentured Indians arrived in Natal between 1860 and 1911 (Desai & Vahed 2010a). They were followed by passenger migrants from the 1870s (Vahed & Bhana 2015). The permanent settlement of Indians in Natal roused the hostility of White settlers and after Natal was granted self-government by the British in 1893, laws were passed to restrict Indian immigration, franchise and trading rights. The Indian political response was spearheaded by Mohandas K. Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) which was formed in 1894 (Vahed 1997: 2-6). Claims by Indians for equality on the basis of being imperial citizens were rejected because, as Radhika Mohanram has argued persuasively, ‘whiteness’ and ‘Britishness’ became cognate during this period (Mohanram 2007: 73). Gandhi’s two decades long South African stay culminated in a strike by Indian workers which began at the coal mines in Northern Natal in mid-October 1913 and spread to the coastal sugar estates, railway workers and municipal workers in the major cities. The violence associated with the strike, coupled with pressure from the British government in India which feared agitation amongst Indians, led to a negotiated settlement which gave redress to some Indian grievances but left their status as second class citizens intact (Desai & Vahed 2015).

The First World War broke out shortly after Gandhi’s departure from South Africa. Indian political elites showed their loyalty to the British Empire by contributing to the war effort. They raised money for the Mayor’s War Fund and around 700 Indian volunteers served in East Africa as part of a bearer corps (Vahed 1999 / 2001). Instead of redress, the political, economic, and social screws were tightened after the war as anti-Indianism by Whites gained momentum. The South African League, formed in 1919 to rally against the ‘Asiatic Menace’, declared that Indians constituted a ‘serious moral, economic and political menace’ and should be repatriated ‘as speedily as possible’ because they caused unemployment and lower living standards among Whites. Those who remained should be segregated in reserves and banned from employment in ‘positions of responsibility.’ The League’s hostility forced the government to appoint the Asiatic Inquiry Commission of 1920, which found that the ‘Asiatic menace’ was a myth, but urged voluntary segregation and firmer immigration laws in order to appease Whites (Desai & Vahed 2010b: 6-7).

As racism began to rear its ugly head, Indians met in Cape Town in

January 1919 to form a national organisation. This failed to materialise but a second conference was held in Durban in August 1919 to discuss the Asiatic Commission. Following this, measures were taken by Indians in South Africa to strengthen links with their Indian counterparts. In 1919 Swami Bawani Dayal represented South African Indians at the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress (INC) at Amritsar. In 1922 he got the INC to agree that South Africa could send 10 delegates to its annual meetings (Vahed 1997: 8). Indians formed a national body, the South African Indian Council (SAIC), in May 1921 to coordinate protest. Due to increased discrimination, the SAIC proposed that the Union government hold a round table conference with the Imperial and Indian governments. The conference resulted in the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 which provided for a system of voluntary repatriation for those Indians who wished to return to India and the appointment of an Indian Agent to facilitate relations with the Union government (Sastri 1927: 196).

Repatriation failed to achieve the South African government's primary objective, which was to reduce the number of Indians resident in the country. This led to increased pressure from Whites in the early 1940s for anti-Indian legislation. It was during this period that the moderate leadership of Indian politics was challenged by younger professionals and workers, led by Dr Monty Naicker in Natal and Dr Yusuf Dadoo in the Transvaal, who felt that the politics of accommodation had failed. Under Naicker's leadership, younger members of the NIC, with the support of Indians' trades unions ousted the old NIC leadership in October 1945. This coincided with the government's passing of the Ghetto Act in 1946, which effectively introduced segregation in Natal. The NIC initiated a passive resistance movement against the legislation that lasted for two years from 1946 to 1948, but failed to overturn it (see Vahed & Waetjen 2015: 122-145).

There was strong support in India for the Indian struggle in South Africa. In March 1947, in the midst of the passive resistance campaign, the two doctors, Naicker and Dadoo, visited India to muster support for their campaign. They issued a joint statement on the eve of their departure on 11 March 1947 that the South African government 'has shown a bankruptcy in leadership in dealing with the acute post-war problems.... [and] is guilty of fostering race antagonism.' Naicker and Dadoo's hand was strengthened in that a week before their departure they held a 'historic joint meeting' with Dr A.B. Xuma, the African National Congress (ANC) president, pledging 'the fullest co-operation between the African and Indian peoples' (Bhana &

Pachai 1984: 183). Naicker and Dadoo met with Gandhi and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru during their visit and attended the All-Asia Conference from 23 March to 2 April 1947 where they met leading revolutionaries from all over the world. They returned to South Africa on 28 May 1947. Naicker told the 1947 conference of the NIC that political and community leaders in India had pledged their full support to South African Indians: 'India recognised that we in South Africa were not only fighting for our just rights but also to preserve the national honour and dignity of all Indians .... A mighty India is arising and will allow no country to trifle with her sons and daughters in other countries' (*The Leader* 7 June 1947). The Asian Conference was a seminal moment as Naicker claimed that he had learnt that 'our struggle is not merely a struggle for fundamental rights of the Indian minority in South Africa but a spearhead of the struggle of the oppressed people against the establishment of this Master plan [apartheid]' (Desai & Vahed 2010b: 223).

### **India Takes Up the Issue at the United Nations (UN)**

Shortly after the passage of the Ghetto Act, Indian South Africans called on the Indian government to take measures 'to uphold the honour and dignity of Indians abroad' (Pachai 1971: 186). The Indian government responded by withdrawing its High Commissioner Ramrao Deshmukh for 'consultation' in May 1946 (*The Leader* 16 June 1946). This was momentous as it brought to an end a tangible link with India. The NIC also called on the Indian government to raise this issue at the newly-formed United Nations Organisation (UN). It is ironic that South Africa should be indicted at the UN as its Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, was a founding member of the League of Nations in 1918 and had attended the 1945 Conference of the UN in San Francisco where 'he was a revered figure in the Commonwealth and a venerable world statesman widely respected for his visionary commitment to international peace and justice' (Dubow 2008: 48). But as Dubow points out, Smuts'

lustre did not long survive the post-second world war era .... In 1946 he was rebuffed at the General Assembly, condemned in his own words as a hypocrite. In retrospect, his presence in San Francisco can

be seen as the start of a precipitous political decline, a process highlighted by his failure to comprehend fully the democratizing environment of postwar internationalism, or the narrowing context of nationalism at home. Just as the rest of the world renounced colonialism and racism, South Africa tightened its segregationist strictures under the new banner of apartheid (2008: 44).

A further irony is that Smuts 'was responsible for introducing the phrase "human rights" into the Preamble of the Charter' (Dubow 2008: 52).

Dr Narayan Khare, a member of the Viceroy's Council responsible for overseas Indians, was receptive to the NIC's appeal to indict South Africa at the UN, much to the annoyance of the Viceroy Lord Wavell. Khare and his fellow civil servants agreed that the matter should be raised at the General Assembly rather than the Security Council since this matter did not constitute a security threat. The civil service was aware that they could not win the day on the grounds of protecting minorities but would argue that India had a moral responsibility to protect Indians overseas until they were granted full citizenship (Mazower 2009: 174).

On 22 June 1946, the Congress-led interim Indian government, led by Nehru who was also acting foreign affairs minister, placed the discriminatory treatment of Indians in South Africa on the agenda of the General Assembly's very first session from October to December 1946. At the same time, India took tangible action to show its disapproval. In July 1946, India passed a law prohibiting the import or export of any goods except the personal effects of passengers, as well as newspapers, and magazines. During 1944-45 India's exports to South Africa were valued at 119 million rupees, and imports from South Africa at 30 million rupees (Reddy 1991:22). Nehru took office on 1 September 1946 and his government sent a high powered delegation to the UN. It was led by his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit and included Krishna Menon, who had led the overseas movement for the independence of India, M.C. Chagla, renowned Indian jurist who was Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court from 1948 to 1958, and Sir Maharaj Singh, a former Agent-General to South Africa (Mazower 2009: 176). They were supported by a South African delegation comprising of ANC president A.B. Xuma and NIC members H.A. Naidoo, A.I. Meer, and Sorabjee Rustomjee. According to Manu, Nehru was 'keenly involved from the outset, asking detailed questions about laws and debating tactics, and ensuring that

everyone in the delegation, while free to provide dissenting opinions privately, moved in lock-step in public' (2012: 91).

The Indian delegation argued that Indians were discriminated against on the basis of race in violation of the UN Charter and that the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 (and subsequent round table of 1932) was a treaty between the two nations which carried international legal obligations. South Africa rejected this position and considered the treatment of Indians as a purely domestic matter (Vandenbosch 1970: 197). For their part, South African Indians argued that they were justified in turning to India since they were regarded as transients who were to be repatriated from South Africa. Deputy Prime Minister of South Africa, J.H. Hofmeyr, said to this effect: 'We cannot blame the local Indians of, as we put it, running to Mother India unless we recognise them as South African citizens with rights of citizenship' (Von Eschen 1997: 86).

India's placing of South Africa's treatment of its Indian population, who numbered 282 000 according to the 1946 census, before the UN raised the critical question of that body's jurisdiction and powers. The South African delegation, led by Prime Minister General Smuts, argued that this was a purely domestic affair, citing Article 2(7) of the UN Charter, the 'domestic jurisdiction clause'. As South African citizens, Indians were subject to South African laws (Manu 2012: 98). Speaking before the General Assembly on 25 October 1946, Vijayalakshmi disputed Smuts' view that the Indian issue was a domestic matter:

It is by no means a narrow or local one, nor can we accept any contention that a gross and continuing outrage of this kind against the fundamental principles of the Charter can be claimed by anyone to be a matter of no concern to this Assembly.... Millions look to us to resist and end imperialism in all its forms, even as they rely on us to crush the last vestiges of Fascism and Nazism (Mukherji 1959: 149).

India, she said, felt 'a moral obligation to those Indians whose ancestors had been sent to a remote land on the clear understanding that they would enjoy equality of rights and opportunities'. India also cited Article 14 of the Charter which gave the General Assembly the power to act, no matter the origin of the problem (Mukherji 1959: 152). Vijayalakshmi insisted that India did not 'seek dominion over others ... but we do claim equal and honourable



treatment for our people wherever they may go and we cannot accept discrimination against them' (Manu 2012: 99).

The Indian delegation faced an uphill struggle as most of what would come to be known as the 'Third World' was still under the yoke of imperial rule. Only ten of the fifty-four members of the UN were from Asia and only four, including South Africa, were African. Britain and France vetoed calls for sanctions but called on the Indian and South African governments to negotiate a settlement through a round table conference (Bennett-Smyth 2003). In any event, the UN resolution amounted to little since the new body had no means to enforce it. Five countries consistently opposed or abstained from resolutions criticizing South Africa during this period - Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium and Australia. Except for Australia the others were African colonial powers (Dubow 2008: 46).

Vijayalakshmi was absolutely brilliant during the debates, prompting Menon to write to Nehru on 9 December 1946 that she was 'devastating.... Neither at San Francisco nor here have I seen a speaker so enthusiastically cheered as Mrs Pandit was' (Sahgal 2011: 114). It is said that when Vijayalakshmi met Smuts, she apologised to him for taking up the stance she took and he replied prophetically: 'My child, ... this is a hollow victory. I will be out of power in the next election, but you will have gained nothing' (Sahgal 2011: 115). However, as he conceded in his private correspondence, Smuts was shaken by the assault. According to Dubow,

Smuts expected Indian hostility to South Africa's racial policies at the General Assembly in 1946, but he was shocked by the power of the assault and, in particular, by the manner of Mrs Pandit's condemnation of him. Smuts referred to his failure at the UN as 'a bitter experience': 'Here is the author of the great preamble of the Charter', he complained, 'exposed as a hypocrite and a double-faced time server!' (2008: 66).

Nehru wrote to Smuts on 24 April 1947 that the Indian government was ready to enter into negotiations with the South African government as per the UN resolution. Smuts replied that South Africa could not do so because of the absence of the Indian High Commissioner. Nehru retorted that this was a feeble excuse. Smuts replied that India's withdrawal of its High Commissioner was a 'hostile act' and negotiations could not resume until the

High Commissioner returned. He was adamant that the Cape Town Agreement was not binding and that South Africa had the right to deal with Indians legislatively. Smuts argued that South Africa's policies towards Indians were no different from those of many other countries and he did not understand why these 'policies to achieve internal peace should be especially singled out for condemnation' (Vandenbosch 1970: 195). Negotiations between the South African and Indian High Commissioners in London also failed to achieve positive outcomes. India informed South Africa in August 1947 that in view of this lack of progress, there was no point in its High Commissioner returning to South Africa.

India reported to the General Assembly on 2 December 1947 that South Africa had ignored its offers of a round table conference. Smuts did not attend that meeting but sent his Minister of Justice, H.G. Lawrence who, in his previous capacity as Minister of the Interior, had extensive experience of Indian issues. There was less focus on the Indian issue this time round as the UN's focus was on Palestine while India was embroiled in conflict with Pakistan. Lawrence argued that although the Cape Town Agreement had failed in its primary objective of repatriating Indians, South Africa continued to 'uplift' Indians in the country and the inclusion of a clause allowing for parliamentary representation in the Ghetto Act, showed that it recognised Indians as a permanent part of the country's landscape (Vandenbosch 1970: 195). Smuts himself had said that parliamentary representation would give Indians 'a platform in South Africa. We do not want people in South Africa to go and make appeals in other countries. If they want to make any appeal let them do so in South Africa. We are now giving them political status [and] there is no need for them to go elsewhere' (Vandenbosch 1970: 201). The General Assembly passed a resolution in 1947 urging South Africa and India to continue their efforts to convene a round table conference and to invite Pakistan, which had just come into existence, to participate in the discussions (Vandenbosch 1970: 195).

UN involvement 'dramatically altered the political landscape in South Africa. White South Africans became increasingly self-conscious, drifting to the right, while world support for their cause energized black South Africans.' This was the beginning of the end for Smuts, a 'string of defeats ... culminating in the Nationalist [Party] victory in 1948' (Bennett-Smyth 2003). For Smuts personally, discussion of the issue at the UN damaged his international standing. As Dubow points out:

Few could have predicted that his participation in the recently formed United Nations would catch him out so dramatically. At once, Smuts found himself exposed to a changing environment in which the old rules of diplomacy were shifting, assumptions of impermeable state sovereignty were being questioned, and racism was becoming a matter of international concern. Several related events may be instanced to show the convergence of domestic and international politics in 1946, which inflicted such great damage on Smuts. Though not entirely unanticipated, they caused Smuts acute embarrassment and signalled the beginning of his political demise, a process of decline that was sealed two years later, when D.F. Malan's Nationalists ejected him and his government from office (2008: 64-65).

## **Apartheid**

There was an important change in South Africa in 1948 when D.F. Malan's National Party (NP) emerged victorious in the general elections in May of that year. While segregation was long an entrenched policy in South Africa, the NP was to the right of the Smuts government and introduced a more rigid policy of racial separation known as apartheid which aimed to strictly separate South Africans according to race in every aspect of their lives. Monty Naicker was due to go the UN in July 1948 to present the South African Indian case but the government denied him a visa. The NIC telegraphed Nehru to 'draw your urgent attention to undemocratic and unwarranted action of union government in refusing passport.... This unprecedented attack on civil liberties of Indian people in South Africa is deliberate and calculated attempt to stifle and black out any adverse expression by voteless, voiceless Indian community' (Desai & Vahed 2010b: 228). In another act of defiance, that part of the 1946 Ghetto Act which offered Indians limited representation in parliament was repealed. It had not been implemented by Smuts because of opposition by Indians, but Malan removed even this option (Vandenbosch 1970: 195).

Eric Louw, Minister of Economic Development, represented South Africa at the UN in 1948. In October 1948, on behalf of South African Indians, M.D. Naidoo and Moulvi Cachalia visited India and Pakistan where they met with Nehru and Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Khan. In the nine

years from 1946, 1948 was the only year when the treatment of Indians in South Africa was not discussed by the General Assembly

In May 1949 the General Assembly passed another resolution calling on India, Pakistan and South Africa to enter into discussions at a round table conference. However, the Indian government's letter to the South African government on 4 July 1949 was ignored (Mukherji 1959: 154-155). The South African government did reluctantly meet with a joint Indian / Pakistani delegation led by Pandit Kunzru in February 1950, making it clear that it was not doing so because of UN pressure. Shortly after the meeting, however, the South African government promulgated the Group Areas Act in April 1950, ignoring a request by the foreign delegation to put this legislation on hold until negotiations had been completed. The Indian government issued a statement in June 1950 that in view of the attitude of the South African government, future meetings would be unproductive (Mukherji 1959: 158). K.R. Nehru, Indian delegate to the UN, reiterated in 1952 that the halting of discriminatory legislation was a precondition for a round table conference (*Indian Views* 9 January 1952).

The fifth General Assembly meeting adopted a resolution on 2 December 1950 that called for a round table conference to be held before the end of April 1951; failing which a three person commission should be appointed to 'assist' the two sides in negotiations. The resolution also called on the South African government not to enforce the provisions of the Group Areas Act while negotiations were in process (Vandenbosch 1970: 197). The South African government not only rejected the resolution on the grounds that the treatment of Indians was a purely domestic matter but brought the provisions of the Group Areas Act into effect on 31 March 1951. In the absence of any progress the UN General Assembly meeting of November 1951 adopted a stronger resolution that the 'policy of racial segregation (apartheid) is necessarily based on doctrines of racial discrimination' and that South Africa had contravened the previous resolution by enforcing the Group Areas Act (Vandenbosch 1970: 197).

Since the April 1951 deadline had lapsed, on 5 December 1952, the UN General Assembly resolved to proceed with the appointment of a three person committee, called the Good Office Commission, to facilitate discussions between South Africa, India and Pakistan. There were 44 votes in favour and 14 abstentions. It was the first time that no government had vetoed a resolution against South Africa. Indian delegate K.R. Nehru explained that

a UN resolution was necessary because South Africa 'was in no mood to discuss the removal of disabilities' (*Indian Views* 9 January 1952). When the South African parliament opened on 18 January 1952, the Governor-General E.G. Jansen described the UN's involvement in South Africa's domestic affairs and in its control of South West Africa (now Namibia) as 'a serious infringement of South Africa's rights' (*Indian Views* 23 January 1952).

With South Africa refusing to engage in talks under the mandate of the UN, there were suggestions that talks should take place outside of UN jurisdiction. However, Indian leaders in South Africa did not want the Indian government to withdraw the issue from the UN. P.R. Pather of the Natal Indian Organisation (NIO) said that in the 1940s attempts by Indians in South Africa to negotiate directly with their government had failed as they lacked 'any bargaining power' and were, consequently, 'not in a position to talk on substantial terms with the Union Government.... The SA Indian question must remain at the UN until it is finally settled.' J.N. Singh of the NIC said that 'to permit the removal of the item from the UN Agenda will be to eliminate for South Africa the censure of the entire civilised world – only the SA government stands to gain from such a step' (*The Graphic* 7 November 1952).

### **The Good Office Commission**

The UN established the Good Office Commission in December 1952, which was tasked with facilitating discussions between India, South Africa and Pakistan, studying the racial situation in South Africa, and reporting to the UN within two years. The Commission wrote to the Indian, Pakistani and South African governments about convening a meeting. The South African government replied that it rejected the resolution of December 1952 and thus did not recognise the Commission. In fact, the South African delegation left the Debating Chamber when the resolution giving effect to the appointment of the Commission was passed (*Indian Views* 17 June 1953). The Good Office Commission was chaired by Herman M. Crux of Chile and included Henri Langier of France and Dante Bellegarde of Haiti. It met for the first time in Geneva on 8 May 1953 (*The Graphic* 9 May 1953) but made little progress because South Africa refused to engage in negotiations within the UN mandate. When the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly met in October 1953, Pakistan proposed that meetings should be held outside

the authority of the UN in order to break the deadlock (*The Graphic* 24 October 1953).

Nehru came under attack in the Indian Parliament in March 1953 for India's membership of the Commonwealth while Britain was not supporting action against South Africa. Nehru was adamant that India's Commonwealth membership allowed it to have a say in international affairs. The lack of progress on South Africa, he said, was due to the 'half-hearted support extended on the part of important and great countries who quibbled over these matters.' Nehru conceded that India could do nothing about the South African issue beyond raising it at the UN, and that he personally did not 'see any solution of problem in the near future – certainly I cannot bring it about.... The Government of South Africa is impervious to any reasoned approach' (*Indian Views* 1 April 1953). Nehru repeated in the Indian parliament in October 1953 that the South African dispute was 'frozen, petrified.' He described the situation as a 'major test for the world' since, unlike other countries which practiced racism with an element of apology, 'in South Africa there is no apology. It is blatant. It is shouted out, and no excuse is put forward for it' (*The Graphic* 3 October 1953).

The Commission reported to the UN in September 1954 that it was unable to get negotiations started during 1952 and 1953 due to the intransigent attitude of South Africa. In February 1954 it tried to get the parties to meet outside the UN's authority but that strategy also failed. An invitation was sent to South Africa's chief representative to the UN, W.C. du Plessis, on 25 August 1954 to attend a meeting with the Commission but he replied that the South African government did not recognise the Commission (*The Leader* 24 September 1954).

G.P. Jooste, South Africa's deputy representative at the UN, argued that the annual discussion of South Africa's internal policies was 'prejudicing' the country's 'good governance and stability.' This 'hostile approach' was 'fanning the emotions' of Black South Africans and 'sowing suspicion' and 'promoting distrust' among South Africa's racial groups. It was also giving people in other parts of the world the impression that the UN could be used 'as a tool of agitation' (*The Leader* 1 October 1954). When the matter was debated by the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly in October 1954, du Plessis reiterated that the UN did not have the right to meddle in South Africa's affairs and that, in any case, Indian South Africans had 'never evinced the slightest desire to leave' the country as their

circumstances were not as bad as the detractors were making them out to be. He claimed that India's stance encouraged agitation amongst those within South Africa who wanted to disrupt law and order with Indian and communist support (*The Leader* 22 October 1954).

The Asian and African countries proposed that the United States (US) mediate the dispute. However, the US ambassador to the UN, Henry Cabot Lodge, voiced Washington's 'increasing concern' over intervention in the domestic affairs of a member state and proposed direct negotiations. A proposal by Cuba, Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador that South Africa, India and Pakistan resume direct negotiations was accepted unanimously by the Political Committee. The NIC issued a statement welcoming the decision. It stated that the 'world has moved on since the days of Kruger [Transvaal president in the nineteenth century], and today colour bars and colonial exploitation are rapidly disappearing in all parts of the world.' The statement was clear that the resolution of the Indian question had to be 'in relation to the broader question of racial discrimination in the Union' and that a lasting solution depended on 'the efforts of the people of the Union themselves' (*The Leader* 5 November 1954). India's representative to the UN, P. Trikamdas, warned that South Africa was headed for a 'fearful race conflict and race war. The African giant has awakened and will not for long tolerate the status of semi-slavery for the greater glory of the Master Race' (*The Leader* 5 November 1954). South Africa ignored calls for round table discussions.

At its ninth session in 1954 the UN decided to discontinue the Commission and to call on India, Pakistan, and South African to undertake direct negotiations, with a mediator appointed to facilitate discussions. The resolution was adopted with 45 for, 1 against, and 13 abstentions. Ambassador Luis de Faro (Brazil) was appointed as mediator. However, South Africa informed the UN in April 1955 that it was terminating all negotiations in view of two speeches that Nehru had made in early 1955 attacking South Africa: 'As far as the Union Government is concerned, the question of persons of Indian origin in the Union of South Africa must be regarded as closed' (UN 1968: 780).

South Africa's action was a direct result of proceedings at the Afro-Asian conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, from 18-24 April 1955 and attended by 29 nations (*The Leader* 22 April 1955). Nehru was one of the architects of the conference, which aimed to end the 'politics of pigmentation' in which 'arrogant white statesmen set themselves up as

overlords over 'lesser peoples' who were considered to be unable to stand on their own two feet in the difficult conditions of Western Civilisation' (Adebajo 2008: 109). Nehru took Moses Kotane of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Moulvi Cachalia of the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), who were leaders of the 1952 Defiance Campaign, to the conference as observers (Reddy 1987). India successfully moved a resolution censuring South Africa's racial policies. The resolution read:

The conference extended its warm sympathy and support for the courageous stand taken by the victims of racial discrimination, especially by the peoples of African and Indian and Pakistani origin in South Africa; applauded all those who sustained their cause, reaffirmed the determination of Asian-African peoples to eradicate any trace of racialism that might exist in their own countries; and pledged to use its full moral influence against the danger of falling victim to the same evil in the struggle to eradicate it (Adebajo 2008: 109).

According to Bunting, the biographer of Moses Kotane, Nehru impressed Kotane as 'an international statesman of great charm and understanding, alert and well-informed. He expressed intense hate for national oppression and injustice, and was greatly disturbed by the vicious racial policies pursued in parts of Africa, especially South Africa.' Kotane and Cachalia secured a large sum of money to aid the South African liberation movement (Bunting 1975: 275-276).

In deciding to withdraw from negotiations, the South African government described Nehru's speech as 'indeliberate'. Monty Naicker of the NIC said that South African Indians 'deeply regretted' the action of the South African government in withdrawing from the round table talks, while P.R. Pather of the NIO described the action as 'ill-advised' (*The Leader* 29 April 1955). When the General Assembly met later that year, de Faro informed it that his attempts to restart negotiations had failed. The General Assembly adopted a brief resolution in November 1955 which noted that the parties had failed to hold discussions and urged them to restart negotiations. South Africa was absent when the resolution was adopted by 43 to 0 (UN 1968: 780). In early 1956, there was consternation in Natal when local newspapers claimed that Nehru had said that India was contemplating war with South Africa. A.M. Moolla of the NIO wrote to Nehru to confirm that he had been correctly



quoted. India's Ministry of External Affairs replied that the statement was incorrect. What Nehru had said was that India had problems with three countries, South Africa, Pakistan (over Kashmir), and Portugal (over Goa) and that 'while some people might think in terms of these problems leading to war, this was entirely out of the question' (*The Leader* 11 February 1955).

While this issue was being played out internationally, many Indians in South Africa joined the majority African population in a Defiance Campaign against apartheid laws during the second half of 1952 (Vahed 2013). Speaking in the Indian Parliament in November 1952, Nehru said that no progress had been made in effecting the UN resolution because the South African government 'has not co-operated.' He added that the issue had been 'overshadowed by the much larger issue of race conflict which has led to the passive resistance movement [Defiance Campaign] against apartheid' (*The Graphic* 14 November 1952). At the 58<sup>th</sup> session of the All India Congress in January 1953, Nehru warned that a race war was

developing in Africa. The policy of the South African government has been opposed by us in so far as people of Indian origin are concerned. That policy has progressively emphasised racial discrimination and indeed, overlordship of one race over another. The passive resistance movement in South Africa has now become widespread and Africans are taking a leading part in it.... Repression will never solve the problem of Africa and the grave danger is that something in the nature of race war will develop and bring disaster in its train (*Indian Views* 18 February 1953).

From Nehru's statements and actions it is clear that he did not want to confine India's involvement to South African Indians only but to extend it to the majority African population. This reflects Nehru's internationalism. He was adamant that the treatment of Indians in South Africa was not 'merely an Indian issue' but 'a world cause' that affected all peoples 'struggling for the equality of opportunity for all races and against the Nationalist doctrine of racialism' (Mazower 2009: 178).

## **Nehru and Africa**

Nehru stood out from most of his contemporaries in a very important respect.

He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, read for the Bar in London, and was widely travelled and consequently cosmopolitan in his outlook. According to Brown (2006: 73):

Nehru was one of the best-travelled Indians of his age.... Not only did Nehru spend the years of his education in Britain (with forays abroad). He spent nearly two years in Europe in the mid-1920s, and again some months in the mid-1930s.... They provided the occasion for extensive travel and the forging of international contacts. On the earlier visit he went to Brussels for a congress against imperialism and encountered members of the European Left as well as a number of Latin American, Middle Eastern, African and Asian delegates, including some from China. The latter encounter prompted him to think about future cooperation between Indian and Chinese nationalists. He and his family also visited Russia, and he was forced to think seriously about the attempt at large-scale socio-economic engineering he witnessed there. Later that decade – in 1938 – he took another break in Europe, feeling out of place in Indian politics. He went to Spain where he made contact with the International Brigade, as well as taking care, back in England, to see as wide a range of politicians as possible – particularly those with influence on Indian policy.

Nehru wanted India's international standing to be 'radically transformed as part of a global problem of capitalism sustaining imperialism' (Brown 2006: 74).

Unlike Gandhi, Nehru made strident calls for South African Indians to reject racial and ethnic exclusivity and embrace the African majority in the struggle against White minority rule. Speaking in London in June 1953, Nehru said that Indians in South Africa were not Indian nationals, and that

the question of Indians, though important to us, has been deliberately allowed by us to become a secondary issue to the larger issue of racial discrimination. The opposition movement there is far more African than Indian. The leadership is African – we want it to be so. We have told Indians in Africa very definitely and very precisely that we do not encourage or support them in anything they might want

which goes against the interest of Africans. We shall support them, of course, in their legitimate demands (*The Graphic* 20 June 1953).

According to a report in *The Graphic* (20 June 1953), with the street placards reading 'Nehru shocks Indians', local political leaders expressed 'unease' at Nehru's statement which was seen as 'the most important pronouncement by any prime minister of India ... in the history of Indians in South Africa.' 'Moderate' Indian leaders interviewed by the *Graphic* reporter were concerned that the problems of South African Indians were being 'submerged in the vaster race problems of all Africa and in the debating exchanges of the United Nations, where the practical issues facing South African Indians have been dissolved into the larger questions of world policy and diplomacy.' Their 'destiny' now depended not on their 'own will' but the outcome of the passive resistance struggle led by Africans. NIO moderates further complained that amongst Indians, the Indian government was only consulting with Congress leaders rather than seeking to gauge the views of the 'large section of Indian opinion which does not embrace the policies of Congress' (*The Graphic* 20 June 1953).

There was strong reaction to this report. A letter writer signing off as 'AVOCA' questioned whether Indian political moderates (represented by the NIO) enjoyed the support of the majority of Indians and asked the NIO to produce its membership list. Nehru, the letter argued, consulted with NIC leaders because he 'will consult only persons worthy of consultation.' The NIC leaders had 'shown their merits not merely by words, but also by deeds. The Prime Minister of India knows what it takes in human efforts and suffering to undergo a prison sentence and he knows the mettle possessed by those who serve prison sentences for the sake of freedom' (*The Graphic* 27 June 1953). J.N. Singh of the NIC said that Nehru's views reflected that of his organisation and that there was 'a degree of consultation and cooperation and understanding' between the Indian and African congresses. Indians would not be 'mere followers' but would play an equal and active part in the alliance (*The Graphic* 20 June 1953). A.I Bhoola, who studied law with Nelson Mandela at the University of the Witwatersrand, and who was a member of the NIC, denied that there was 'widespread' unease among Indians locally. Those who spoke of 'the Indian problem in South Africa' were 'living in the past. There is no such problem.' At issue were the concepts of 'White supremacy' and 'Apartheid', rather than the 'rights of a

handful of Indians.’ He described moderate politicians as being like the ‘proverbial ostrich’ who refuses to ‘see things as they are.... They are too narrow, self-centred and parochial.... The issues are far more fundamental than one of living next door to a European.’ The Defiance Campaign had created ‘a tremendous fund of goodwill’ among Indians and Africans ‘which needs to be zealously guarded and strengthened, and we can do so ONLY along the lines indicated by Mr Nehru’ (*The Graphic* 27 June 1953).

The first Overseas Indians Conference, held in London on 13 June 1953, and attended by delegates from Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, British Guiana, Malaya, Trinidad, and several other countries, echoed Nehru. In his presidential address, K.D. Kumar of Malaya said that with the exception of South Africa, Indians were an ‘integral part of multi-racial societies’ and ‘must regard themselves nationals of the country in which they lived.’ E.H. Ismail of the NIO represented South Africa while the SAIC sent E.J. Pillai as an observer. English speakers with long-established links with South Africa included Henry Polak, who had worked closely with Gandhi, and Father Harold Satchell (*The Graphic* 18 July 1953). In October 1953, Nehru delivered his ‘African Speech’ in the Indian Parliament in which he maintained: ‘We shall help you [Indian]. Naturally we are interested in protecting you, your dignity or interests, but not if you go against the people of Africa, because you are their guests and if they do not want you, you will have to go bag and baggage and we will not come to your aid....’ (*The Graphic* 28 November 1953)

This message was reinforced locally. At the SAIC conference in August 1954 I.C. Meer moved a resolution that was adopted calling on the Indian government to refuse to accept any expatriates from South Africa. He said that while some Indian and White politicians in South Africa regarded the Cape Town Agreement as the Magna Carta of Indians in South Africa, South African Indians had no say in its formulation. But even that Agreement had been breached by the National Party government which had not fulfilled its ‘upliftment’ clause. India should therefore make it clear that it would not be party to the repatriation scheme or accept any Indians deported by the government for political reasons. This would send an unequivocal message that Indians were South African citizens (*The Leader* 20 August 1954). At the July 1955 conference of the Natal Indian Teachers Society (NITS), its president Dr A.D. Lazarus said that Indians in South Africa should stop thinking of themselves as ‘alien and unassimilable’ and should become ‘true

South Africans in thought and deed.’ ‘Alien and unassimilable’ were the words used by D.F. Malan when he introduced the Areas Reservation and Immigration Bill in 1925, and should be rejected outright by South African Indians. He called on teachers to reinforce this lesson to school children and to emphasise that they were part of the majority population in South Africa (*The Leader* 8 July 1955).

Despite these pronouncements, some Africans were suspicious of Indian intentions. Journalist Jordan Ngubane, who wrote a weekly column in *Indian Opinion* entitled ‘African Viewpoint’, said that the Indian and African alliance over the Defiance Campaign had ‘complicated tensions of a highly explosive nature.’ He wrote that African national pride was being ‘insulted’ by Indians in South Africa and in India who were

giving a twist to the resistance movement which would give it a character that would redound only to their own exclusive credit and reveal African contributions in poor light.... The treatment meted out to African leaders and African contributions by important sections of the Indian press at times does little to cement Afro-Indian relations. Both in this country and in India the resistance movement is often reported as though it was an Indian movement. The impression is being sedulously created that the African leaders of the struggle are juniors to their Indian counterparts (*The Graphic* 6 February 1953).

On the other hand, Moses Kotane of the SACP took a different view. While South African ministers demonised Nehru for wanting to conquer Africa to provide a home for India’s surplus population, Kotane felt that Nehru ‘genuinely believed in the freedom of all oppressed people in the world as a matter of right and justice.’ He said: ‘Mr Nehru spoke [at the Bandung conference] with intense emotion in condemning the barbarity and tyranny of the South African Government .... It is clear to me that India, far from restricting its interest to the fate of South Africa’s Indian population, is deeply concerned about the position of all victims of the Government in South Africa’ (Bunting 1975: 275-276).

## **The Wrath of Malan**

South African Prime Minister D.F. Malan was in no mood for compromise.

In September 1952 he described claims that Africans in South Africa were oppressed as a 'damnable lie' and argued that they were better off than Black people in the USA as well as untouchables in India. He added that India would only be satisfied once 'the rich and beautiful province of Natal is given to Indians and the whites allowed to be pushed out.' The Delhi-based *Hindustani Times*, which was edited by Gandhi's son Devdas, pointed out that untouchables and Blacks in the USA at least enjoyed theoretical equality. As long as Blacks in South Africa did not enjoy such rights, 'it is of little avail for him [Malan] to indulge in such unwarranted taunting comparisons.... The more he [Malan] indulges in violent language and mock heroics the more he alienates the world' (*The Graphic* 26 September 1952).

In November 1952, D.E. Mitchell, M.P. and former Administrator of Natal, complained that Indians were 'perpetually shouting for help overseas.' The NIO issued a statement that Indians were loyal to South Africa, 'but any people paying equal taxes and bearing all the responsibilities of citizenship and yet denied the elementary rights of citizenship are fully justified in seeking the assistance of outside countries to gain that right. The Republic of India has the right by virtue of the existence of the Cape Town Agreement to oversee the Indian people in South Africa.' The issue was taken to the UN because the South African government rejected all attempts to 'arrive at a settlement through a policy of peaceful negotiations' (*The Graphic* 7 November 1952).

In a debate on foreign affairs, Malan stated in parliament in May 1953, 'I say deliberately that Nehru is the enemy of the white man. He wants the white man out of Africa' (*The Leader* 7 May 1953). Minister of the Interior T.E. Dinges called on Nehru to keep his 'nose out of Africa.' The TIC passed a resolution 'deeply regretting the undignified and highly unwarranted attack' (*The Leader* 14 May 1954). As noted in the epigram, Oswald Pirow described Nehru as 'just another coolie.... We should not help to make the coolie even important by criticizing him' (*The Leader* 28 May 1953).

Nehru responded in the Indian parliament that the allegations were 'totally false and misleading' and that through their statements Malan and his colleagues had gone 'utterly beyond all reasonable bounds of decency and propriety in international affairs' (*The Leader* 21 May 1953). The Indian press also denounced Malan. The *Hindustan Times*, for example, wrote that Malan's outburst

sprang from a deep-rooted malady. It is not only a matter of self-preservation that makes him rant so often and so loudly about the White man's position in South Africa. He seems to be in terror over the future of his race, which has so far exploited the non-Whites and treated them as slaves. By shouting against Nehru, the South African Prime Minister cannot turn the tide of history. His oppression is sure to recoil on him. Neither Malan nor those who support his ideology will be able to prevent the awakened Asians and Africans from winning their basic rights (*The Leader* 28 May 1953).

Malan again attacked Nehru in a speech in the South Africa parliament in December 1953, where he said: 'India's plans in Africa are very clear; nor does India hide its plans. India formulated its policy in this way: that it stands for 'anti-colonialism'. In other words, here in Africa, its standpoint is that the European, the man from Europe, must get out of Africa.' He blamed Nehru for initiating the 1952 Defiance Campaign and thereby interfering in South Africa's internal affairs. Malan wanted the 'eyes of the world and especially the eyes of the nations interested in Africa ... opened to what is happening here as a result of the actions of India.' There was a need to

protect the indigenous population of Africa against penetration by the peoples of Asia.... India, with its population of 400 000 000 is seeking a place where it can unload its superfluous population, and the most obvious place to unload them is in Africa.... The European countries that have possessions in Africa ... and the UN should also realise its obligation to protect the indigenous population of Africa against Asiatic penetration. Africa should be safeguarded for the European ... because he has borne civilisation on his shoulders and is still necessary here, but the rest of Africa should be there for the benefit of the Native (*The Graphic* 12 December 1953).

### **South Africa Punishes its Indian Population**

While cultural, sporting and economic links between South Africa's Indians and India were receding, there were sporadic attempts to organise sporting tours. *The Graphic* (31 October 1952) reported that a South African Indian football team would tour India during 1953 and the same newspaper reported

on 13 March 1953 that football matches in the new season were more exciting than usual as players were seeking to impress the selectors. However, the players were shocked when the South African government refused them passports. They were due to leave on 3 May 1953 (*The Graphic* 2 May 1953) but failed to depart. On the same day, the South African Indian Football Association (SAIFA) issued a statement that despite its

assurances that the tour was a purely goodwill and sporting one, with no political associations whatsoever, and despite urgent appeals from Indian and European sporting organisations, the Minister has refused to alter his decisions.... We are at a complete loss to understand the reasons for it – more so in the light of official approval for European sporting tours to and from South Africa in recent years (*The Graphic* 9 May 1953).

P. Gupta, president of the All-India Football Federation issued a statement that he had learnt of the ‘unfortunate cancellation’ with a ‘feeling of utter disappointment tinged with regret.’ He felt that the South African government was influenced by ‘considerations which should find no place in sport’. He called on the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the International Football Federation to take such steps as would ‘prevent a recurrence of the unfortunate discriminatory action against footballers obviously on racial grounds alone.’ Football centres in India had completed preparations and there was ‘a keen sense of disappointment throughout the country’ (*Indian Views* 27 May 1953).

Denying passports was part of the state’s plan to reduce South African Indians’ contact with India. On 10 February 1953, Minister of the Interior T.E. Dinges announced that in terms of the Immigrants Regulation Amendment Act of 1953 there would be a ban on wives from India, thus withdrawing a concession granted to Indians in terms of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1913 (*The Graphic* 6 June 1953). Dinges explained during debates in Parliament that this concession had been granted by Smuts because of the male: female disparity. Since gender parity had been reached among Indians in South Africa and given that the entry of wives and children exceeded the total number of Indians who left South Africa each year, this measure was necessary to reduce the Indian population in South Africa (*The Leader* 28 January 1955). The NIC issued a statement that the ban ‘makes



serious inroad into the liberty of the individual. Why should an Indian be prohibited from marrying a person born in India?’ (*The Graphic* 6 June 1953)

Although the Indian High Commissioner had been withdrawn, his office remained functional in Cape Town and it issued a memorandum disputing Donges’ assertions. The memorandum pointed out that the right to marry partners in India was not one given to Gandhi but that the Immigrants Regulation Act of 1913, while forbidding further Indian immigration, permitted Indians, like all other nationals, to marry outside South Africa. This right was now being denied to Indians while members of other race groups were not affected. The memorandum further argued that Donges was wrong to state that gender parity had been reached. According to the 1951 census, the Indian population of 365 524 was made up of 188 956 males and 176 568 females, meaning that there was a shortfall of females. The difference between the entry and exit of Indians was minimal. The number of Indian wives and children admitted between 1937 and 1952 was 17 324, while the number of Indians repatriated was 16 952. Furthermore, the figure of 17 324 included many wives and children who had remained in India longer than three years and had to reapply for admission, meaning that they were counted twice. Taking away the right of Indians to marry wives outside the country amounted to the ‘sheer persecution of a racial minority’ (*The Graphic* 19 September 1953).

There was a hysterical reaction in the White press at the end of April 1953 when the *S.S. Karanja* docked in Durban. A local White-owned daily’s headlines blazed ‘A dramatic last-minute bid to beat the Union’s new ban on Indian wives from entering this country was revealed when the British Indian ship docked in Durban... 81 women and children arrived in Defiance of the Ban.’ The authorities found that all the arrivals had completed their paperwork before the ban and they were allowed to land (*Indian Views* 6 May 1953). The *S.S. Kampala*, which arrived on 30 May 1953, brought more wives and children. The authorities refused to allow them to disembark. The NIC sent a telegram to Nehru, who was in England attending the Queen’s Coronation, to intervene as this act was ‘tantamount to breaking up family life’. Mrs J.C. Gheewalla, a passenger on board the ship, sent a telegram directly to the Queen: ‘We wives of Indian nationals ... request your Majesty on this joyous occasion of the Coronation to use your Majesty’s authority to help us to join our husbands.... As a wife and mother you will appreciate the suffering this [separation] will bring our children and families’ (*Indian Views*

3 June 1953). The wives and children were eventually allowed into the country and, in fact, when the Immigrants Regulation Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament in September 1953, it stated that women married before 10 February 1953 would be allowed to stay in the country if they were already there, while those still in India were given three years (until February 1956) to enter the Union. Approximately 900 wives and children, described in the White press as ‘beat-the-ban’ wives, stood to benefit from this ruling (*The Graphic* 12 September 1953).

While the Indian High Commissioner had been recalled in 1946, the commission in South Africa was finally closed with effect from 1 July 1954. This was at the insistence of the South African government. The Indian government announced that it had taken the decision with ‘deep regret’ at the request of the South African government (*The Leader* 2 July 1954).

### **The United Nations Finally Acts**

While the UN seemed to wash its hands of the issue of the treatment of Indians in South Africa, Nehru maintained a strong interest in the country. When ANC leader Oliver Tambo and Yusuf Dadoo escaped into exile in the early 1960s, Nehru provided them with Indian travel documents and transport from Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, to London. He also sought to secure the exclusion of South Africa from the Commonwealth (Reddy 1987). Under Nehru’s leadership the South African issue was kept high on the UN’s agenda. Successive Indian delegations led the annual debates against apartheid until 1957 when Ghana became independent. India then requested that Ghana, as the first independent African state, take the lead (Reddy 1991: 16).

Nehru remained adamant that the treatment of Indians in South Africa could not be separated from the legitimate aspirations of the African population. For example, in a speech at Rajya Sabha on 5 December 1958 he said that ‘question of the people of Indian descent in South Africa has really merged into bigger questions where not only Indians are affected but the whole African population ....’ In the Lok Sabha [Upper House of the Indian Parliament], on 28 March 1960, following the Sharpeville massacre of 21 March where the South African police shot dead a number of unarmed African protestors, Nehru said that ‘the people of Indian descent have had to put up with a great deal of discrimination and we have resented that. But the African people have to put up with something infinitely more, and ... our

sympathies must go out to them even more than to our kith and kin there' (Reddy 1987). The issues of the treatment of Indians in South Africa and of apartheid more generally were merged at the UN in 1962 under the title 'Policies of apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa' (Reddy 1991: 17-18).

The UN's first concrete action was Security Council Resolution 134, which was adopted on 1 April 1960 and which criticised the South African government's handling of the Sharpeville protests. After South Africa became a republic in 1961, it was forced to withdraw from the Commonwealth due to pressure from African and Asian states (Desai & Vahed 2010a: 228-230). India co-sponsored a 1962 UN resolution calling for sanctions against South Africa. At the same time, the UN established a Special Committee against Apartheid (Reddy 1991: 18). India was involved in co-sponsoring another General Assembly resolution in November 1962 requesting member states to impose certain sanctions against South Africa (Reddy 1991: 22). Resolution 1761 (XVII) called on members to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa; close ports to vessels flying the South African flag; 'enacting legislation prohibiting ships from entering South African ports'; 'boycotting all South African goods and refraining from exporting goods, including all arms and ammunition, to South Africa'; and (e) 'refusing landing and passage facilities to all aircraft belonging to the Government of South Africa and companies registered under the laws of South Africa' (Reddy 1991: 23).

India took concrete steps such as stopping South African vessels from entering Indian seaports and prohibiting Indian ships from going to South Africa. South African planes could no longer land at Indian airports or overfly India. The boycott of South African goods was also continued, except for '*bona fide* personal effects of travellers, post cards, letters, aerogrammes and telegrams. Permitted items included books and periodicals; publications like magazines and newspapers'; 'free unsolicited gifts from relations and friends including family and personal photographs if paid for at the letter postage rates, or printed matter rates, if admissible. These cannot be sent by parcel post. The value of such gifts should not exceed Rs. 200'; 'packets containing sweetmeats and blessings for Muslim devotees by the Durgas Committee, Ajmer, provided that no packet exceeds one pound in weight and that packets are accompanied by certificates from the Nizam of the Durgas showing that they are *bona fide* offerings by devotees'; and 'pictorial

representations with religious and social background'. The Indian government promised to 'do everything in their power to bring about the abandonment of the cruel and inhumane' policies of the South African government (Reddy 1991: 24).

Nehru inspired many South Africans who developed a powerful affection for him. When he died in 1964, Monty Naicker sent a letter of condolence to Indira Gandhi:

at the irreparable loss mankind has suffered at the death of India's beloved Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The democratic world has lost one of the greatest torch bearers of freedom of our times. He was a great inspiration to peoples the world over who believed in and fought for the brotherhood of man. With the rest of the democratic world we mourn his loss for he was to us one of the most outstanding symbols of freedom in this age of conflicts. On this sad occasion we can do no more than pledge to uphold the noble ideals of peace and freedom which were so dear to the hearts of Pandit Nehru (Desai & Vahed 2010b: 231).

## **Conclusion**

Nelson Mandela was released in February 1990 after being incarcerated for 27 years. In August of that year he visited India to huge popular acclaim. This was affirmation of the historic links between India and South Africa and Mandela's personal admiration for Nehru. He explained this admiration to his biographer Anthony Sampson: 'When a Maharaja tried to stop him he [Nehru] would push him aside. He was that type of man, and we liked him because his conduct indicated how we should treat our own oppressors.' As a budding young lawyer in the 1940s, Mandela read most of Nehru's works and quoted him in his speeches. He used Nehru's phrase 'there is no easy walk to freedom anywhere' in his first major political speech in September 1953 and the title of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* echoed Nehru. Mandela was also a recipient of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1980. Nehru appealed to Mandela and a generation of African leaders because he was a socialist and modernist, and worked hard to bring the apartheid regime to account at the UN, and to forge a broad internationalism (Guha 2012).

After becoming president, Mandela visited India again in 1995 and 1997 in a quest to develop bilateral ties. The Red Fort Declaration of March 1997, signed during Mandela's visit, outlined the vision of a 'unique and special relationship' between South Africa and India, underpinned by mutual interests and perceptions. South Africa-India Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) meetings were held annually to address bilateral political issues and ways to advance economic co-operation in areas such as mining, engineering, financial services, and agro-processed products. South Africa and India are also joint members of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM), the Commonwealth and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC), and *BRICS*, an acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This organisation was originally founded as BRIC in 2003 but changed to BRICS when South Africa joined in 2011 (Vahed 2014: 10-12).

When Nehru took up the struggle against apartheid he saw it as part of a broader struggle against colonialism and imperialism. He worked hard inside the UN to apply pressure on South Africa but also sought to build a political bloc around the NAM. While South Africa and India share many common problems, such as inequality, poverty, poor service delivery, and high levels of unemployment, BRICS does not have a grand 'Nehru-ian' vision but seems bent on pursuing neo-liberal economic policies which increase inequality in these countries. Worryingly, the cosy relationship enjoyed by the Indian capital and the ANC government has led to mounting anger amongst many Africans about what they see as Indians exploiting and taking advantage of politically connected Africans for their benefit (Vahed 2014: 14-16). This echoes sentiments from the 1950s when the political alliance between Africans and Indians was viewed negatively.

How should we assess Nehru's internationalising of the issue of apartheid? The problem for Nehru and other opponents of apartheid was that South Africa refused to be drawn on the merits of its racial policies but insisted throughout that the UN did not have the right to intervene in its domestic policies. There was a contradiction in South Africa's position. It insisted that Indians were temporary sojourners in the country who would be returned to India, yet was adamant that while they were in the country they had no recourse to India. Western countries resisted intervention in South Africa whom they saw as a bulwark against communism during this Cold War era. In the scheme of matters that the UN had to attend to, the conflict

between India and South Africa was a relatively minor one. However, India helped to keep the world's focus on South Africa until more 'Third World' countries became independent and were in a position to take concrete action against the country. Nehru's other great contribution was to emphasise that Indians in Africa were part of the African continent and, as citizens of African countries, should contribute to the upliftment of that continent and stop seeing themselves as 'Indian'. He called for Afro-Indian unity and provided moral and material support to the country's main liberation movement, the ANC.

The inputs of Nehru and Indian South Africans in the 1940s and 1950s were brave ones at a time of utter racism and a ruthless apartheid regime. They were willing to take risks in confronting that regime, in forging Afro-Indian unity, and in keeping the issue of apartheid alive nationally and globally. India's contribution to South Africa was about more than mere trade relations and economics. These organisations and individuals contributed towards a rich tradition of intellectualism and international politics, contributing significantly to the making of a democratic South Africa and its standing in world politics today.

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# Lusophone Africa: A New Destination for Indian Energy Security

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## **Abstract**

Indian economy is growing at a fast pace and is emerging as one of driver of international economic growth. Among the challenges towards ensuring sustained growth is the securing energy supply. Being an energy importing country, it has tried to diversify and secure sources of energy especially oil from many countries including some African countries. Lusophone or Portuguese speaking African countries, in particular, Angola and Mozambique have in the recent past become focus of both policy makers and business groups. India, however, it faces different types of challenges that include instability and endemic conflict in these countries and more importantly active engagement and competition from other countries such as China and Brazil. While Indian policy appears to succeed in Mozambique, its policy in Angola has not yielded similar success.

**Keywords:** Energy security, Lusophone Africa, Mozambique, Angola, India-Africa Partnership

India has been growing at a fast pace and is considered to be one of the emergent drivers of international economic growth. However it faces formidable challenges to attaining both its internal and external goals. Among these challenges is the acute vulnerability it has in attaining energy security. The paper will look at this issue in the context of their growing relationship with Lusophone or Portuguese speaking Africa that includes Angola, Cape

Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea. India's relations with Lusophone countries, in particular with Angola and Mozambique, have traditionally been warm and cordial. They have remained low key with only peripheral engagement. This persisted even after India's renewed focus and engagement with Africa with an emphasis on trade relations.

While India has not been able to make significant inroads into investing in the energy sector in Angola, it is the third major destination for Angolan exports. In the case of Mozambique the recent gas discoveries and large coal deposits have become the main drivers of engagement with India. A host of Indian players both from the public as well as private sectors have been active in mining and other extractive activities. However there is a need to analyse the other factors that impact these engagements such as the instability and endemic conflict in these countries and more importantly active engagement and competition from other countries. These relationships especially with Mozambique are poised at a crucial juncture. If the right enabling environment is created, they have substantial potential to grow. The paper intends to study India's engagement with Lusophone Africa by focusing on Angola and Mozambique and analysing the current challenges and prospects of future trajectory.

The sense of vulnerability that India perceives is partly due to the adverse regional security environment that it finds itself in. These formidable security challenges from its other Asian peers are compounded by China and Japan's quest to have access and control supplies of various commodities such as oil to secure their economic future. This has made the access to oil and energy a security challenge and its disruption is seen as a threat to national security.

## **Energy Security**

The term energy security encompasses many dimensions and the interrelationships that have an impact on the availability of secure energy access at affordable price. These secure supplies should cover both the current needs as well as those in the foreseeable future. As energy security is intrinsically linked to the economic development it has significant implications for emerging and developing societies. Energy security is

defined as the 'ability of an economy to provide sufficient, affordable, and environmentally sustainable energy services so as to maintain a maximum welfare state' (Vosylius *et al.* 2013: 9).

While arguing that global energy consumption will be growing primarily due to demand emanating from Asian countries especially India, China and Japan, Sovacool and Vivoda states that the Asia's oil dependence will increase from 57.5% to 66.4% by 2030. Asia countries will need an investment of about \$7 to \$9.7 trillion in the overall energy sector during the period 2005-2030. Out of this total investment about 60% would be in electricity generation, transmission and distribution (Sovacool & Vivoda 2012: 949-50).

However, more importantly it is not availability of energy or investment in that sector but security of supply has become a key economic and political concern. Also this has global implications. While India, China and Japan account for about 19.3% of world oil demand yet they control only 1.5% of world oil reserves (Sovacool & Vivoda 2012: 950), implying that most of the oil supplies would have to traverse long distances from distant transcontinental oil fields making them vulnerable to disruptions.

In a similar vein Andrew Phillips argues that the emergence of China and India as super consumers and their concurrent securitisation of energy as a policy issue have aggravated pre-existing regional tensions (Phillips 2013: 18). While both have a common interest in securing cheap and reliable access to energy services, there is a growing tendency to approach energy policy as a national security issue cast in increasingly adversarial terms. He defines energy security as the perceptions of the national government that they will have reliable, affordable and uninterrupted access to energy necessary to maintain normal economic activity. He further argues that this subjective perception of the government is conditioned by three considerations. The first is the perceived adequacy of energy services relative to current and prospective demand. The second is the perceived efficiency, flexibility and resilience of the institutions responsible for the allocation of resources associated with energy service provision. The last is the perceived stability and benignity of the larger security order within which energy services are traded internationally.

One basic concern for energy security has been the domination of fossil fuels in the global energy mix and the looming fear of their depletion. Other concern is the supply adequacy based on the government's assessment

of efficiency, flexibility, resilience and responsiveness of domestic as well as international institutions. As a consequence of Asian countries/economies becoming increasingly integrated with the global economy, their needs have also increased and their efforts to secure supplies too have broadened to reach new areas. On the other hand their needs for uninterrupted, affordable energy supply that is resilient to short term disruptions need to be analysed. Similarly another concern is that will this supply be sufficiently adaptive and attract investments to ensure long term global energy security remains a major concern of policy makers of the region. Another important factor is the stability and benignity of the strategic environment as adverse conditions and supply disruptions would cause significant economic loss and hamper developmental efforts.

The tendency to securitise trade of key commodities has historically been the norm in Asia. As India, China and Japan are net energy importers, energy too gets securitised. However a matter of concern is the adversarial manner in which it is being securitised and the way this process is impacting upon the existing alignments patterns to reinforce regional rivalries. China is extremely sensitive to the geopolitical reality that underpins the global energy market, evident in its systematic efforts to expand energy links. Similarly from a supply adequacy perspective India's energy security perception is similar to the Chinese concerns (Philips 2013: 26-27).

It can then be argued that energy security perceptions of a country are a composite of many factors that encompass supply adequacy, institutional efficiency and strategic stability. However some countries such as India due to the precarious situation, in which they find themselves, tend to perceive energy as a national security challenge rather than an exclusively economic issue. As a consequence there is then a tendency to securitise energy policy. As this concern gathered importance and significance, policy makers in India began to frame responses to it and finally the Planning Commission came out with a policy report on it.

## **India's Energy Requirement**

In August 2006, an 'Integrated Energy Policy report' was published by the Planning Commission of India that discussed various issues relating to enhancing India's energy security in a holistic and sustainable manner. The report considered energy as being critical for attaining the country's

development agenda. It conceded that the challenges energy security poses to India are formidable. Meeting its energy needs and providing adequate energy of desired quality and mix in a sustainable manner and at competitive prices will be difficult. The report, according to Dadwal, further argued that India needs to sustain an 8% to 10% economic growth rate, over the next 25 years to achieve poverty eradication and attain its human development goals (Dadwal 2011: 6-7). In order to be able to maintain such a high growth rate India will need to increase its primary energy supply by three to four times. This would entail commercial energy supply to grow from 5.2% to 6.1% per annum and its total primary energy supply from 4.3% to 5.1% annually.

The report further points out that India has around 5.4 billion barrels (750 Mt) of crude oil reserves and 1074 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas reserves. Indigenous oil production has not grown but has rather stagnated in recent years while the demand has grown by 3–5% annually. India is the fourth-largest oil consumer and the sixth-largest oil importer. By 2008–09, oil imports reached nearly 2.4 million barrels per day (mbd), representing 75% of total consumption. Based on the growing trend of demand and no prospects for major increase in production the dependence on imports is likely to increase. A model developed by the Planning Commission estimates different scenarios of energy consumption (<http://indiaenergy.gov.in>). It estimates by the year 2047, if country makes an aggressive effort then the total overall import dependence would be reduced to 38%, 77% in oil, 52% in gas and 19% in coal.

The number of countries from whom India imported oil grew to almost 50 countries in 2009-10 from 35 countries in 2006. The top 13 countries accounted for 95% of India's crude oil imports in 2006-07, but only 86% in 2009-10 implying it was spreading its suppliers (Sharma & Ganeshan 2011: 7). It is interesting to note that in 2006-07, India imported oil from only two African countries: Nigeria and Egypt. However by 2009-10, amongst the top 13 oil supplying countries included Angola that accounted for 5.4% along with Egypt providing 1.5% of India's total crude oil imports. This reflects the growing importance of other African countries such as Angola, from whom energy imports, has grown substantially over the last few years. In 2009-10 Africa provided about 20% of India's total crude oil imports, in comparison to 16% in 2006-07.

Not only does oil form a significant proportion of India's energy basket, it has traditionally relied on West Asia, but the region's volatility has

forced a hunt for alternative sources. As the then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh emphasised ‘our concern for energy security has become an important element of our diplomacy and is shaping our relations with a range of countries across the globe, in West Asia, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America’ (Beri 2011: 5-6). India’s recent engagement with Africa is based on its desire to play a more significant role in the international arena by securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council along with promoting its economic and development interests and goals. Amongst these factors is the country’s quest for energy security. This coupled with new discoveries of oil and gas in sub-Saharan Africa, has made it a new destination of investments and collaborations. India’s growing energy needs have prompted energy co-operation with the African countries. Other factors too contribute towards this thrust as India’s Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, points out in relation to the country’s relations with other countries, ‘the emphasis has been on building an enduring partnership with sustainable development, resting on principles of equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit’ (Beri 2011: 11).

India’s engagement with Africa, it can be argued, is an effort to build a partnership that is founded on mutual needs by ‘sharing our experience, capacity and technology in the energy sector ... building local capacities and ensuring technology transfer’ (Beri 2011: 8). During the 2009 India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference, India identified five main areas of co-operation with African countries. These include apart from buying more crude oil from Africa, investing more in upstream opportunities such as pipelines, refineries and export facilities, source more liquefied natural gas and in exchange provide to these countries with Indian skills, talent and cost-effective technology.

### **Africa's Growing Importance in Global Energy Supply**

The crude oil reserves in Sub-Saharan Africa have several advantages. The first advantage is that the region holds substantial oil reserves. However, unlike oil reserves in different parts of the world, most African reservoirs still remain largely untapped. The development of the productive potential of these reserves can make a significant contribution to global oil supply. Another advantage that most of Africa’s oil is of high quality containing low-sulphur content. Since the mid-1990s most of the new oil discoveries have

been in deep-sea locations making shipping and export to major consuming countries easy. The combination of substantial untapped oil reserves of high quality, along with the possibility of easy access to transportation facilities, according to Gawdat Bahgat, has attracted massive investment from international oil companies towards Africa. These huge and growing investments have contributed to the rise of both proven reserves and actual production of oil (Bahgat 2007: 95).

## **India's Africa Policy**

India's broader engagement with Africa has undergone substantive change over the last decade or so. Africa as a continent has had a long and chequered relationship with India both of which are currently witnessing significant transformation. These internal changes have had a critical and crucial bearing on the emerging pattern of their external engagements. However to understand the dynamics, it is essential to factor in the larger international context and role of various role players, especially former colonial powers. It is also important to understand that the contemporary global landscape is changing into a more complex mosaic of interconnection and engagement between many new players. This change is bringing about a shift in the focus of relationships. It is also essential to study the context of transformation of Africa for an effective understanding of future trends in the engagement.

Traditionally Indian policy towards Africa was to support decolonisation efforts and anti-apartheid movement against South Africa. In the 1960s and 1970s the focus expanded to include common development challenges and need for a New International Economic Order. These policies remained merely symbolic like for example the South-South co-operation's implementation has remained very notional. The relationship became even more indifferent during the early post-Cold War period due to the redundancy of the anti colonial and anti apartheid agenda that had brought Africans and Indians together. After the start of economic reforms in 1991, India's foreign policy became increasingly pragmatic. The focus shifted to economic diplomacy and in the initial years Africa was ignored or overlooked in an effort to engage with more developed economies.

India, however, had been trying with limited success to leverage the ITEC programme of training facilities and project expertise with Africa. It

also tried to showcase the Indian developmental experience of over six decades through an incremental process of trial and error in a diverse, pluralistic democracy. This developmental experience, due to the similarities that exist between India and Africa, was projected as having a special relevance to the needs of the continent. In a major initiative the Indian President Dr. APJ Abul Kalam, during a visit to Africa in September 2004, announced the setting up of the Pan African e-Connectivity initiative to connect all countries of Africa. These relations took a major positive turn as a consequence of Indian ambition to play a more proactive global role. The holding of the India-Africa Forum Summits in 2008 and 2011 is a pointer to the growing Indian interest in the continent. While on the other hand African countries too are trying to broaden their engagements beyond Europe. This convergence has provided a mutually sustainable platform for policy planners on both sides.

The first ever India-Africa Forum Summit, attended by the countries representing AU and the Regional Economic Communities of Africa was held in 2008. Leaders of 14 African countries and the AU Commission participated in it. It represented an important turning point in the engagement with Africa. The Summit adopted the Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Cooperation to act as the blueprint for cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The framework outlines the priority areas for future co-operation that included capacity building, agricultural infrastructure development, health and food security, energy security and technological co-operation.

India also announced during the summit, unilateral duty free and preferential market access for exports from all Least Developed Countries. There are 34 such countries in Africa. These concessions will cover 94% of India's total tariff lines and provide preferential market access on tariff lines that comprise 92.55% of global exports of all Least Developed Countries. Products of immediate interest to Africa include cotton, cocoa, aluminium ores, copper ores, cashew nuts, cane sugar, ready-made garments, fish fillets and non-industrial diamonds. India would also double its quantum of credit to US\$ 5.4 billion from US\$ 2.15 billion over five years. It also announced the setting up many Institutions such as the CV Raman International Fellowship for African Researchers, which was instituted along with doctoral fellowships in agriculture.

The second Africa-India Forum Summit was held in Addis Ababa in May 2011. The theme of the summit was 'Enhanced Partnership and Shared



Vision'. Two important documents were adopted at the Summit *viz.* The Addis Ababa Declaration and the Framework for Enhanced Cooperation. There was an effort to give further impetus to capacity and institution building. The focus areas for partnership included agriculture, trade, industry especially small and medium enterprises, finance to sports and tourism. Apart from credit for development, many new institutes of learning were to be set up in different African countries with a focus on agriculture and rural development, food processing, textiles, weather forecasting, life and earth sciences. It was agreed to 'continue our dialogue, deepen our friendship and enhance our cooperation, under the theme: Enhancing Partnership: Shared Vision.' (Addis Declaration 2011: 1) The summit was envisaged to reaffirm that Africa and India are fraternal partners due to the historical understanding. There was also a commitment as part of this partnership to deepen the process of African integration, promote a culture of peace and recognition of diversity through the consolidation of democracy.

It also noted that the economic growth in Africa had been revived to pre crisis levels and many new avenues and opportunities for economic partnership have emerged especially in the context that India was becoming a significant driver of global growth. Another factor that was addressed was the need to productively utilise the growing numbers and aspirations of youth from both India and Africa. After the Delhi Summit, there had been an increase of financial flows from India to Africa. Many of these were primarily focused on capacity building, human resource development and support to infrastructure, agriculture and SMEs. At the Addis Summit it was decided to build upon this by focusing on inclusive growth and socio-economic development.

The third edition of the India Africa Forum Summit was to be held in 2014 but was postponed due the change of government in Delhi. It is expected to be held sometime in the latter part of 2015. The summit's format and the deliberation would provide a pointer to the new government's priorities and agenda as well as the responses to the expectations of the African leadership and the future road map for the engagement.

## **Energy Engagement between India and Lusophone Africa**

Other areas that have emerged as major drivers of India-Africa engagement is India's energy deficit, a seat in the reformed United Nations Security Council

and the Indian Diaspora. These are defining Africa's growing importance in India's foreign policy. However the need to safeguard and sustain its economic development in a turbulent strategic and economic environment has become a critical challenge for policy framers in India. The inward-looking economic policy of India was replaced as a consequence of the economic reforms that were launched in 1991. Within a decade after launching these reforms i.e. by the turn of the century India became the fourth largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity. It is anticipated to overtake all the Western nations, except the US, in terms of economic size by the end of current decade and the US economy by 2050 (Beri 2011: 7). This rapid economic growth has propelled India to become a major player in the international system with growing stakes. However to sustain the high economic growth witnessed in recent years, there is a critical need for India secure its energy supplies.

India's relations with Lusophone African countries have traditionally been warm and cordial. But relationships with Angola and Mozambique have remained low key with only peripheral engagement until recently. India and Angola relations stretches back to the period of nationalist struggle when India supported the MPLA in its struggle against Portuguese colonial authority. India has been part of all the three UN verification missions to Angola from 1989 to 1997. There have been limited high level exchanges between the two countries. For instance, the late Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Angola in May 1986 while the Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos paid a return visit to India in April 1987. The then Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. Anand Sharma visited Angola in June 2007 and the Minister of State for Commerce Mr. Jairam Ramesh in March 2008. In January 2010 the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Mr. Murli Deora went to Angola with a delegation from the oil and gas Public Sector Undertakings to deliberate on the potential for a partnership in the energy sector. Similarly there have been regular visits from the Angolan side to India. Some notable visits include the visit of the Minister for External Relations Mr. Joao Bernardo de Miranda in May 2006 and the Minister for Petroleum Mr. Jose Maria Botelho De Vasconcelos in October 2010. The Minister of External Relations Mr. Georges R Chikoti attended the India-LDC Ministerial Conference in New Delhi in February 2011.

However, as is clear from the above the visits are few and far between, but in the recent past a host of business delegations, some from

individual companies and some facilitated by the chambers of commerce like the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) have visited to discuss trade and investment opportunities. The low frequency of visits by political leaders reflects fleeting attention among them for sustain their engagement and promote economic interests. Along with this is the inability of the business community to create a space for themselves while resisting the stiff competition from other countries like China but more formidably from Brazil which shares cultural and linguistic affinity.

In the case of Mozambique the relationship extends to the pre colonial period when merchants from west coast of India particularly from Gujarat sailed across the Indian Ocean. After Mozambique got its independence from Portugal, India was among the first countries to open its mission in 1975. Some high level exchanges have taken place between the two countries. The first Mozambican President Samora Machel visited India in 1982, which was reciprocated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in April 1982. President Joaquim Alberto Chissano has visited India twice - once in May 1988 and then in May 2003. President Armando Guebuza paid a state visit to India in September-October 2010. More recently in August 2015, President Mr. Filipe Nyusi, who is product of Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad, paid a state visit where a host of new agreements were reached. The change in leadership and growth in investment may lead to new climate of engagement and shift them to a deeper engagement.

This low level emphasis persisted even after India renewed its focus and engagement with Africa with a substantial economic component. While India has not been able to make significant inroads into investing in the energy sector in Angola, it is the third major destination for Angolan exports which primarily consists of oil and gas. In the case of Mozambique the recent gas discoveries and presence of large coal deposits have become the main drivers of engagement. A host of Indian players both from the public as well as private sectors have been active in the mining and extractive sector. About quarter of Indian investment in Africa have been made in Mozambique. After this brief discussion on India Lusophone Africa engagement, a look at the development and evolution of the energy sector in these countries is important to further the analysis.

Though the civil war ended in 2002 Angola the country still faces formidable developmental challenges. Endemic abject poverty has more than a third of the population living below the poverty line. The world's falling oil

prices have burnt a hole in the government's revenue and have led to cuts in its spending. The Angolan government recently increased oil prices by up to 28 % in April 2015 leading to widespread protests in Angola. The imminent change of national leadership in 2016 has also added to the prevalent state of insecurity in that country.

Angola became the largest oil producer in Africa in 2008 when it briefly overtook Nigeria (Hammond 2011: 345). It is currently the second largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa. In the Angolan economy, according to Hammond, the share of oil is about 45% of the country's GDP, 90% of exports and 90% of government revenues. Most of the oil fields in Angola are offshore fields. On one hand being off shore fields makes the export and shipping easier while on the other hand it get disconnected and insulated from political risks and more importantly scrutiny by local opponents of the regime.

The oil produced is of low sulphur content and of a high quality. Oil was discovered in Angola in 1955 and attempts to exploit it were initiated by the Portuguese colonial administration. By 1973 it had become Angola's chief export accounting for about one third of its total exports. Oil production continued during a 13-year war of liberation that culminated in the country's independence in 1975. Similarly the civil war that lasted from 1977 to 2002 did not impact the production of oil. The national oil company *Sociedade Nacional de Combustíveis de Angola* (Sonangol) was established in 1976, based on the departing SACOR, the Portuguese oil concessionaire. Sonangol is the sole concessionaire for oil exploration and production in the country. Angola joined OPEC in 2007. It received a quota of 1.9 million bpd. As of January 2008, its proven reserves were calculated at 9.0 billion barrels, up from 8.0 billion in 2007.

Most of Angola's oil is found in the Cabinda area that is an enclave territorially separate from Angola, sandwiched on the coast between the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has both onshore and offshore oil reserves. Its domestic consumption is partly refined at two refineries at Luanda and in a new refinery in Lobito that started production in 2012. In 2014, Angola produced 1.7 million barrels of crude oil per day; Angola's oil production had been steady rising at an annual rate of about 15% during the period 2002 to 2008 due to production from different deepwater fields. It is estimated that Angola earned \$24 billion in net oil export revenue in 2014 (unadjusted for inflation), \$3 billion less than in 2013

because of decreased production and falling prices. Angola's dependence on oil revenue makes it vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices (US Energy Information Administration, 2015). According to data from the World Bank, GDP growth fell to 2.4% in 2009 from 13.8% in the previous year as a consequence of the global financial crisis and the drop in oil prices, but it recovered to 6.8% in 2013 as oil prices increased. However for the year 2014 it again fell to 4.4% due to falling prices (World Bank).

India-Angola bilateral trade, increased from US\$ 1286.184 million during 2007-08 financial year to US\$ 8731.91 million in 2012-13 – more than a seven fold increase over a five-year period. However the provisional figures for the year 2013-14 indicate that bilateral trade will be lower at US\$ 6515.55 million. India is now the second largest trading partner of Angola after China, sharing about 10.6% of Angola's external trade. In Sub-Saharan Africa Angola is also the second largest supplier of crude oil to India after Nigeria. GAIL and other Indian companies have shown interest in imports of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LNG) from Angola in their effort to supplement supplies to satiate India's energy requirements. They have however not been able to gain entry and invest in the energy sector. While the principal items of Indian exports are tractors and transport vehicles, agricultural machinery and implements, food and meat products, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, finished leather, paper/wood products.

In September 2014, in Mozambique, the FRELIMO<sup>1</sup> government and RENAMO<sup>2</sup> had agreed to the demobilisation of erstwhile rebels and process of their subsequent integration into the army, police and society. An international mission was sent to help in this effort. However even as the mandate of the mission is to expire in mid-May 2015, there has been no substantive movement on the ground. The RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama has threatened to divide the country. There are also reports of attacks on army base by rebels. All this put a question mark on the fragile

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<sup>1</sup> *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* or Mozambique Liberation Front is the dominant political party in Mozambique founded in 1962, FRELIMO began as a liberation movement fighting for the independence.

<sup>2</sup> *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* or Mozambican National Resistance is another liberation movement that turned into a political party in Mozambique. It also fought against the FRELIMO in the Mozambican Civil War.

peace that was reached between the government and RENAMO and heightens the prospects of instability.

Mozambique has large onshore and offshore sedimentary basins that have a high prospect to yield hydrocarbon resources. Currently there are four proven gas fields all of which are located onshore in the Mozambique basin: Pande, Buzi, Temane, and Inhassoro. Estimates of the natural gas reserves in Mozambique were about 4.5 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) in early 2013. Currently Mozambique produced only a small amount of natural gas from the Pande and Temane fields, which are both operated by Sasol, a South African company. Most of this natural gas is exported to South Africa via the 535-mile Sasol Petroleum International Gas Pipeline. However once the off shore Rovuma basin fields begin production in 2019, the total output would increase considerably. India is one of the prospective users of this natural gas and has made investments in this sector. In the coal sector Mozambique surpassed Zimbabwe to become the second-largest coal producer in Africa after South Africa in 2012. Mozambican coal production significantly increased to nearly 5.4 million tons in 2012 from a mere 42,000 tons in 2010. A substantial portion of this is exported to South Africa and Asian countries, including India.

India-Mozambique bilateral relationship has started to expand recently. India is the eighth largest investor according to Mozambique's Investment Promotion Centre (CPI). About US\$128 million of investment has taken place till 2014. However this figure excludes investment in the extractive sector which are substantive and account for about fourth of Indian investments in Africa according to Prime Minister's statement during the state visit of President Mr. Filipe Nyusi in August 2015. (MEA, GoI). ONGC Videsh and Oil India Limited have recently taken 20% stake in the Andarko led consortium in the north of Mozambique at a cost of about US\$5 billion. In addition, some other Indian companies are investing in coal, mineral and hydrocarbon sectors. These include Tata Steel, JSPL, JSW, Essar, Coal India Ltd in coal sector and BPRL in hydrocarbon sector. Indian investments face competition from Brazil, Portugal and South Africa are the three main investors in the country.

Bilateral trade with Mozambique was US\$709.61 million in 2010-11 and US\$631.76 million in 2011-12. During 2012-13, the trade has crossed the US\$1 billion target set by the leaders of the two countries in 2010 and amounted to US\$1281.41 million registering an impressive increase of

102.41% compared 2011-12. Similarly in 2014- 15 total trade was US\$2396.58 million, with Indian exports to Mozambique at US\$2070.84 million registering an increase of 64.72% and Indian imports at US\$325.74 million registering an increase of 11.19% over 2013-14. (MEA, GoI)

As is clear from the foregoing discussion though Lusophone Africa provides a new and important destination for securing energy security by diversifying both the sources and energy mix. It however has to contend with three main challenges. The first is the persistent and endemic conflicts these countries have been witnessing. Unless these societies are stable and provide a conducive condition for mutually beneficial engagement, the future can be uncertain.

Both Angola and Mozambique face multiple and complex challenges while they address endemic conflict in their quest for a sustained peaceful development. The genesis of these conflicts can be traced to the harsh and brutal colonial rule and its disruptive legacies. The independence was achieved after a long armed liberation struggle leading to post liberation civil war for supremacy and domination amongst different contending groups. These groups used natural resources like diamond to fund and sustain their armed struggles. They also got enmeshed into the cold war rivalry and became pawns of different regional and extra regional powers. Even though peace accords have been signed, developmental work in terms of creating both hard and soft infrastructure has a long and difficult path to traverse before tangible benefits can be seen. Though peace has been achieved and civil war ended but it is fragile and prone to crumble. The recent threats from RANAMO are a pointer to this possibility. Making this task even more difficult is the potential for external interference by powerful developed countries which can use these cleavages to reignite the civil strife and then bargain for better terms.

The next major challenge that India-Lusophone Africa engagement encounter is the presence of many old as well as new players. While India has certain advantages but Brazil for instance has the benefit of linguistic camaraderie that it has been using effectively to even displace the Chinese companies. This does not undermine the capacity and ability of Chinese companies to out bid competition. Lastly the traditional players such as EU and United States should not be written off. They enjoy many advantages that their long relationship provides.

The last challenge is the capacity of India to be able to have the stam-

ina and vision to be there for the long haul. The private sector driven by its profitability motive tends to focus towards greener pastures. While Africa in general and Lusophone Africa in particular do provide ample opportunities but are very particular with respect to their yearning for development. In this respect they expect the engagement to be based on mutual benefit and enhancing opportunities for them as well.

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# **An Appraisal of India-Nigeria Historical and Contemporary Relations**

**Adaora Osondu-Oti**

## **Abstract**

Close interaction between India and African countries predates their respective independence. There are numerous areas in which collaboration between India and Nigeria occurred, providing a platform to consolidate their common areas of interests. In the British colonial Africa including Nigeria, the Second World War marked a period of comradeship and sharing of experiences between Indian soldiers and Nigerian soldiers. It is well known that Indians and Nigerians established contact through the migration of indentured labourers from India that were part of the British colonial ventures to Nigeria. India also established its diplomatic mission in Nigeria two years prior to Nigeria's independence. Later on after Nigeria's independence, India-Nigeria's political relations received a boost in such forums as the Non-aligned Movement and British initiated Commonwealth. More importantly in the spirit of South-South Solidarity established at the Bandung Conference of 1955 in Indonesia, India's close co-operation with Nigeria was evident in the military, economic and socio-cultural fields. While economic relations were visible, the impacts of Indian businesses were not significant except for 'known' Indian firm such as Chellarams that established its presence in Nigeria as early as 1923 and was into textile trading. However, with India's economic reform and current positive economic growth, a new impetus is being witnessed in India's economic relations with Nigeria. While many are aware of India's role in pushing forward non-aligned movement and its third world solidarity gospel in relations with African countries, Nigeria inclusive, many are unaware of the strides being made today by Indian companies in Nigeria, especially in the extractive and manufacturing sector. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to examine the 'new emerging spots' and where the future of India-Nigeria relations lay.

**Keywords:** Appraisal, India, Nigeria, Historical, Contemporary, Relations

## **Introduction**

It is a known fact that relations between India and Nigeria started prior to Nigeria's independence in 1960. The migration of Indians as part of indentured labour to British colonies marked the beginning of interactions between Indians and Nigerians, since their first arrival in Nigeria in the 1890s. At the Bandung Conference of 1955, India made its first post-colonial contact with Africa. Nigeria was not yet independent and was not represented in that Conference, yet India established its diplomatic mission in Nigeria in 1958. Having gained its independence in 1947, India's establishment of its diplomatic mission two years prior to Nigeria's independence came partly because of the colonial linkage India shared with Nigeria, and also because of the fact that India knew that Nigeria (the most populous country in Africa) cannot be ignored in its then political agenda, that is, supporting African countries liberate themselves from colonialism (part of the texts contained in the Bandung Declaration).

India's gaining of independence before the African countries, spurred India's leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, into playing the international role as champion and leader against colonialism and racism in Africa. Moreover, India's large population and territory impressed on its leaders the notion of power and a leading role (Bukarambe 1989:91), among developing countries, and these contributed a lot to India's role in Africa after its independence. At the height of the Cold War, India came up with the Non-Alignment Policy; a wider Third World force in which participants avowed their distance from the two superpowers rivalry; aligning themselves neither with the United States, nor with the former Soviet Union (Osondu 2014). From the 1960s, to the 1990s, India pursued a political agenda with the purpose of strengthening South-South connection and solidarity. For instance, India brazenly supported African liberation against colonialism and apartheid, and gave impetus to the idea of Non Aligned Movement (NAM). It effectively used NAM as a platform to champion Third World dependencies against colonial powers, through which Nigeria also developed a voice in the world politics. Even though there is evidence of Indian Diaspora engaging in businesses in Nigeria, such as wholesale textile trading with major Indian firm such as Chellarams, India's economic impact was minimal (Osondu 2014).

However, with the successes of the economic reform embarked upon since 1991, India began to engage Nigeria anew at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. India's rapid economic growth, at almost 8 percent annually, brought about a renewed interest in Africa's most populous country; this time not focusing on Nigeria as collaborator to fight colonialism/racism/Western oppression, or as non aligned partner, but as a country with enormous resources, raw-materials and a large market for its manufactured goods. The burgeoning relations between India and Nigeria have been witnessing remarkable changes since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order to understand fully the dynamics of the contemporary relations between the two countries, there is a need to examine them in a historical perspective. Hence, the succeeding sections are structured in the following ways: the first is a historical overview of India-Nigeria relations; the second examines India-Nigeria relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and the third section captures some of India's contemporary relations with Nigeria in order to ascertain the changes in the 'new' India-Nigeria relationship. The fourth section, which is the last section, arrives at a conclusion on the nature of India-Nigeria contemporary relations.

### **India-Nigeria Relations: Historical Overview**

The first period of India-African contact began in the era of colonialism, when Indians got involved with Africa, through the arrival of Indian capitalists, especially from Gujarat who traded with the African continent; and, Indian troops, who were part of the British colonial ventures (Sharma 2008). Indian workforces and indentured labourers were also employed in plantations and railway construction in various African countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Voll, 2010: 2). Anirudha (1979: 264) noted that during the period of British rule some five million Indians migrated to different colonies of the British empire, including South Africa, Mauritius and Nigeria, mostly under the system of indentured labour. Indians began arriving Lagos in the 1890s (Sachdev 2012). The migration of these Indians to the British colonies in Africa marked the beginning of an emergent long time relationship between India and Nigeria. The second period of India-Africa relations started with the politics of decolonisation and independence of African nations (Sharma 2008), who were mostly under colonial rule when India's long liberation battle against British rule came to an end. India

became independent in 1947, and ‘when India became independent, there were only four sovereign states in Africa: Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa (Pham 2007: 342).

Following independence, India’s leader Jawaharlal Nehru saw its international role as champion of struggles against colonialism and racism (Naidu 2009: 112). It was India’s large population and territory that impressed upon its leaders the role they could play in assisting other colonised countries in their fight against colonial rule. For Nehru, advocating decolonisation was part of the Afro-Asian resurgence and India’s policy was wholly influenced by his missionary zeal to end colonialism, racial domination and discrimination in the African territories (Singh 2007: 3). In 1955 the Bandung Conference was organised that brought together Asia and African countries formally for the first time to chart the way forward from colonial liberation and independence. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru played a leading role in convening the Bandung Conference, which brought together representatives of African and Asian countries, and later gave rise to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the midst of the Cold War. It was one Conference that was organised without the participation of the Western powers. It was argued that India’s interests in Africa emerged from Jawaharlal Nehru’s simple assessment of Africa where he stated that ‘though separated by the Indian Ocean, Africa is in a sense our next door neighbour’ (cited in Ahmed 2005: 30). For instance, New Delhi’s contribution to isolate internationally the apartheid regime in South Africa and the colonial regime in Namibia and Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) were remarkable (Voll 2010). Prime Minister Nehru demonstrated the commitment of India in the fight against racism and colonialism; he was once quoted to have said ‘we are particularly interested in the emancipation of colonial and dependent countries and in the recognition of the theory and practice of equal opportunities of all races’ (India Council for World Affairs 1964).

Nevertheless, India’s international standing was later rendered yet more marginal by the death in 1964 of Nehru, the chief architect of India’s foreign policy of South-South cooperation (Naidu 2009). The succession of Indira Gandhi to the Premiership following the death of her father brought a reassessment of India’s African policy. With her visit to African countries such as Zambia in 1964 after first attending Kenya’s independence ceremony in 1963, India’s engagement moved ‘from treating Africa as a homogeneous bloc to more selective friendship with particular African states’ (Naidu 2009).

After Indira Gandhi's assassination, Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister tried to maintain the tempo in India's relations with Africa. In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi established the Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid Fund (AFRICA), under the auspices of Non Aligned Movement to assist the frontline states in Southern Africa to withstand the apartheid regime's strategy of destabilization (Badejo 1987). India's early relations with Africa were premised on the moral ground that it shared Africa's history of subjection and humiliation through colonialism (Naidu 2009).

Moreover, its role in helping African countries to choose the path of independence endeared India to Africans. For instance, it was India's peaceful path to independence that provided the impetus and *modus operandi* for Nigerian nationalists in the struggle for Nigeria's independence. Nigerian nationalists pursued the method of non-violence (that is, a peaceful path) in the struggle to achieve independence, in contrast to many African states that employed armed struggle and violence. It was India's Mahatma Gandhi that initiated the philosophy of Satyagraha, or non violence to the issue of racism in South Africa. Upon his return to India, Gandhi successfully implemented this Satyagraha philosophy to frustrate British rule in India, arguing that it places the battle by unarmed Indians against colonialism in India's favour. Later, Gandhi's method won the hearts and minds of African nationalists such as Obafemi Awolowo, Mbonu Ojike, Adegoke Adelabu, Albert Lutuli, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah, who began to implement the non violence method in their respective countries.

It was in that light (non-violence method) that Nkrumah launched 'positive action' in Ghana in the early 1950s, and Mbonu Ojike began the famous 'boycott the boycottable' drive in Nigeria (Badejo 1987:239). The boycott movement launched in Nigeria by Mbonu Ojike was inspired by the Swadeshi movement in India (Singh 2007: 2). The Swadeshi movement had its genesis in the anti-partition movement which was started in order to oppose the British decision to partition Bengal, the nerve centre of Indian nationalism. Thus, following the principles of Swadeshi (self sufficiency), an economic strategy such as boycotting British manufactured goods and promoting Indian-made goods were adopted in the Movement. The cumulative impacts of the philosophies of the people of India, including Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy, the Swadeshi movement and Jawaharlal Nehru's policy of freeing countries from Western domination were what influenced pioneering Nigerian nationalists and politicians. In 1960, Nigeria

became independent, and in acknowledging the pre and post independence influence of India on Nigeria, President Shehu Shagari expounded in his visit to India in 1983 that:

We come to salute India, the largest democracy in the world. We also come to learn from India, as we have been learning, beginning from the example of your (India's) great Mahatma Ghandi, the greatest hero of all colonial peoples throughout modern history. The moral force of his (Ghandi's) passive resistance philosophy ultimately led to victory. This has been the source of inspiration to all of us (as colonial appendages) and has guided us in our own struggles to achieve our own freedom from colonialism and exploitation. We also watched with interest the achievement of your republican status within the Commonwealth. We followed your example and your model (Cited in Kura 2009).

More importantly, India's establishment of its Diplomatic House in Nigeria in 1958 (two years prior to Nigeria's independence) laid the foundation for what later concretised into sustainable bilateral relations between India and Nigeria. India welcomed Nigeria during its admission to the United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth. While India's relations with Africa were heavily skewed towards Ghana (Naidu 2009: 113), Nigeria also received attention. Thousands of students from Nigeria attended Universities in India, and India helped set up the Nigeria Defence Academy (Singh, 2007). India's engagement with Nigeria (just like other African countries) was strengthened by the 1962 border dispute with China. Nigeria was actually among the countries (Ethiopia, Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo, and Libya) that rallied to India's support mainly due to Nigerian government opposition to communist ideology and lukewarm attitudes towards the communist countries, China inclusive. The Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, condemned what he saw as Chinese intransigence and called on all friends of India to speak out in defence of that which was right for endurance of world peace (Badejo 1987: 241). Nigeria openly and vehemently condemned China and declared its support for India, with the help from the media as well, such as, the Daily Telegraph (1962: 90) which stressed in an editorial that:

India, which believes solidly in non-violence, has been forced into violence by communist (China), which needs extra territory for her teeming millions, and to do this, she has embarked on an (act of) aggression on Indian territories. The eyes of the world are watching this assault and those who keep an open mind agree that China is committing an (act of) aggression on India.

India as former British Colony, shares a similar background with Anglophone African countries as Nigeria, which they continue to strengthen in the Commonwealth Forum. At the UN and the Commonwealth, Nigeria and India have worked closely together. India is the largest country in the Commonwealth and Nigeria is Africa's largest country in the Commonwealth. This connection enhances familiarity and eases cooperation (Bukarambe 1989: 101). India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru visited Nigeria in 1962 and in the following year, 1963, only three years after Nigeria's independence, India was invited to establish a Defence Academy for Nigeria (Olusegun 2012). The South-South solidarity India shared with Nigeria, and the collaboration in 'anti-colonial struggles in Africa created affinity and mutual goodwill and cooperation between both countries' (Osita 2008: 33).

### **The Nature of India-Nigeria Relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

India's 20<sup>th</sup> century relations with Nigeria (just like other African countries) were centred on advancing the South-South linkage/connection established formally at the Bandung Conference. It was in the spirit of Bandung, that India started its support for African countries liberation from colonialism. At the outset of formal relations with Africa, India's stance was geared towards promoting South-South Cooperation. With the policy of Non-Aligned Movement and South-South cooperation to end colonialism established first during the 1955 Africa-Asia Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, India's Cold War policy was targeted at implementing greater cooperation with developing countries, where it belongs. While China can make the claim that it has never enslaved or colonised Africa, India can also premise its own relationship with the continent on the same moral ground (Naidu 2010). What distinguishes India-Africa relations (as well as China) from Africa's relations with traditional partners (in Europe and North America) is the sense of



solidarity established as developing countries. For instance, after Nigeria's independence, India-Nigeria relations focused on the need to support other African countries to gain their freedom from colonialism and Western oppression; they were at the forefront of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles. The two countries became involved in peacekeeping activities in Africa.

India as well as Nigeria sent troops to Congo during the Congo's crisis of 1960-1963 under the auspices of UN peacekeeping operations (Kura 2009). Also, during the Angolan Civil War, India recognised the MPLA (Movements Populaire de Libération de Angola), which Nigeria also openly supported. India's African policy objectives were focused on strengthening South-South solidarity, ending colonialism and apartheid in South Africa, while maintaining non-alignment. The major economic programme India engaged in was the India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), which India established in 1964. It was the Sino-Indian border dispute that led to India's launch of the Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation (ITEC) in 1964 as a strategy to win more support from Africa. Indian experts were sent to Nigeria under the Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation (ITEC) agreement from 1971 (Kura 2009) to assist in training of Nigerian professionals. The ITEC programme became the avenue through which India shares its knowledge and expertise with thousands of young Africans through structured and relevant training courses (Ahmed 2005: 30). In line with its technical aid programme, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between India and Nigeria in 1975 for India to provide training services to 500 Nigerian teacher trainees. Also, in a visit to India by the Nigerian Oil Corporation delegation in 1974, requests were forwarded to Indian government regarding providing training facilities for Nigerian engineers, geologists and technicians in the oil industry. During the visit, arrangements for a special training programme at the Institute of Petroleum Exploration at Dehra-Dun were completed. As a follow up to the MOU, a batch of 22 Nigerian professionals underwent training in oil exploration at Dehra-Dun in 1974 (Kura 2009).

In India's early contact with Africa, India had limited resources to engage in greater economic activities. India was suffering from a 'Hindu rate of growth' during the post independence period (Rodrik & Subramanian 2005). The Hindu rate of growth is a derogatory term referring to low annual growth rate of the planned economy of India before the liberalisation of 1991,

which stagnated around 3.5% to 1980s. The per capita income of India was estimated at \$61.00 in 1961, among the lowest in the world (Appadorai 1963: 483). Thus, India's economic relation with Africa progressed at a snail's pace (Modi & Shekhawat 2009: 32). Through this minimal interaction, India had to provide credit facilities, and at times, grants tied to the purchase of Indian goods and expertise (Badejo 1987: 247). Thus, India focused more on voicing out its non support against colonialism and apartheid in international forums such as the United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth. For example, India was the first country to table South Africa's legislated forms of discrimination through the ideology of apartheid in the UN assembly in 1964 (Badejo 1987). Primarily, India was constrained by 'poverty' at home, and also, fraught relations with neighbours, notably Pakistan and China, and an anxiety to avoid taking sides in the Cold War' (*The Economist* 2011).

## **India's Contemporary Relations with Nigeria: Emerging Areas**

In response to a fiscal and balance of payments crisis, India launched a program of economic policy reforms in 1991 (Bajpai 2002: 1). Though economic liberalization in India can be traced back to the late 1970s, economic reforms began in earnest only in July 1991 (Panagariya 2001: 1). India's reform aimed at reducing the extent of Government controls over various aspects of the domestic economy, increasing the role of the private sector, redirecting scarce public sector resources to areas where the private sector is unlikely to enter, and opening up the economy to trade and foreign investment (Ahluwalia 1994: 1). With the reforms, the ambitions of the Indian private sector rapidly developed, as did new approaches to engage the Indian Diaspora, particularly under the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from 1998 (Lall 2001).

As a result, India's relations with Nigeria is being intensified given their experienced economic boom (economy is growing at the rate of almost 8 percent annually). According to Jagtiani (2012: 3), India now views Africa through a strategic lens and has realised that economic engagement with African countries could serve its present national interests, in terms of ensuring economic security. India's Africa policy currently focuses on three major areas: energy acquisition, market quest for its manufactured goods and

market quest for investments. For instance, according to Obi (2010), a key foreign policy priority for India is energy security. India's need for resources (especially crude oil) has increased. India's domestic crude oil consumption is around 113 million tonnes (2.2 million barrels per day) of which 1.5 million barrels are imported (Beri 2007:47). When United States' National Intelligence Council drew up its *Mapping the Global Future*, in 2005, it forecast that if India maintains its present growth rates, by 2020, India would increase its energy consumption by 100% (Fiori 2010). With only 0.4 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and no significant oil discoveries since the 1970s, India's oil needs has to be sourced externally (Naidu 2010), which makes Nigeria (the largest oil producing country in Africa) a great source of attraction.

The Indian government through its state owned oil companies has been scouting for energy in Nigeria. India's ONGC Videsh Limited, a state-owned company is making significant deals in Nigeria's crude oil sector, and also private oil companies such as Essar, Sterling Group and Sandesara. Indian oil companies participated in Nigerian bid rounds in 2005-2007 and won 6 oil blocs: ONGC Mittal (OMEL) won 3 oil prospecting license (OPL), known as OPL 279, OPL 285 and OPL 297 (these number are serially assigned to oil companies by the Nigerian government when they acquire blocs in Nigeria). Sterling oil company won 2 (OPL 2005 AND OPL 2006) and ESSar won 1 (OPL 226). Also, ONGC Mittal Energy Ltd (OMEL) entered into a US\$6 billion infrastructure deal with Nigeria in exchange for two offshore acreages and oil exploration rights (Naidu 2010). This investment by India termed 'aid for oil strategy' (Obi 2009:204) was a deal to establish a refinery, power plants and railway lines in Nigeria.

In its quest for energy security, India, like China, has also started striking 'oil for infrastructure' deals in Africa. India's investments in overseas exploration and energy projects have risen to over US\$3 billion (Ganguly 2007). National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), an Indian company into oil refinery has invested up to US\$3.5 billion in Nigeria. India Oil Corporation (IOC) into LNG plant and oil refinery has proposed US\$ 2-4 billion investment in Nigeria (Naidu 2010: 38). Also Oil India, an Indian oil Company has invested 25% stake in Sunetra, Nigeria known as OPL 205 (Naidu 2009: 119). In an interview with Mr. Sachdev, the Indian High Commissioner, Abuja, he noted that in 2011 India's Sterling Group started oil production in their acquired oil blocs in Niger Delta. Also in 2012, the

Sandesara Group celebrated the production of one million barrels of Brent crude oil from its newly launched operations in Nigeria (Pathak 2012: 50). India's interest in Nigeria's crude oil is huge. With 23.9 million tonnes of purchases, India was the largest importer of crude oil from Saudi Arabia; followed by imports from Nigeria at 15 million tonnes, United Arab Emirates at 9 million tonnes and Iran at 6.4 million tonnes (Beri 2007: 47). Nigeria ranks second only to Saudi Arabia for their crude oil imports (Sharma & Mahajan 2007:41; Beri 2005: 381), making Nigeria India's first and largest source of hydrocarbons in Africa. Oil constitutes more than 96% of Indian imports from Nigeria (Beri 2003).

Moreover, with India's increasing industrial production, India requires more markets for its manufactured goods. In other words, rapid economic development has made India keen for new markets (Shekhawat 2005). Nigeria, with its large market is attractive for India to sell its industrially produced goods. Nigeria is currently India's second largest trading partner in Africa, not just because of India's import of Nigeria's crude oil but mainly due to its large export of manufactured goods to Nigeria. The fact that India has a rich stock of skilled labour compared to Nigeria, advanced manufacturing industries give it comparative strength not just in rendering professional services but in trading in manufactured products as well. India's export basket to Nigeria is dominated by manufactured items such as machinery and instruments, rice, pharmaceuticals, electronics, transport equipment, vehicles and tricycles. In Africa, Nigeria is the largest importer of India's manufactured products such as medicaments (26%), machinery and appliances (32%), cycles (25%) and aluminium and aluminium alloys (41%). Nigeria is a major importer of pharmaceuticals from India, importing more than 35% of generic pharmaceuticals/branded drugs. In West Africa, Nigeria was the first to import anti-retrovirals from India's Cipla and Ranbaxy Pharmaceutical Companies (Ministry of Commerce, India, 2011).

Another area of India's interest has to do with the quest for market expansion for its companies to invest. At the moment, large numbers of Indian companies have made (still making) substantial investments in Nigeria. As of 2012, India's estimated investment in Nigeria was \$9 billion plus \$5 billion committed (Interview with Mr. Sachdev, Indian High Commissioner Abuja, on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2013). India is rated the highest investor in Nigeria as of 2010 and its companies as one of the major

employers of labour (Indian High Commission in Abuja, 2013). Being that India has been on the African continent for decades, the large Indian Diaspora, whose members have business ties to India and a good knowledge of Africa are today playing a significant role in attracting new investments to the continent (Broadman 2007:97). For instance, the India-Nigeria Friendship Association was formed in 1978 in Nigeria, and later in the following year, the Indian Cultural Association was also formed in Nigeria; these groups have often helped to strengthen business and socio-cultural cooperation between Indians and Nigeria. According to the Indian High Commissioner, there are more 35, 000 people of Indian origin in Nigeria. India's increasing economic engagement with Nigeria is also owed to the fact that the Indian government lifted regulations and control allowing firms to go abroad, and removed the \$100 million cap on foreign investment for Indian firms (Eriksen *et al.* 2012: 21).

Apart from the above mentioned investments in Nigeria's energy, India's private sector companies are leading in investments in other areas such as telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, steel, textiles, automobile, and power generation. According to Indian High Commissioner Abuja, over 100 Indian companies have investments in Nigeria. Prominent among them are Bharti Airtel, Bajaj motorcycles, Chellarams, Birla Group, Kirloskar, Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, NIIT, ApTech New India Assurance, Bhustan Steel, KEC, Tata group, and Skipper Electricals. There are also the Stallion Group (involved in the sale of Hyundai motors, stallion rice, stallion chemicals and fertilizers and Tata Group (the automobile maker, pitching its tent in Nigeria, with opportunities for sale of Nano, the world's cheapest car). Tata group has a presence in Africa since 1967 in the transport, information technology, hotels, mining and telecom sectors (Modi 2010: 121). The Tata Africa Group opened a subsidiary office in Lagos, Nigeria, in October 2007 (Sudeep 2009:26). Following that, Tata now prides itself as one of Nigeria's main automobile service provider. There is the India owned Dana Group that is into manufacturing of different products in Nigeria- including plastics, foods, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. For instance, Dana Plastics, a subsidiary of the group has not only established itself as one of the top three manufacturers of plastic household wares in Nigeria, but now also exports from Nigeria to other African countries like Gambia, Namibia and Mozambique (Indian High Commission in Abuja, 2013). Dana plastic products are popular in Nigerian markets, and is highly patronised. Dana

Industries Limited, another subsidiary of the Dana Group is the supplier of Danaco Full Cream Milk, Sun Yum Instant Noodles, Aquadana and their products have increased the choices available to Nigerian consumers in its product areas (Indian High Commission in Abuja, 2013). The Dana Foods Limited, the rice production arm of the Dana Group has a fully automated 20 tonnes per hour (TPH), brown rice polishing facility in Lagos. Dana Steel Rolling Company in Katsina (it acquired the federal government owned Katsina Steel Rolling Company in 2006 after the privatisation process) produces reinforcing and general purpose steel for construction, and is committed to Nigeria's industrialisation. This Steel Company currently has an installed capacity of 207,000 metric tonnes per annum and has invested about N9 billion on the expansion of the firm (Infinities 2011: 56). Companies such as Chellarams that started with textile trading in 1923, has expanded and diversified into manufacturing, marketing, distribution and services. For example it is into assembling of three-wheelers and bicycles, used by ladies, gents and children, and also into manufacturing of full cream milk such as Oldenburger, and Real Milk in Nigeria; all of which captured a substantial share in Nigeria's consumer market.

In the area of manufacturing in Nigeria, Indian companies are now the major investors, among other foreign companies. Most of these Indian firms started arriving when Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999. When President Obasanjo assumed office, he engaged in image laundering and canvassing for foreign direct investment in order to develop the country dilapidated infrastructure after 16 years of military rule and attendant human rights abuses that deterred foreign investors. India was one of the countries that the President visited in year 2000 to source for investments. Also India's economic liberalisation and subsequent economic boom have resulted to its increasing external economic cooperation. Thus, Indian companies have to a larger extent taken over manufacturing of all types and also exports of finished goods from Nigeria to other African countries. In 2003, Aarti Steel, established an ultra modern wet flus continuous galvanising line plant sprawling over 10 acres of land at industrial estate in Ota community in Ogun State. The main product lines are manufacturing of full hard galvanised products for the production of corrugated roofing sheets, galvanised plain sheets/coils from 0.12 mm to 0.80 mm (Baghla 2009: 36). Aarti Steel has directly exported its product to Nigeria's neighbouring ECOWAS countries such as Ghana, Republic of Benin, Senegal, Chad, with indirect exports being

witnessed from Ghana and Senegal to Cameroon, Niger as well as Burkina Faso retailers (Baghla 2011: 34).

Different turnkey contracts have also been undertaken by Indian firms in Nigeria. Nargajuna Group signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Nigeria to set up five fertilizer plants, Urea/Ammonia complex with a capacity to manufacture 2.6 million tonnes per annum in different regions in Nigeria (Riaz 2012: 44). The total investments into the five projects of Nargajuna are estimated to be worth \$2.5 billion US dollars and are expected to be completed in 2014 (Infinites 2012a: 44). Also, Indian Indorama Corporation is investing \$2 billion US dollars into fertilizer and methanol plant project at Port Harcourt (Riaz 2012:48). It is expected that 50% of the fertilizer production will be consumed in Nigeria and the remaining 50% exported to other West African countries. For the methanol plant undertaken by Indorama Corporation, it is stated that domestic market is not still mature enough in consumption in sectors like formaldehyde and DMT applications; but it is expected that around 75% of methanol products will go to overseas markets like China (Riaz 2012: 48), when fully put into use. Indian companies are also into power generation projects. India's investments in Nigeria, is far ahead of China, although China export manufactured goods to Nigeria is higher than that of India (Osondu 2014).

There is absolutely no sector in Nigeria where India's firms are not found; India has the advantage of a large Diaspora that has established their presence in Nigeria over many decades. Indian companies are also into power generation projects. Skipper Electricals, an Indian Power generation company started investing in Nigeria's power sector in year 2004. Skipper pioneered the introduction of transformer repair facility and Mobile Repair, and Testing Van along with a Mobile Substation, and its main clients is the Transmission arm of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) and other private companies in Nigeria (Infinites 2012b: 54). Skipper Electricals has successfully executed engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) projects in the field of Transmission lines and Substation erection of up to 132 kilo volts (KV) for PHCN. Some of its ongoing projects are 132KV distribution transmission line running 175 kilometres in the northern state of Katsina, 2x60 mega volt amperes (MVA) and 132/33KV Substations in Ibadan and Kaduna; Skipper is in the various stages of energizing nine number of 2x15MVA, 33KV injection Substation in Lagos (Infinites 2012: 54).

Aside the fact that Indian firms are looking for investment opportunities abroad due to economic modernisation at home, the fact that the Nigerian government is actively pursuing overseas investment in many sectors to accelerate economic growth, cannot be underestimated. In the health sector for instance, Nigeria has been clamouring for partnership with India. As a result some Indian private hospitals have established a base in Nigeria. In an interview with Mr. Sachdev, Indian High Commissioner in Abuja, Nigeria, he revealed that India, Primus International Super Speciality Hospital established a base in Abuja in 2010, and now carries out medical surgeries to Nigerians such as Spine surgery, Kidney transplant, Bariatric surgery, among others. The birth of the hospital is the first of its kind in Sub-Saharan Africa. Also, given the demand for good health care from Nigerians, Apollo Hospitals now cooperate with some non-profit organisations in Nigeria to provide training to health professionals- nurses, doctors and technicians in India (Infinities 2009: 24). Nigeria is also gaining today from the Pan African E-network Programme that India set up for Africa in 2009. Pan Africa e-Network project that was initiated in 2008 during the India-Africa Summit by India was meant to bring Indian expertise in the fields of education and health into Africa via online education and telemedicine; by way of online medical consultation with African medical practitioners for African patients that might not afford the cost to travel to India.

The first phase of the Pan African e-Network project was inaugurated in February 2009 covering 11 countries which included Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Rwanda, Senegal and Seychelles. Out of the 36 learning centres that have been commissioned in Africa, Nigeria benefitted in one, which is located in the University of Lagos (Sahu & Datta 2011). Learning centre in Nigeria got established in December, 2008; the Patient-end was commissioned in February 2009; the Regional Super Speciality Hospital (RSSH) was commissioned in January 2009 and the VVIP centre is yet to be installed. India has seven pharmaceutical companies manufacturing anti-retroviral drugs in Nigeria (Kumar 2009: 30). For instance, Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd was one of the first Indian pharmaceutical companies to set up base in Africa, since 1977 (Modi 2010: 130).

Today, Ranbaxy offers a range of products- anti-infective, cardiovascular, and most importantly, antiretroviral (ARVs). Also, India's Shalina Healthcare is into manufacturing of pharmaceuticals in Nigeria, with



over ten year operation with its subsidiary in Nigeria, called Socomex Nigeria. Shalina Healthcare offers a wide range of over 200 branded products in the consumer, prescription and over the counter categories catering for a broad range of therapeutic groups including anti-malaria, anti-biotics, cough and cold management, pain management and nutritional products such as IBUCAP, CEFATAX, MAGNAVIT and Super Apeti Tablets. Also India is engaged in the training of health personnel; some are part of the short term courses that India provides to Nigerian professional through ITEC. Today, Nigeria has the highest slot for India's ITEC programme in West Africa; as of 2012, it received 210 slots for training of its professionals in various fields. When it comes to medical issues, India has become the major place of destination for Nigeria. As of 2011, Indian High Commission Abuja issued 33,000 visas to Nigerians to travel to India, with 50% of those visas were for medical treatments.

In the telecommunication sector for instance, Indian company, Bharti Airtel acquired the Kuwait Zain Africa mobile services with operations in 15 countries and a total consumer base of over 42 million in the early part of 2010 for \$10.7 billion (Voll 2010: 8). Airtel is currently making remarkable sway, and it now has more than 25 million subscribers in Nigeria. In the area Information Technology (IT), India's, National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) is a household name in Nigeria. NIIT was established in Nigeria in 1999, and today has over 120, 000 Nigerians that have benefitted from their IT service education (Indian High Commission Abuja, 2013). NIIT has 35 centres spread across different states in Nigeria, and annually it trains 16,000 students. NIIT offers portfolio of certificate courses including software development, networking, database certification and multimedia applications that prepares Nigerian youths for lucrative IT careers.

India has also been a major promoter of Nigeria's non oil export, in the agricultural sector. One of the Indian companies engaged in the agricultural sector in Nigeria is the Olam International. Olam International is a leading global supply chain of agricultural raw-materials and food ingredients. Olam International Nigeria started in 1989 with cashew trading but has today grown and diversified into other agricultural crops such as rice and cotton, and also into supply of industrial raw materials such as fertilizer. Olam has invested massively in 'Farmers Out-grower Programs' and 'Processing Plants' across several states in Nigeria. Today, Olam is ranked the largest 'non oil exporter' in Nigeria, and has maintained that position

since the year 2000. It exports products such as cashew, cocoa, cotton, sesame, shea nuts, and ginger in Nigeria (Indian High Commission Abuja, 2013). India's firms are the major supplier of agricultural equipment in Nigeria. For example, there is the Mahindra and Mahindra (M&M) group and the Angelique International, both Indian companies that supply customised agricultural equipment such as small tractors, drilling and irrigation equipment and machines for small and medium-sized agro processing units that are appropriate and affordable for small holdings (Modi 2010: 124). It has set up assembly lines in Nigeria as well as in other West African countries such as Senegal, Gambia and Mali (Modi, 2010:124). Indian owned Sonalika International Tractors Limited (ITL) has also established assembly plant in Nigeria to cater for the whole of the West African market (Wahi 2009:28). Sonalika manufactures a wide range of tractors from 30 to 90 HP and farm implements. Another Indian firm, KBL deals with agricultural and agro-processing equipment; it supplies pumps and valves and spare parts to Nigeria.

In the textile sector, Indian companies have continued to survive despite the collapse of a major segment of the sector since the mid 1990s. Today the major textile manufacturing companies in Nigeria are owned by Indian companies. For example in Lagos, SUNFLAG Nigeria Limited and Woolen and Synthetic Textile Manufacturing Company are owned by the Indians. SUNFLAG is six group of companies that are into areas such as knitting mills, spinning mills, printing, and weaving; they are also into manufacturing of Ankara, bed sheets, towels, printing of school uniforms, mattress cover, dyeing among others. It started operation in 1963, and was the only remaining textile mill in Nigeria when other indigenous ones folded. According to Mr. Adesina Abiodun, the Marketing Manager, SUNFLAG Textile Manufacturing Company, who has worked with the Company for over 20 years, he maintained that the Company's survival was due to employing different market strategies, such as frequent market survey and constant rebranding to suit the 'changing' needs and tastes of the customers.

## **India New Interests in Nigeria and Prospects of their Relations**

Overall, the major focus of India's contemporary interest in Nigeria is clear: economic. Its increasing trade, investments and energy quests are evident.

When the immediate past Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh stated that Africa is an emerging priority area' for India's foreign policy (Bhatia 2010: 18), it is not hard to perceive the direction of his statement. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs had in 2003 scaled up its diplomatic initiatives by creating three joint secretaries to manage the three regional divisions covering the continent, complemented by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), and the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of India. Prior to year 2003, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs had a single joint secretary overseeing its Africa division; but it has now increased it to three divisions: West and Central Africa; East and Southern Africa and West Asia and North Africa (Singh 2007:11). This restructuring is done to a certain extent to sharpen its focus on its foreign policy and investment strategies in Africa.

Currently, India's economic cooperation with Africa is organised by three groups. Firstly, there is institutional cooperation built by private enterprises and non-governmental organisations such as the Indo-African Chamber of Commerce and Industries. Secondly, there are partnerships supported by Indian government such as the yearly Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership and the annual 'Made in India' Show, which enjoy the support of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries and Indian Ministry of External Affairs. Thirdly, there is the economic cooperation established by the Indian Government. For example, at the Indian government level, the India-Africa Forum Summit puts the partnership between India and Africa in an official legal document, providing a platform for direct interaction and cooperation; at the ministry level, there is the India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference with cooperation between the Export-Import Bank of India and the African Development Bank Group as well as participation by several sub-regional development banks and Export-Import Banks (Zongyi 2013:18). While the Indian government acts as a promoter and coordinator of economic relations, India's private sectors are playing a pivotal role (Zongyi 2013: 18), as seen in Nigeria's manufacturing, energy and non oil sectors, where Indians have dominated. Manufacturing industry in Nigeria is a major emerging spot for India. While Chinese goods have dominated the Nigeria market (Osondu 2014), Indian firms are dominating the Nigeria's manufacturing sector.

Indeed, India's foreign policy has shifted from Nehruvian (Third World solidarity) principles to pragmatic economic diplomacy. Although South-South solidarity and mutual cooperation continue to ring loud in official statements of Indian government, India's quest for market,

investment and energy are today where its solidarity lies. During the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh's visit to Nigeria in 2007, he was quoted to have said, 'our partnership will be based on the fundamental principles of equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit' (Beri 2008). Today, the solidarity of non-alignment and struggle to end colonialism advanced by Indian leader, Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1950s have been replaced by establishing solidarity based on India achieving its contemporary interests, which is targeted towards economic security. Notwithstanding that India hinges its initial relations with Nigeria on South-South cooperation; today South-South co-operation is of a different nature, whereby India's economic interests are pursued with its South-South partners: Nigeria, in this case. The Indian government African policy was well articulated in its Declaration during the 2008 India-Africa Summit- the first of its kind in India-Africa relations.

In the Declaration, India pointed to the fact that in this period Indian economy has evolved into a mature and fast growing economic mode, and thus India has decided, with Africa to build on these positive achievements with a view to helping each other to become self-reliant and economically vibrant..... as well as work together to strengthen close partnership (India-Africa Summit Declaration, 2008). While it could be argued that India changed its policy in Africa, after having achieved the political objectives it campaigned for (end to colonialism and apartheid); or that India became more interested in Nigeria after Civilian Rule was reinstated, India's economic reform contributed immensely to its increasing economic interest in Nigeria. Seeing the need to modernise its economy and ascend towards the ranks of world economic powers, just like China has done, the Indian government began economic reform initiatives along the line of neo-liberalism, and also relaxed its laws on foreign investments for its private firms.

This study has been able to reveal that India has advanced its relations with Nigeria to go beyond the initial politically based interests to economic engagements, laden with considerable investments in not just one sector, but all sectors. From the foregoing it is likely that the two countries will continue to witness growing economic cooperation. On the part of India, it is expected that with India's rapid economic growth, Nigeria will in future witness more influx of Indian firms seeking for investments in its manufacturing sector, and also influx of India's manufactured goods for

Nigerian consumers (since Nigeria has the largest market in Africa). In Nigeria's energy sector, there is every likelihood that India will take the lead in future; with United States suspending its import of crude oil (due to increase in its own domestic production), India that used to rank second, behind United States in imports of oil from Nigeria will automatically be placed in the first position, making India a major economic partner for Nigeria. With Nigeria's quest for industrialisation and the increase in the number of manufacturing industries from India, which now exports manufactured goods to neighbouring African countries from Nigeria, there is every possibility that if the trends continue, Nigeria will achieve or be close achieving its goal of being among the 20 largest economies by 2020. While, for instance, Nigeria's economic relations with the Western powers such as the United States are 'dwindling' as shown in the United States suspension of its oil imports from Nigeria and the conditionalities attached to the United States' aid, India's relations with Nigeria have been witnessing great boom. India unconditionally and in the spirit of South-South connection, empowers and assists African nations, Nigeria inclusive as it engages in trade with them.

## **Conclusion**

India's post independence relations with Nigeria dates back to more than five decades. In its early contact with Nigeria, India primarily focused on maintaining South-South solidarity and cooperation to end colonialism in Africa as well as apartheid policy in South Africa. India in the spirit of South-South solidarity pursued the Non Alignment Policy for the Third World Countries, to distance themselves from the great powers conflict. The establishment by India of a diplomatic mission in Nigeria even prior to its independence was a mark of solidarity that served as an act of defiance against the might of the British and true support of Nigeria's quest for political emancipation from them. It is quite possible that Jawaharlal Nehru did not envision India's political support for Nigeria to convert itself into long term economic benefit. Today, successive Indian leaders and big businesses have capitalised upon the good relations that India's first post independence government had established with Nigeria and its neighbouring countries. To this extent their investments have blossomed to the point of creating employment for Nigerians on the one hand, and using Nigeria as an export base for its products to neighbouring African countries.

It is therefore not surprising that India is currently about the largest foreign direct investor in Nigeria. As it replaces the United States of America to take the number one spot in oil purchases from Nigeria, it has also earned the privilege of being to a large extent a trusted investor in the country. India's support for Nigeria against colonial domination and Nigeria's support for India against Chinese invasion in 1962 forged a closer alliance over time between the two countries. Once the major political objectives were achieved, economic cooperation surged to a point of consolidating common interests and advancing their trade links in ways that are bound to show greater interdependence over the next few decades. At the moment, Nigeria's oil is as crucial to India as India's professionals, entrepreneurial and technical bases are crucial to Nigeria.

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# Nigeria: Advertising the Economic Engine

**Abhay Chawla**

## **Abstract**

Since 1990, both Africa's exports to Asia and its imports from Asia have grown more rapidly than either its exports to or its imports from any other region of the world. Among Asian countries China and India have eclipsed Japan and South Korea as the most important markets for African goods. Among the various indicators of an emergent superpower status for a country is its economy, with media as an important sub constituent, something that has been missing in academic discussions. Advertising is an important media constituent. It is generally assumed that the economy has a direct bearing on advertising and not vice versa.

This paper looks to trace the growth of the advertising industry in India and China. The paper then traces the growth of the advertising industry in one of the fastest growing economies of Africa i.e. Nigeria and explores the linkages between the growth of the advertising sector in Nigeria and the increase in trade between Nigeria and India-China.

**Keywords:** Digital Media, Advertising industry in Nigeria, India and China as emergent superpowers, advertising an economic engine, Nigerian advertising industry.

## **Introduction**

Entertainment demographics (population in age groups that are the highest consumers of entertainment) are more acute indicators of the future of the entertainment business: North America has 65 million in that demographic, while China and India have almost 700 million. In India alone over the next 10 years, 40% of existing population will come from this demographic. The

corresponding figure for the US is just 15% (Barathi *et al.* 2011). This statement sums up the potential of China and India in the media immersive world of today.

In the USA the creative industries led by Hollywood account for about \$504 billion, or at least 3.2 percent of the U.S. goods and services (TAP, 2013). The developed nations spend between 0.8 per cent to over one per cent of their GDP on advertising with the US spending nearly 1.3 percent of it in. India advertising was supposed to be 0.55 per cent of the country's gross domestic product by 2010 IBN(2007). However as per J P Morgan's report of 2011, it was only 0.34 percentage of the GDP, almost half the world's average of 0.75 percent, while for China it was 0.44 percent.

From the days of Thomas J Barratt who is known as the father of modern advertising (Coates 1908) the world has come a long way. Barratt created an advertising campaign for the Pears Soap Company that included slogans, images and phrases (NYT 1914). Bovee (1992) defined advertising as: 'A non personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media'. Simply stated by Advertising Association of UK, it is a means of communication with the users of a product or service. Advertisements are messages paid for by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them. Hence the advertising industry includes companies that advertise, agencies that create the advertisements, media that carries the ads and a host that deliver the advertisement to the customer.

In a World Federation of Advertisers and the French Advertisers Association (USA) commissioned to study the importance of advertising towards the economic growth showed three correlations that provide evidence of the impact of advertising on consumption, a key element of economic growth. As per the study the correlations are

- 1) The countries in which media advertising investment rate is highest are those in which the propensity for consumption is also highest.
- 2) An increase in the advertising investment rate is followed some months later by a rise in consumption.

- 3) The sectors which either undertake extensive advertising or which have increased their efforts in this field are experiencing greater growth (Nayaradou, 2006).

Advertising is a powerful tool of competition. It provides valuable information about products and services in an efficient and cost-effective manner. In this way, advertising helps the economy to function smoothly—it keeps prices low and facilitates the entry of new products and new firms into the market (Arrow & Stigler 1994).

Commercial advertising media can include wall paintings, billboards, printed flyers, radio, cinema and television adverts, web banners, mobile telephone screens, web popups etc. Today the fastest growing advertising segments are the internet and the mobile advertising. For example in the USA since 2010, internet advertising growth has been fuelled by a 123% CAGR in mobile advertising compared to 12% in non mobile (PWC 2014).

It is well known that economy drives advertising. When an economy is robust companies increase their advertising budgets. As per a recent estimate by Zenith Optimedia, spend on above-the-line advertising that is directed at mass audiences topped \$465 billion globally in 2011, at the 2009 fixed exchange rate, or close to 1 percent of GDP. This number would easily exceed \$1 trillion, or more than 2 percent of GDP, if below-the-line promotional media for niche audiences—such as direct-to-consumer mailings, e-mail marketing, coupons, and product samples—were included (knightdigitalmediacenter.org).

However advertising as a part of the overall media landscape is also a good indicator of a country's economy and growth. Bughin & Spittaels (2012) in their research found that advertising fuelled about 15 percent of growth in GDP for the major G20 economies over the past decade because it generates new business.

In a report by Deloitte commissioned by the Advertising Association, London, it was found that on an average, £1 of advertising spend generated £6 for the economy. That means the £16 billion spent on UK advertising in 2011 generated £100 billion in the UK economy. It goes on to state

It provides a third of all TV revenues and two-thirds of newspaper revenues; it supports sectors from photography to film production. We estimate that over 550,000 people work in jobs that are funded by

advertising revenues, or involved in the commissioning, creation and production of advertising across the relevant supply chains. However, the overall impact of advertising is much broader. It has a critical role in making the economy function. Advertising is at the centre of a virtuous circle of competition, innovation and market expansion, to the benefit of consumers and businesses (Deloitte 2013).

Advertising and Economy can be looked as the proverbial chicken and egg situation. This paper takes the advertising point of view and will trace the growth of advertising industry in India and China along with the growth of advertising industry in one of the fastest growing economy of Africa i.e. Nigeria and explore the linkages between the growth of advertising sector in Nigeria and the increase of trade between Nigeria and Indo-China.

### **Advertising Market of China and India**

China's explosive economic development started when Deng Xiaoping initiated free market reforms in the late 1970. Much of the growth in Chinese advertising initially seems to have been led by transnational advertising holding companies. For example in the mid-1980s Ogilvy & Mather established the first Sino-foreign advertising joint venture. Others also followed their multinational clients who were also entering in China in this period (Chang, Wan & Qu 2003: 466). According to the central State Administration for Industry and Commerce, advertising has been 'the fastest developing industry' since the Chinese economic reform process commenced in 1979 (CAA 2003).

Zhang (2011) points out to four main elements that influenced the development of the Chinese media market

- 1) Rising incomes, with per capita disposable income in urban areas rising 173 percent between 2000 and 2009, from ¥6,280 (\$945) to ¥17,175 (\$2,584).

- 2) Retail distribution: Increased number of stores and other retail distribution points to lower tier cities is spreading brand awareness. Increase in advertising to keep pace for appealing to new consumers in second- and third-tier cities.
- 3) Media Inflation: Television is still the dominant media and there is a rising communication cost.
- 4) Government Policy: The government in 2009 introduced the tri-play policy (integrating broadcast TV, Internet, and telecom) with the new broadcast advertising rule restricting the amount of advertising on state run TV. The idea is to promote digital media.

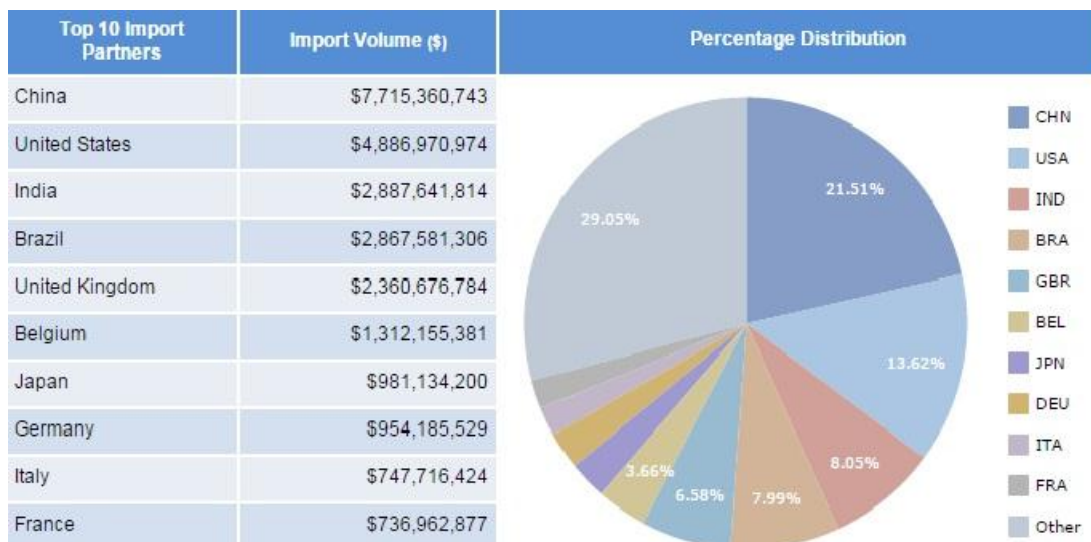
A PWC India Entertainment and Media Outlook report 2014, states that by 2018, China will have narrowed the gap with the USA which will still be the largest entertainment and media market.

Indian advertising revenue is projected to grow 13% and will reach INR 630 billion in 2018 from INR 350 billion in 2013. The internet advertising is expected to grow at a CAGR of 28% and be third after television and print by 2018, unlike USA where internet advertising will equal that of TV in 2018 (PWC 2014).

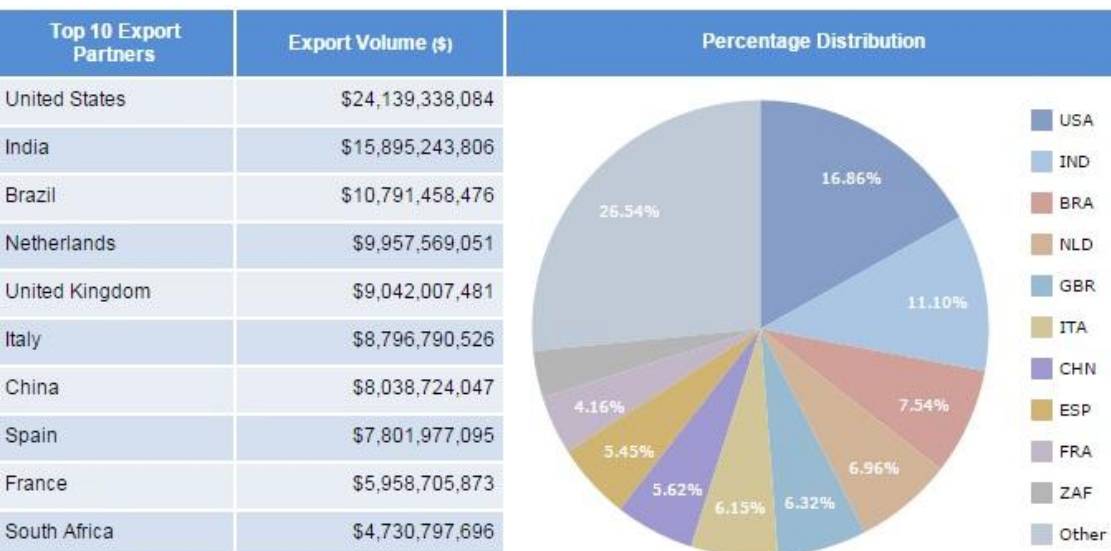
## **The Nigerian Economy and the Advertising Market**

With approximately 174 million inhabitants, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous country in the world. Nigeria has overtaken South Africa as Africa's largest economy after a rebasing calculation almost doubled its gross domestic product to more than \$500bn, data from the statistics office showed (Aljazeera 2014).

A 2012 UN report on the Import and Export partners of Nigeria shows that China and India are among the top three import partners along with the USA while India is among the top three export partners along with USA and China drops to seventh position.



Source: UN Comtrade (2012)



Source: UN Comtrade (2012)



The Nigerian growth story is summarized by Kolade Karim, CEO, Shoreline Group Nigeria during an interview with CNBC Africa, ‘One of the big areas is going to be the Fast Moving Consumer Goods sector, second to that the natural resource boom is going to continue growing, and the emergence of the huge middle class that Africa’s developing (CNBC 2015).’

Martyn Davies, CEO Frontier Advisory feels, ‘One important sector that is actually driving internal growth in Nigeria is the huge privatization that’s taken place over the last couple of years. Over 100 government-owned companies and corporations have been privatized, which tells you that transfer of spend from public sector into private-sector drive is driving formidable growth right across the sector’ (ibid).

Is there a relation between advertising and economic growth or vice versa? The top 20 products that generated more advertisements during the year include: telecommunications, personal paid announcements, beer, gaming/entertainment, corporate, banking/finance, and religion. ‘The top 20 categories contribute 60 percent of total spend with telecom continuing to be the highest spender with overall spends of N14.7 billion (14 percent) of the total ATL advertising in 2013’ (Ekwujuru 2013).

It is not just the traditional advertising but with over 95 million active subscribers, Nigeria has become Africa’s largest mobile advertising market. There has been a 37 per cent growth recorded in mobile advertising impressions in Nigeria for the first three months of 2012 (Oketola 2012), with the number of mobile Internet subscribers forecasted to surge from 7.7 million in 2013 to 50.4 million in 2018 (Jager, L. de *et al.* 2014).

The important question then to be asked is where are investments in the telecom sector coming from?

However before answering the question lets quickly look at a brief overview of the Nigerian advertising industry. Olakitan (2012) writes about the early days of advertising in Nigeria:

Advertising was uncoordinated and unregulated. In 1977 the Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria, AAPN and Advertising Council of Nigerian, ACON was established. Then majority of consumer products and services advertised in Nigeria were of foreign origin and mostly non-essential. The products advertised often targeted the elites because the Nigerian masses could

not afford them. Financial advertisements were the most dominant products and services of Nigerian origin because they promoted more products and services that the average Nigerian could not afford. In 1988 the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON was established.

The Advertisers Association of Nigeria was established in October 1992 as a rally point for the big time advertisers in the country. Afromedia Nigeria Limited, which was registered on 28th October 1959, was one of the earliest outdoor agencies. It later changed its name to Lintas Nigeria Limited.

The Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, AAAN has disclosed that advertising expenditure for 2013 had grown to N125 billion from N91 billion in 2012. 2013 also saw internet advertising becoming the sixth largest revenue segment with a projected CAGR of 32.7%, it will become the fourth-largest by 2018 overtaking both newspapers and radio (Jager, L. de *et al.* 2014) and with more than eight billion advertising impressions in the first quarter, the Vice-President and Managing Director, InMobi Africa, Ms. Isis Nyong'o, says 'Nigeria has become Africa's largest mobile advertising market. She goes on to quote the unprecedented 376 per cent growth in Nigerian mobile advertising impressions from 2010 to 2011 that demonstrates the growth in popularity of mobile advertising as a consumer medium in the country.

Coming back to the telecom industry, at the International Telecommunications Union, ITU Telecom world summit<sup>1</sup>, Executive Vice Chairman of Nigerian Communications Commission, NCC, Dr Eugene Juwah in his presentation on Nigeria's telecom industry said 'Investment in the Nigerian telecom industry is well over \$25 billion. ICT sectoral growth is at 30 percent for the past 3 years; sectoral contribution to GDP was 7.05 % in 2012 and currently stands at 8.53 percent.'

What has this growth in the telecom market meant in terms of advertising in the telecom sector? The telecommunications sector retained its position as the highest advertising spender in Nigeria in 2013. The combined total advertising spend by all the telecommunications companies was put at

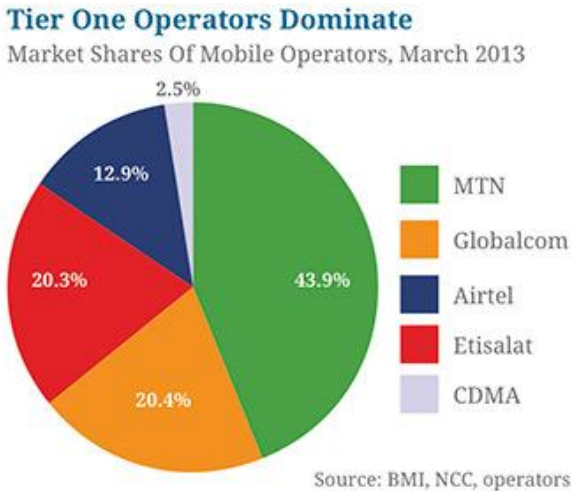
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/11/nigerias-25bn-telecom-market-haven-businessmen-toure/>.

N14.7 billion, representing 14 percent of the total advertising expenditure of N103.8 billion, according to Mediafacts. The telecom company MTN topped the sector with an above-the-line advertising expenditure of N5 billion, followed by Etisalat which spent N3.9 billion. Globacom and Airtel spent N3.1 billion and N2.5 billion, respectively (Obi 2014).

Where do China and India figure in this telecom growth?

The market share of Mobile operators as of 2013 is shown in the following chart.



Leading telecommunication brands including MTN, Glo and Airtel were again among the top 10 biggest advert spenders in 2013 (Akingbolu 2014). In a paper on the role played by advertising in influencing consumers' preference for telecom services provided by telecommunication firms in Nigeria, it showed that 38% of the consumers showed preference for MTN out of the various firms of the telecommunication firms studied based on the

their captivating advertising (42.62%) and availability (37.24%) (Bolaito 2012) proving that advertisement has a major role to play in a customer buy.

Nigeria is one of the hubs chosen by China from which it intends to roll out its telecommunications strategy. The Chinese government's role was underlined in 2004 when Deputy Minister of Commerce Chen Jian stated, 'China will further expand telecom cooperation with African nations in line with mutual benefits and common development. Moreover, the Chinese government will support its telecom enterprises to run more telecom services in Africa'. This in a nutshell explains the core of the Chinese telecommunication strategy in Africa (Expo 2004). A country by country breakdown of Chinese investment in the African continent according to the Heritage Foundation (China Global Investment Tracker Interactive, January 2012) shows that in 2012, China's investment in Africa focused primarily on five countries which include Nigeria. The breakdown by country showed that Nigeria has had \$15.42 billion net investment from China. Shenzhen-based Huawei Technologies, China's biggest telecoms equipment maker and Peer ZTE Corp. another Chinese player is growing in importance in Africa (Gabriel 2013). ZTE mostly cooperates with existing GSM and code division multiple access (CDMA) operators in the country. ZTE established a subsidiary company in Nigeria in 1999 – the same year that the Nigerian telecoms sector was deregulated – and reportedly regards Nigeria as 'key for their African business activities in the next couple of years' (Xinhua 2011 as cited in Aliyu 2011). Huawei also established its operations in 1999 and provides telecoms solutions and possesses knowledge in telecom network infrastructure, software, devices, and professional services (Uzor 2011 as cited in Aliyu 2011).

The Indian engagement in telecom doesn't seem to have the backing of the government and is a business to business engagement. Companies such as Airtel and multinational conglomerate TATA, both of which operate in Nigeria, invest in African markets on their own volition and do not seem to be supported by the Indian Government (ATN2011 as cited in Aliyu 2011). These companies wield considerable influence in the Nigerian market and Nigeria is the third biggest importer of Indian goods and services on the African continent (Kurla 2009).

Sample of the advertisements by Airtel Nigeria:



Source: Jaguda.com



Source: [africa.airtel.com/Nigeria](http://africa.airtel.com/Nigeria)

## Conclusion

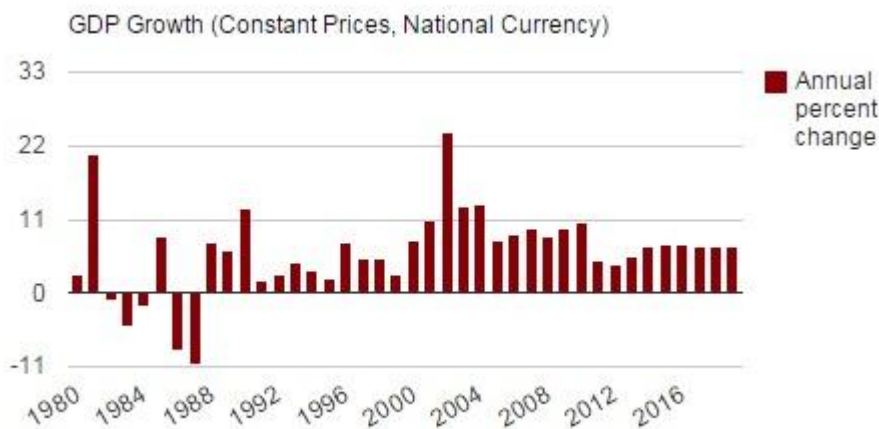
As the Nigerian economy grows and the market matures the spending on advertisement will only grow. As was shown in the research of Bolatito (2012), 42.6% of the customers preferred MTN service based on their advertisements.

Akingbolu(2013)felt that notwithstanding the astronomical explosion in the use of the internet and social media, traditional media will continue to hold its own as a veritable platform for marketing campaigns. He makes this claim on the 2012 Annual Media Penetrations Statistics (AMPS) recorded in Mediafacts. However the report also showed that the print media and out-of-

house media recorded decrease in their shares of media spend. While the report mentions that the expenditure share of the internet and social media were not ascertainable, it would only go up as the mobile and internet penetration increases. In fact the blistering pace with which the mobile penetration is increasing in Nigeria, the advertising industry like the rest of the world would start tilting towards online and mobile advertising at the cost of the traditional.

Telecom sector is the largest advertiser in Nigeria and with the current growth of mobile telephony shall stay in the coming years. It was also shown how the telecom and ICT industry has seen heavy investment from both China and India with China investing in supplying equipment while Indian companies concentrating on service.

The Nigerian GDP growth, 1980 to 2016 (projected) is as follows.



Source: National Statistical Office<sup>2</sup>

The % change of GDP, 2008-2014 is as follows.

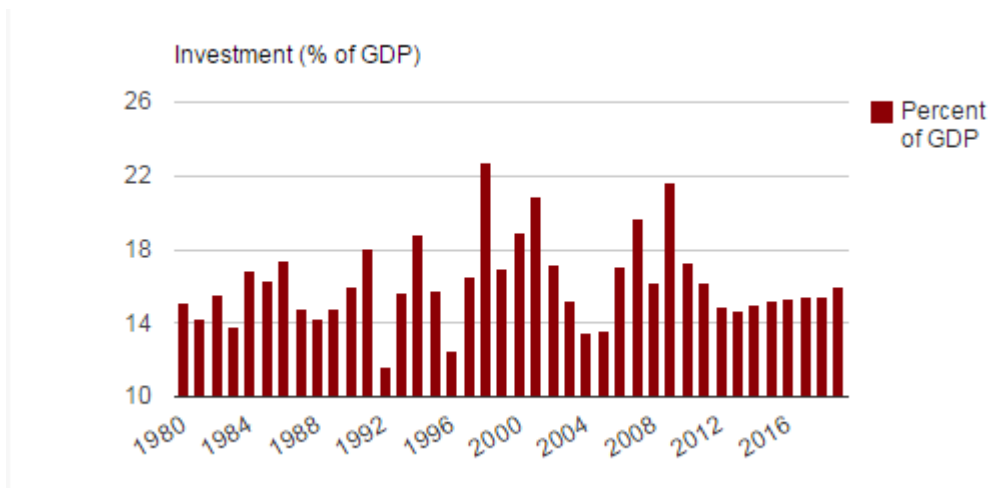
<sup>2</sup>NSC date retrieved from [http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Nigeria/GDP\\_Growth\\_Constant\\_Prices\\_National\\_Currency/#otheryears](http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Nigeria/GDP_Growth_Constant_Prices_National_Currency/#otheryears)

## *Nigeria: Advertising the Economic Engine*

2014	6.966
2013	5.394
2012	4.279
2011	4.887
2010	10.592
2009	9.551
2008	8.552

**Source: National Statistical Office<sup>3</sup>**

If we are to look at investments (% of GDP), 1980 to 2016(projected)



**Source: National Statistical Office**

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<sup>3</sup>NSC date Available at: [http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Nigeria/GDP\\_Growth\\_Constant\\_Prices\\_National\\_Currency/#otheryears](http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/Nigeria/GDP_Growth_Constant_Prices_National_Currency/#otheryears).

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2014	14.988
2013	14.72
2012	14.908
2011	16.212
2010	17.291
2009	21.688
2008	16.21

**Source: National Statistical Office**

So in 2012, while the GDP grew 4.2% and investments as a percentage of GDP grew 14.9% the Nigeria advertising industry spend on Above-the-Line Advertising activities dropped by 10.6 per cent to N91.846 billion in 2012 as against N102.755 billion in 2011 (Ekwujuru 2013).

Traditional understanding of the economy and advertising relation should indicate a rise of advertising revenue due to a better economy. However we see a fall. As most academic research and news articles take the traditional point of view i.e. economy fuels advertising a more detailed research is needed to show a reverse connection i.e. between ad spend and economy as was shown by Bughin andSpittaels(2012) in their research; advertising fuelled about 15 percent of growth in GDP for the major G20 economies over the past decade because it generates new business, unless their results are applicable to only developed economies and not developing ones.

The above plotted Nigerian data also show there are other factors that come into play and there is not a straight forward simple correlation between economy and advertising or vice versa in a developing economy like Nigeria.

However import and export data as well various news items, some of which are detailed above explicitly prove that the Asian charge in Nigeria is being led by China and India.

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# **The Indian-South African Bilateral Sphere: Of Mainstream Relations, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Peoples' Movements**

**Bobby Luthra Sinha**

## **Abstract**

The bilateral ties between India and South Africa have traversed through a myriad of interesting connotations. Iterating from uncomfortable, colonial socio-economic dynamics to formally embittered relations during apartheid, the bilateral public sphere between the two countries now stands transitioned into a boisterous neo-liberal globalized diplomacy. This paper is a reflection upon how the actions, abilities and even the disabilities of privileged stakeholders in the forefront of this 'Mainstream Bilateral Sphere' (MBS) impact the day to day world of those who form the ordinary 'People's Bilateral Sphere' (PBS) between India and South Africa. By interpreting the struggles, ideas and practices of a set of Indian South Africans involved in an anti-substance abuse politics led by micro social action groups such as the Anti- Drug Forum (ADF), I study how various kinds of bilateral spaces may take shape and impact upon one other. Second, I analyse the significance of common knowledge of community stakeholders in the building up of such multi-layered spaces and politics. A simple question that arises and is answered during the course of this paper is what information do individuals with drug-use histories and social activists hold for the enhancing the mutual bilateral between India and South Africa? By taking up examples of illicit drug trafficking between the two countries specifically from the 1970s onward, I show how due to lapses or inadequacies in the mutual MBS, a 'Clandestine Bilateral Sphere' (CBS) complete with innovative and exploitative drug trafficking mechanisms began to exist and came to the fore between the two countries. Replete with mafia dons and street drug mules,

this clandestine political layer not only came into existence but placed itself and drew sustenance from within the grey areas that reside between the mainstream bilateral on the one hand and the peoples' bilateral on the other. I speak of the alternate global and its narratives through a worm's eye perspective by sharing ethnographic visions from ordinary men and women in the people's bilateral who witness, imagine and calibrate this global from within their local. This paper discusses how the PBS can counter hegemonise the international social reality by inserting its articulations and discourses onto the privileged mainstream bilateral, even, as it challenges the processes that emanate from the clandestine bilateral spheres between India and South Africa. This paper draws critically upon the world of people's memory, imagination and social action, besides the politics of the MBS and the CBS between India and South Africa.

**Keywords:** Mainstream Bilateral, Clandestine Bilateral and People's Bilateral; Mandrax and illicit drug trade between India and South Africa; Anti-Drug Forum in Durban

## **Part I Introduction: Themes, Framework and Methodology**

From amidst the qualitative data that I collected on a social movement against substance abuse among Indian South Africans (ISAs) in Durban, emerged a peoples' narrative on clandestine international spaces between India and South Africa. I interacted with a broad range of people- from formal actors such as local political elects, court officials, police, diplomats and informal ones such as community activists, local voices, journalists, de-addiction specialists and youth with addiction histories. Especially significant for me were results emanating from interactions with actors caught at the tail end of drug addiction such as youth, school children, former addicts, petty criminals-their parents/ grand-parents and neighbours. Besides this, another important finding was that all actor groups view drugs, substance abuse and narcotics differently from one another. For instance, the tail end users are viewed by and large, as 'consumers' in the parlance of the majority of the formal set of actors. On the contrary, the activists, social workers, community leaders and other volunteers of the anti-substance abuse movement viewed the tail end users as caught between contexts of victimhood and those of

perpetration. Drug users for the former were actors in their own right, armed with/guilty of the proverbial ‘choice’ to select what they would smoke, when and how. In the interpretation of the latter, the dark, noir world of the users revealed the full extent of their suffering and swagger between cycles of substance abuse and ‘being clean’ or of crime and innocence.

What caught my attention as an ethnographer was none of these two extremes. Rather, I decided to focus on the middle ground where the tail end actors and their empathizers donned the mantle of thinkers and offered an alternative analysis of the ‘narcotics bilateral’<sup>1</sup> among nations. Exploring and collating the thinking of these informal actors, I arrived at inductive categories to describe my data. Whether it was the periods of immersion in the field or distance from it, my data stayed with me and lingered on. There was just no escape from the hard hitting analysis of drug users and issues around them that the budding anti-substance abuse politics (elaborated in sections below) wants to solve. It is in such a frame of mind that I share my data here, a point that Spradley (1970; 1980) calls ‘the ethnographic cycle’. In such research there is no rigid separation of analysis from data collection but rather a constant feedback in which interpretations are developed from observed behaviour and then ploughed back into the research process to investigate their explanatory power and to guide the collection of further data. Any theory or epistemology which arises from the research is thus ‘grounded’ in the collected data (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Ethnographic analysis is iterative and reflexive, that is, it builds on ideas formulated throughout a study and research problems are transformed, adapted and revised throughout the research process<sup>2</sup>.

Through continual reflection, interpretation and interaction in a circular fashion, I coded the data qualitatively into categories such as accounts of practices, experiences, special narratives, life histories and emotions shared by addicts and activists. My motive was to articulate colloquial responses, conjectures, themes and thesis into a grounded epistemology. I discerned that there are three kinds of bilateral spheres that the narcotics trade between India and South Africa is built-up and becomes

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<sup>1</sup> For more on, how illicit drug routes and relations build bridges among various kinds of international borders and spaces, see Shah: 1998; World Drug report: 2010.

indicative of. From the time of Mandrax trafficking successfully carried across land, sea and air routes, starting from mid-to late 1970s, the bilateral sphere has never been a single reducible category, as I explain in the succeeding sections. It is of relevance to state here, that the narcotics trade in the two countries is often explained keeping in view external reasons. In an article on organized crime (such as narco-trafficking) in South Africa, it is stated:

The US, Italian and Russian mafias, the Colombians and the Triads are alert to the opportunities. They have all initiated moves to exploit South Africa's weakening criminal justice system. Criminals from many parts of the world have set up operations in the country, and are using Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban as staging-posts for international drugs traffic and money-laundering (Africa Analysis, 25 August 1995, p.16).

Similarly in the Indian case, the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle are the dominantly portrayed as catalysts for the movement of drugs in and out of India (Das 2012; NCB, Annual Report 2012). Nonetheless, it is clear that, while no such narco- manoeuvres or illicit trade -exchanges can be possible without a set of locally established factors and actors, state politics is such that usually the issue that usurps more attention is the case of internal and external security (See Baynham 1994; Grové 1994). Problems that become actually implied in peoples' everyday life are usually put on the back shelves of international diplomacy. For the purposes of this study, I see the trade and its related structures and institutions as an overlapping, inter-connected and cyclical space that networks over and under the proverbial sovereign states and produces not just internal but also external repercussions.

I ground the bilateral trade relations between the two countries in two categories, instead of one dominantly understood sovereignty based notion of it: the formal, governed by states, treaties, MNCs and the exigencies of international diplomacy as opposed to the informal which develops between people, groups, cultural organizations or even suspicious entities as smugglers, traffickers and criminals. Meaning thereby that, at all times, two kinds of interactive possibilities may form between nations through two distinct kinds of routes- the certified and the non-certified or the conspicuous and the subtle. However, whether hailing from formal or informal



backgrounds, many of my local (middle-aged to older) informants', reminisced vividly on the use of Mandrax among the Indian South Africans. Adding succinct anecdotes and examples of the confidently thriving illicit drug trade between Mumbai, Cape Town and Durban, my informants spoke from memory. They talked about the 'heady, hippy decades' of the 1970s and 1980s. They quoted examples of the connections and networks that existed between the people of the countries despite the apartheid sanctions. Owing to such informal bilateral ties that many objects defied the international embargoes imposed in the formal, bilateral sphere and moved across the sea, air and land routes clandestinely. Evidently, authoritative decision making space (where the formal bilateral is enacted and which becomes visibly comprehensible by their various mutual treaties and accords or their lack/absence) between the two countries is not sufficient to understand every aspect of other kinds of lived spaces, especially where the informal bilateral relations between the two come to life. Therefore, this paper brings spaces such as the illicit bilateral sphere between India and South Africa, into the debate. Alongside these two, the conspicuous mainstream and the clandestine bilateral, has arisen, what I refer as, the people's bilateral of India and South Africa.

Qualitative data collection from stakeholders was definitely challenging because in many instances the illicit and the licit worlds merge, overlap and transition into each other. Interviewees and informants prefer to be extremely discreet. When substantial information was divulged, many requested that the intimate parts of it should not be shared in print or written in ways that reveal who the actor-respondent might have been<sup>3</sup>. So instead of focusing on names and routes involved in illicit trafficking of drugs, I attempted to develop an ethnographic understanding of the situation, which opened a world of vast information for me. For the sake of a nuanced clarity and epistemological convenience, I delineated this world into three kinds of spaces: mainstream spaces where inter-state policies can be made (diplomacy, state officials), clandestine spaces where inter-state policies can be challenged or countered/flouted (drug lords, dons, traffickers and runners)

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<sup>3</sup> In the drug and alcohol field, ethnography as a research method is still underutilized, though a handful of important ethnographic contributions (Moore, 1993: Pp.11-25) remain path breaking.

and lastly people's spaces where the individual and collective impact of both these kinds of spaces is felt and lived in quotidian contexts. It is also in these people's bilateral that struggles and analysis, memories and social experiences can effectively counter hegemonize the narratives and discourses of the mainstream as well as the clandestine bilateral. The multi-layered and multi-contextual sphere between India and South Africa thus can be seen to constitute many kinds of spaces and times that contain vital information for one another.

## **Part II The Indian-South African Mainstream Bilateral Sphere (MBS)**

While the word, 'bilateral' may acquire various connotations in different contexts, I will bring into discussion its meaning associated with diplomacy and international relations. Simply defined, bilateral implies having two sides or affecting reciprocally two nations or parties such as a bilateral treaty or a bilateral trade agreement<sup>4</sup>. This global connotation of bilateral has evolved and changed according to the changing world view, politics and international relations between sovereign nation states. From being understood negatively during the two World Wars, when the insight emerged that the bilateral treaties and agreements provoke war and economic downturn such as that during the great depression of the 1920's to being disfavored in comparison to the role of high profile multilateral entities such as the United Nations and World Bank during the height of the cold war- the bilateral process has come a long way and survived its stance as the fact remains that that diplomacy continues to be carried out between the informative and intimate bilateral spaces between two nations. So from trade agreements, bilateral treaties to secret policies the bilateral sphere remains a vital functioning ground between nations, (Thompson 2013).

Historically, India's links with the struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa date back to the period during which Mahatma Gandhi started his Satyagraha movement in South Africa over a century ago in 1913. Later, India occupied the forefront to provide the international community its

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<sup>4</sup> For details, see, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bilateral>  
Accessed on April 20, 2014.

support for the anti-apartheid movement. It was the first country to sever trade relations with the apartheid Government (in 1946) and subsequently imposed a complete -- diplomatic, commercial, cultural and sports -- embargo on South Africa. India worked consistently to put the issue of apartheid on the agenda of the UN, NAM and other multilateral organizations and for the imposition of comprehensive international sanctions against South Africa. The ANC maintained a representative office in New Delhi from the 1960s onwards. Following talks between the then South African Government and the ANC, India's relations with South Africa were restored after a gap of over four decades with the opening of a Cultural Centre in Johannesburg in May 1993. Formal diplomatic and consular relations with South Africa were restored in November 1993 during the visit to India of the then South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, (Indian High Commission: Pretoria).

In the new global era, just like the frontiers of relations between sovereign states are expanding and contracting owing to various flows of networks and communication, at the same time, so is a re-definition of the bilateral now possible- as many kinds of new and relevant associations and forums strive to expand their bilateral into a multilateral while continuing to strongly build up their mutual relations with each other as is visible in the India and South Africa bilateral: Not only have they signed mutual accords and agreements w.r.t to the many challenges connected to the present era of globalization including crime and drugs but they have also extended their diplomatic sphere to engage in multilateral trade agreements in a bid to enjoy the due benefits of globalization.

The India Brazil South Africa (IBSA)<sup>5</sup> dialogue forum and the association of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS)<sup>6</sup> are

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<sup>5</sup> The IBSA Dialogue Forum brings together three large pluralistic, multicultural and multiracial societies from three continents as a purely South-South grouping of like-minded countries, committed to inclusive sustainable development, in pursuit of the well-being for their peoples and those of the developing world. IBSA was formalized and launched through the adoption of the Brasilia Declaration on 6 June 2003. Its creation recognized the necessity of a process of dialogue among developing nations and countries of the South to counter their marginalization. The principles, norms and values underpinning the IBSA Dialogue Forum are participatory democracy, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law and the strengthening

two relevant examples of this growing and expanding sphere of relations at the global international and bilateral level. Mbeki, Da Silva and Vajpayee officially presented IBSA to the international community at the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2003. Basically, the purpose of this forum is to share views on relevant regional and international issues of mutual interest as well as promote cooperation in the areas of defense, multilateral diplomacy, international trade, technology, social development, environmental issues and other areas of interest at a macro level. This activism on the part of three middle-income developing countries, in particular South Africa, Brazil and India, which has resulted in the creation of a trilateral diplomatic partnership is in itself a reflection of broader transformations across the developing world in the wake of globalization.

Against the background of India's consistent support to the democratic South Africa, there has been a steady consolidation of its close and friendly ties with South Africa, both bilaterally and through the trilateral IBSA Dialogue Forum. A number of bilateral agreements have been concluded between the two countries since the assumption of diplomatic relations in 1993 in diverse areas ranging from economic and commercial cooperation, defense, culture, health, human settlements, public administration, science and technology and education. Aside from the existence of this formal bilateral (which now incorporates new mutual multilateral concerns over trade and commerce as well) India and South Africa exhibit a concern over burgeoning problems such as increase in international terrorism, religious extremism, trans-border organized crime and illicit trafficking in arms and drugs. They view this upsurge as a serious threat to sovereign states, international peace, development, security and stability<sup>7</sup>.

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of multilateralism. see: <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/about-ibsa/background>. Retrieved May, 14, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> BRICS members are all developing or newly industrialized countries, but they are distinguished by their large, fast-growing economies and significant influence on regional and global affairs; all five are G-20 members. For more, see (Alden, Chris & Marco Antonio Vieira 2005).

<sup>7</sup> In this context, India-South Africa stress the importance of strict, full and unconditional implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on the fight against terrorism and reiterate in particular their commitment to the UN

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In doing so, both the countries show an enthusiastic posture similar to important international organizations and think tanks such as the UN: As of now both countries stress their concern for creating a concerted effort at tackling the various challenges that hold their attention and are identifiable in the various bilateral treaties and MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding). However out of the approximately forty bilateral agreements they have between them post-Apartheid, only a handful explicitly pertain to cooperation in fields of criminal assistance; medicine and health; Science and technology; and Customs<sup>8</sup>. Hence surely this is one area where plenty of work needs to be still done in the India-South Africa bilateral sphere. Both the countries have in one way or the other contributed to prolific substance abuse as well as illicit drug trafficking between them, as the following section will elaborate.

My paper argues that perhaps time is ripe to make an ameliorative pause at both ends and re-consider on how to damage control. Investing in mutual partnerships and projects to support humanitarian and legal initiatives in the area of substance abuse would be a good step forward. Prioritizing mutual exchange of information, ethnographic and technical know-how can go a long way in traversing the many mysterious and suspicious sites of globalism hidden in the seemingly homogenous layers of international relations. Somebody somewhere down the official line has to take responsibility of acts of commission or omission in the drug trafficking chain. Community stakeholders as well as state officials in India and South Africa, admitted during informal interviews that habitual drug traffickers and authorities do have a very precise information bank on each other's activities. My research points out that the social onus as well as the dilemmas of illicit drug trafficking, obviously reside in the authorities as well as those on ground (who continue to face the sociopathy around substance abuse) more than they do with the traffickers<sup>9</sup>.

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Security Council Resolution 1373. See, <http://www.indiainsouthafrica.com/fact-file/keydocuments1.html>. Accessed June 12, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> A complete list of mutual accords, declarations and treaties signed by South Africa post 1994 is available online See Bilateral agreements signed by South Africa between 01. 01. 1994 until 15 04 2011. <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/bilateral0415.rtf>. Accessed 10.06. 2014.

<sup>9</sup> In the section on the people's bilateral sphere, below, I elaborate this point by examples from our field work.

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### **Part III Emergence of a Clandestine Bilateral Sphere (CBS) between India and South Africa and its expanding networks**

India has always been a conduit and producer of drugs. Large quantities of the chemicals (used in Pharmaceutical industry) have been diverted to produce illegal drugs such as Mandrax and Methamphetamine, which has emerged as a major problem in countries such as South Africa (and the United States). Further, ample opportunities exist for drug syndicates to ply their trade in not only India, but also in countries such as Pakistan and Nepal in South Asia. The drug trafficking connection between South Africa and India dates back to the period when India banned the production of Mandrax in early 1970s. Mandrax used to be produced legally in India until it was recognized that the drug had a high potential of being abused. South Africa was then and still is the largest market for smuggled Mandrax, where reportedly 80% of the illegal drug's consumers reside. While other synthetic drugs such as amphetamines and the hallucinogen LSD, were mainly produced and consumed in Europe and North America, methaqualone, however, was exported from India which was its main production hub.

Methaqualone is a depressant used in combination with diphenhydramine (or, alternatively, diazepam) in the manufacture of Mandrax. Methaqualone is not typically abused in India. It is illicitly produced in India and exported for consumption (both oral and smoked in combination with cannabis as 'white pipe') in South Africa, with which India has had not only strong, historical, cultural but also trading links. The drug gained a huge market in South Africa which seemed to have a craving for the strong tranquillizer which was often crushed with marijuana and smoked (Baynham 1995; and Griffith 1991). Initially, manufacturing of this drug was limited mainly to Maharashtra and Gujarat in India. Gauging its illicit demand potential, pharmaceutical establishments in Hyderabad, South Gujarat, Rajasthan and Eastern Uttar Pradesh started producing it as well. In some cases it was observed that these illicit operations had been financed and controlled by non-residents based outside India. Till mid-1990s South Africa, reportedly remained the principal destination for the end product (Baynham 1995).

Many studies take the view that the movement and demand for illicit drugs and substance abuse is a result of its porous borders after the end of the apartheid regime. This led to an increase in availability and use of drugs post

1994 (Cilliers 1994; *Business Day* 1994; Legett 2004). Open borders does seem to be part of the explanation on drugs such as heroin used during present times. However, to assume a connection so simple between borders in the New South Africa and drug (ab)use fails to explain the demand and use of synthetic drugs such as Mandrax among the Indian South Africans during the decades preceding democracy<sup>10</sup>. Drugs have had, as this study re-iterates, a longer history and opportunity to navigate through South Africa's ports, roads and by air, than the onslaught witnessed post 1994. My fieldwork findings indicate that despite apartheid controls Mandrax was one such drug that made its way into South Africa since late 1970s. In many respects, this expanding extent and trend of the illicit consumption of Mandrax in South Africa is seen as being unique in the world. Anecdotal evidence from the law enforcement and treatment communities within the country indicates that South Africa is by far the world's leading consumer of the drug. Some estimates suggest that as much as 80% of worldwide clandestine production of Mandrax may have been destined for the South African market (Venter 1998) alone. In 1998, the South African Association of Retail Pharmacists claimed that South Africa consumed between 70-90 per cent of the world's production of Mandrax (CIIR 1998).

My argument is based, not only upon ethnographic findings but also on the literature that shows that clandestine Mandrax laboratories arose in India, Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Swaziland, Mozambique and later also in the South Africa itself and then expanded to the far East, (Peltzer Karl, Shandir Ramlagan & Nancy Phaswana-Mafuya 2010; Mashaba 2006). Additionally, globalization has further facilitated the introduction of potent addictive drugs such as heroin, cocaine and ecstasy in South Africa. Prior to 1994, cocaine and heroin were not readily available in the society, (Legett 2004). South Africa's re-integration<sup>11</sup> into the world-wide community in the

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<sup>10</sup> Drugs such as dagga (marijuana) and heroin are derived from plants. Others drugs such as ecstasy and Mandrax are and man-made, (See, Peltzer Karl, Shandir Ramlagan and Nancy Phaswana-Mafuya 2010).

<sup>11</sup> As South Africa formed new trade links with other countries, and international flights reached more destinations, (Cilliers 1994), it became a larger target for drug syndicates. In August 1994, the then White House national drug control policy director Dr Lee Brown, observed, '*A few months*

1990s made it possible to (mis)use its developed transportation, communications systems, and advanced banking structure for illicit trafficking of many commodities, including drugs (UNODC 2002; 2003; 2006). In President Jacob Zuma's (2014), twenty year report for the nation, it is admitted that with respect to drug trafficking much needs to be invested, especially in terms of intelligence in order to address the problem.

To return to Mandrax, it was originally known as a safe and non-dependent drug. Subsequently once its potential for abuse was discovered, it was formally pulled off the markets, thus making its manufacture illegal in India where it was first produced. But the banning of Mandrax did not signify an end to its illicit journey. It caused crime syndicates to use the opportunity and continue producing it by means of expanding clandestine laboratories. The market was already established before the ban and the South African demand for the drug coupled with state lapses on both sides made smuggling it a profitable business to venture in, after the ban. Even as late as 2002, though Cannabis and heroin based cocktails were gaining first preference, Mandrax still remained the second most commonly-used illicit drug in South Africa (UNODC 2002: Country Profile, South Africa).

With the motive of extracting social estimates on the prevalence of drugs as clandestine spheres of business and use between India and South Africa, I share some vignettes from my field work which was conducted in Durban during January and February 2014. The Snowball Sampling method was used to collect qualitative data on peoples' memories and anecdotal experiences. Out of a total of 48 individuals who shared their ideas, experiences and struggles against substance abuse for this research, thirteen came from a mixed background ranging from coloured, black and white. Thirty five stakeholders were from the Indian South African community. Thirteen belonged to the colored, the black and the white communities. Thirty from the whole sample were above forty. In hindsight, my older interviewees could clearly recall the Mandrax phase but refused to divulge names. Clearly fearful of the incredibly magnificent and dangerous reach of the drug mafia, some evaded even naming the known culprits of that era. While others felt obliged to caution and warn me over the impossibility to fix blame squarely on one set of actors as they said that it is all a part a macro

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*ago South Africa did not appear on the radar screen - but recently that has changed.' Business Day, 29 August 1994.*

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movement of illicit drugs and not really a country specific problem. Hence, a grassroots oriented qualitative research on drugs has many hindrances and can prove tricky. But at the same time, the diversity of independent voices therein can contribute to alternative ways of looking at dominant or one-sided discourses.

It is true that the easy availability, networks and diversity of illicit drugs thriving in South Africa is unprecedented and makes chasing criminals a herculean task. Yet if social analysis is to be done taking into account peoples' narratives, the roots of this process are said to be set in the period of apartheid. The apathetic administrative attitude of the South African government towards the blacks (that referred to native Africans, coloureds, Indians from the late 1960's onwards) and their segregated living made it easier for traffickers to reach out to them for smuggling of illicit drugs into the society and economy. An overwhelming majority of the people from who associated their goals, actively or passively in the anti-drug politics being waged among the Indian community in Durban remarked that the politics of the apartheid regime played an important role in feeding drugs into the Indian areas. As one works on people's accounts and narratives by leaving aside unverifiable information, there appear precise historical memories and anecdotes which bring to light the emergence and expansion of real life underworld nexus between India and South Africa. These shared experiences point to the general comprehension on the issue and reveal a storehouse of peoples' everyday knowledge on how mafia and authorities at both sides were able to penetrate through apartheid control and isolation. Although there can be eloquent debates on whether these were acts of commission or omission, yet the quotidian actors have their own power and reach to not only reflect upon the state but also the society of which they themselves are parts of. According to Rashid Khan (name changed) who worked as a journalist during the 1970 to 2000 for a Durban Indian Newspaper<sup>12</sup>,

When Apartheid was at it heights, the Indians, just like other discriminated races, were still coming to terms with the traumatic spatial segregation<sup>13</sup> imposed on them by being shifted into special

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<sup>12</sup> Interview conducted by author in Durban, February 13, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> From 1960 to 1983, 3.5 million non-white South Africans were removed from their homes, and forced into segregated neighbourhoods, in one of the

racial zones. But it is also true that other winds of change were blowing across social life from within, owing to changing family structures and codes in Indian community. A first generation of 'double income' families was coming into being throwing challenges to parenting styles and supervision- the youth were ideologically inspired by changes in political consciousness and wanted to be freer. I remember having witnessed a change in social attitudes as a young teenager. So many of us wanted to be –modern- and underwent the increasing craving for Indian things. We wanted to reach out and feel India which we felt was modernizing by whatever little we saw or heard of it. Many of us were smitten by the younger lot of Bollywood screen idols who appeared to be so jazzy with their free lifestyles. We dreamt of having the access to those cultural fantasies and social freedoms that the Indian movies signified for us. My peers and desired to have glamorous girlfriends to go dancing and drinking with<sup>14</sup>.

Similarly Abdul Wahed<sup>15</sup>, from an anti-drugs vigilante group in Durban, while remembering the rapidly changing social times of the two decades in question, chips in,

Many were also getting pulled into Night- clubbing. It was the age of our own 'flower children' - ( as the people engulfed by the impact of powerful youth movements in the decade of late 60s and 70s in America-were referred to in the local Durban slang) as well. It was

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largest mass removals in modern history. See, South Africa\_Forced Removals. AODL. African Studies Centre. Michigan University. <http://www.overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia.php?id=65-259-6>. Retrieved 01.06.2014.

<sup>14</sup> In the 1960s, often referred to as the 'silent decade,' a new sense of resistance had been brewing. In 1969, black students, led by Steve Biko (among others), formed the South African Student' Organisation (SASO) Stressing black pride, self-reliance, and psychological liberation, the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s became an influential force in the townships, including Soweto (Bonner, P. L. 1960).

<sup>15</sup> Interview conducted by the author on January 23, 2014.

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like a musical rock and roll and a kind of sexual revolution setting in—whereby demand for drugs either got inbuilt stealthily or quickly carved a niche for itself permissively. Whether it was the result of the changes taking place or whether it was the change in people’s attitude that prompted substance abuse or whether it was the successful plans of a drug Mafia to cater to the Mandrax demand in Durban and ensure perpetual supply from the Indian shores or both it is not clear. But many were in that social space and the mood was right.

Aside from this direct ethnographic evidence, there are studies that maintain that ironically the rising scale of police and law enforcement resources that were employed almost exclusively to maintain controls over the Blacks, black on black on crimes and illegal drug use/sale among them were rarely investigated nor prosecuted by the apartheid officials. Although South Africa followed international treaties and instituted statutes that made the use of heroin, cocaine, and cannabis criminal offenses, enforcement of such laws remained irregular. In the chapter 7 of the report, ‘The 20 year Review: South Africa 1994-2014’, it is acknowledged that the democratic state of the New South Africa inherited an authoritarian and biased police system from before. The additional handicap was that there were no records nor procedural evidences and precedents available for black on black crimes till almost the mid-1990s as attention was laid on fighting crime only in the white areas. (Zuma 2014: Chapter 7). In the 1960s and 1970s, when the widespread abuse of psychotropic substances emerged in South Africa, the synthetic drugs Mandrax emerged as one of the most widely used among the Indian South Africans<sup>16</sup>.

What will always be veiled in official amnesia is the silence of criminal records and crime in black on black contexts owing to the fact that the South African Apartheid state had done precious little in terms of research or policy on illicit drugs and substance abuse (Rocha-Silva 1992). At the end

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<sup>16</sup> This could also be related to its cheaper prices which led it to acquire ethnic preferences among groups such as the Indian South Africans. It is a well-documented fact that even now, although increasing social ethnic integration is evident, the drug consumption markets of South Africa remain ethnically differentiated in general (UNODC, 2002).

of the apartheid era South African research relating to the nature and extent of use of drugs other than alcohol and tobacco among the general adult population in South Africa was virtually non-existent. In South Africa alcohol and drug abuse was signaled by former President Nelson Mandela in his opening address to Parliament in 1994 as a problem among social pathologies that needed to be combated. By February 1999, the South African Drug Advisory Board showed an unacceptable increase in substance abuse and its associated problems. This problem has been identified by the National Drug Master Plan, as a fuel for crime, poverty, reduced productivity, unemployment, dysfunctional family life, political instability the escalation of chronic diseases, such as AIDS and TB, injury and premature death, (Also see: Drug Advisory Board, 1999).

However, alternative sources such as people's accounts and journalistic coverage of the drug hauls and drug use in newspapers being published from Indian areas can offer a wonderful substitute to re-visit the moment of the emergence of the use of synthetic drugs. Out of the many factors that emerged as being significant in the PIO context, it remains difficult to understand the extent to which they could have separately influenced the availability and use of illicit substances among the ISAs. What we gain from the involved actors' narratives and dusty old examples is an insight, rather a close hindsight into the conditions facilitating the arrival of smuggled drugs in Durban- that the illicit drug trade was prominently feeding into as well as taking advantage of the widespread social revolution of sorts which was unfolding among the Durban Indians (Hansen 2013). It strengthens the idea of the interlinked and overlapping world of mainstream, clandestine and the peoples' bilateral between nations.

Given that the two countries depict a flurry of activity in the MBS, the question therefore arises how effective or how urgent are their efforts to solve the mysteries around the undeterred existence of the clandestine bilateral between them? Drug trafficking and illegal drug abuse has been taking place through their clandestine bilateral since long. India and South Africa are lucrative points of trafficking too. Both countries enjoy a strategic position regionally - having active ports of entry and production as well as lack of an efficient enforcement of the rule of law. Added to this both enjoy the unenviable credibility of providing easily corruptible environments for crime to flourish. There are drug cartels and/or networks comfortably operating from and between cities such as Mumbai and Durban.

Ensnared in the grey zones between de-jure and de-facto authority the underworld has developed significant links with each other, proving that these cartels have little to fear. Obviously they not only operate through clandestine networks that pass as well as trespass through the India – South Africa bilateral but they also derive their power and strategy internationally by virtue of their access to unbridled wealth, technocratic advancement in illicit trafficking modes and massive advantages over the power and reach of states or governments, whose *modus operandi* and *givens* may ‘fade away’ (Naim 2003) in comparison to those of the drug cartels. Naim points out that illegal trade in drugs, arms, intellectual property, people and money is booming. In as far as drugs are concerned, approximately 8% of the world trade revolves around their illicit supply chain<sup>17</sup>.

Anxiously, one scours the newspapers and official records/reports to see how much of the illicit bilateral was made to face law or became subject of bilateral justice-one sure shot way to understand this is through news on drug hauls. The pattern of seizures during the late 1990s with information on organized criminal groups involved in its production, suggested that there was a need to review earlier assessments that the illicit production of Methaqualone in India had been eliminated. There were clear indications of a revival of illicit production particularly in the vicinity of Mumbai, where clandestine manufacture of Methaqualone was directly related to the closure of a number of small-scale pharmaceutical units. Some former employees of these units who possessed the necessary expertise reportedly started lending their technical skills to illicit Methaqualone manufacturers. In some cases it was found that these illicit operations were financed and controlled by non-residents based outside India, particularly the United Arab Emirates, which brings into picture some highly successful Mumbai dons who enjoyed close links with Dubai. The drug was banned, incidentally, when the era of Mumbai smugglers was at its height. It was a

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<sup>17</sup> Like the war on terrorism, the fight to control these illicit markets pits governments against agile, stateless and resourceful networks empowered by globalization. Governments will continue to lose these wars until they adopt newer strategies to deal with this larger, unprecedented struggle that shapes the world as much as confrontations between nation-states once did (Naim, Moisés 2003; and Mashaba 2006).

matter of time when trafficking it was immediately spotted as highly lucrative (Zaidi 2012).

The profitability of the venture captured the imagination of the Mumbai Mafia giving a further boost to its illicit production and trafficking. Between the year 2000-2005, out of seizures made in all parts of the country most were concentrated in Mumbai where the trend indicated that Mandrax trafficking was going strong. In 2002 (11,130 kg) and 2001 (1,984 kg) seizures of Methaqualone had increased sharply over the quantity seized in 2000 (1,095 kg). But in comparison to the previous two years, seizures of Methaqualone declined considerably during 2003 to 593 kg. While drug hauls, at least, signify that something is being done formally, the fact remains that many of these drug hauls at ports and airports are just the tip of the iceberg at best and a cover up at worst. There is a general notion that these camouflage tip-offs cleverly originate from the traffickers themselves (Mashaba 2006).

In most occasions the informants are never identified. The quantities seized, while they may be significant, pale in comparison to the drugs that end up in the market. Therefore, drug traffickers may be using diversion tactics to get law enforcement agencies to focus on lesser consignments while they are busy moving the heavy loads around. As a matter of fact, it is quite difficult to detect drugs moving through ports and harbours where capacity is seriously lacking. This is a universal phenomenon. The goods traffic is just too large to allow law enforcement agents to detect all suspect consignments. India is one of the few countries of the world where drugs and precursors are manufactured, sold in a large domestic market and also, smuggled in and out of the country through various routes and channels, (UNODC, 2005/2010: 20-66).

These patterns provide considerable business opportunities for the underworld. Most gangs have a specialized department dealing with drug manufacture and trafficking expansion. Drug trafficking and organized crime have not expanded in India but also increasingly grown in South Africa since the mid-1990s. Drawing on factors like the country's porous borders, increase in immigrants and international trade links, the underworld created innovative strategies for financing illicit substances across borders. An example was the exchange of hijacked cars across South Africa's land borders in return for illicit drugs. Drug trafficking was an extremely profitable enterprise for the over 200 organized crime syndicates in South Africa. There were links

between the drug trafficking activities of organized crime groups and other criminal acts, ranging from car hijackings and robberies to the smuggling of firearms, stolen cars, endangered species and precious metals, the report said, (Health Systems Trust: 2015).

For India too, the challenge has been steadily rising (for details, see, UNODC, 2005/2010: pp-40-66) and official steps to manage this onslaught of what can be termed as, narco-globalization, have been steadily updated too. Besides its NDPS (Regulation of Controlled Substances) Act 1985 and the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988, in India, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is responsible for implementing the drug demand reduction programme in the country, mainly through support of certified NGOs. Prior to these acts and preventive detention laws, India did not have an exclusive apex structure/authority to check illicit drug abuse and trafficking problems directly. In case of illegal movement of Mandrax per se, these acts seemingly proved as effective deterrents.

However, for any significant comparative insights and answers to emerge, one cannot sum up the situation from the Indian side without considering the other side of the story. Although gradually, Mandrax trafficking registered a decrease between the two countries, it was not entirely a good news. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, heroin was on its way to becoming the drug of choice in South Africa, slowly but steadily (see, Mungai 2015). Thus, the first generation 'Mandrax bilateral' paved the way for second generation 'Heroin bilateral' between India and South Africa. The main destination for the illicit drug from the Indian shores is not South Africa or (South Africa alone) anymore, nonetheless, consignments travel to many western countries as well as west Africa from there. Heroin is brought in from Asia's notorious Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle regions. A proportion of the Heroin traditionally distributed abroad through the cities of Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta began to be shipped through Mumbai and New Delhi as long back as mid-1980s.

Traffickers still smuggle southwest Asian heroin into India along the Indo-Pakistan border and transport it over land to the Indian cities. Similarly southeast Asian heroin is brought into Mumbai and Kolkata by sea and overland routes. Mumbai, Calcutta and New Delhi have steadily emerged as a conduit for heroin (and other illegal drugs, like cocaine) because they are well placed geographically. Being located on the sea trading route to

destinations such as South America, Asia, Australia, Europe and the Middle East (President's Commission on Organized Crime Report: 1986), the cities remain coveted targets for the mafia networks. Besides, this also explains increasing illicit trafficking links between India and South Africa. Additionally top infrastructural development, the high traffic in people and goods serve to make South Africa a perfect conduit for illegal smuggling activities. From South west to southeast Asia to West Africa (Mashaba 2006; Mungai 2015), and Europe, drug traffickers know how to work out ways to taken advantage of the vulnerabilities as well as feasibilities. Both India and South Africa have thus been emerging as crucially favoured destinations for drug trafficking owing to their strategic locations and conducive environments.

Thus the clandestine bilateral sphere of India and South Africa is not static or limited. From the times of apartheid isolation to diplomacy amidst democracy it has traversed alongside the two nations' combined tryst with neo-liberalization and globalization. The CBS knows how to recreate and re-invent itself. The discussion in this section further shows how it calculates it's potential and grows on. If it emanates from beyond mainstream processes, it also functions to cater to destinations apart from either country, while simultaneously serving as a mutual base from within the two.

## **Part IV The People's Bilateral Sphere (PBS): Of Public Memory, Analysis and Collective Action**

The preceding analysis leads us to conclude that clandestine bilateral is undoubtedly a powerful self-selling, self-perpetuating and self-expanding creature. What is equally interesting is that the peoples' bilateral is not far behind. It may not figure in mainstream bilateral studies or in inter-governmental mutual concerns. Yet if the anti-drug abuse and anti-drug trafficking movements on ground are a relevant indication, ironically it is from the PBS that multifarious community efforts are arising bottoms up to engage in damage control locally. Given the fact that the clandestine bilateral sphere between India and South Africa came into being during the apartheid sanctions and the absence of a mainstream political relation between the Indian and the South African state, a search for answers becomes a compelling intrigue. Even though it seems relatively simple to imagine the,



‘why or how’ of the problem, assuming as many of us would do or hear, ‘obviously there must have been a demand that the clandestine bilateral was catering to’, yet this ‘demand’ needs to be embedded in the social context. Complex social changes amid which the Indian South Africans were placed, for instance, hold many answers for the period and processes in question. In this section therefore I analyze the circular role that the clandestine bilateral seemed to have performed between India and South Africa. It shows how the CBS got embroiled in the twin function of not only catering to but also creating the demand for Mandrax among the Durban Indians. Arvindum Moodley<sup>18</sup>, a restaurant owner from Durban with close links to Mumbai and South India,

I worked in the Indian shipping industry during the late 1980s. My wife and I were dating each other then. She would travel from South Africa and I would travel from India all the way to be with each other. During those days one often heard of increasing Mandrax trafficking between India and South Africa. Besides other networks and connections, the Mumbai underworld also seemed to have discovered, exploited and enjoyed an easy reach among the Indian-South Africans, especially those who travelled from Durban to Mumbai and other parts of India. Some (men, women alike) got actually recruited and used as drug mules to keep up the trafficking even if it were for personal or small scale levels. For bigger purposes, Mandrax entered South Africa in all imaginable and unimaginable ways: from being ‘hidden inside hollow musical instruments such as Tablas to being securely tucked inside the entire five meter length of Sari falls. After 1994, we got married and I decided to shift base to Durban. At that point my information network and updates from the Indian side came to an end!

Imparting a closer look at the changes and processes that influenced the appearance of a people’s bilateral space to challenge as well as tackle the menace of drug abuse and trafficking is therefore a relevant need. It helps to know the motives and inspiration in which micro social movements such as community based self-help politics conducted by local organizations draw

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<sup>18</sup> Interview, February 10, 2014. Florida Street, Durban.

qualitative interchange of knowledge and know-how in the people's bilateral. We interacted and conducted participant observation with an organization called the Anti-Drug Forum (ADF). Over the drug abuse scenario and the emerging role of ADF among 'users' among Durban Indians, some recent studies give helpful details about the situation in Durban now and embed the predicament in its local contextual realities. Understanding the current context of addiction at a personal level, Pattundeen (2008: 61-71) explains how the current drug addiction centers around bulked up forms of Heroin.

In local slang the bulked up Heroin variations are called 'Sugars'. Singh, having undertaken case studies with Chatsworth families affected by substance abuse explained that how despite the break down in the system of co-habitation of extended families (due to various social and political reasons including spatial segregation during apartheid), the basic Indian ethic of elders and relatives coming forward to help and positively intervene in time of trauma continues to function. Atom families facing situations of drug abuse do not have to go through it alone (for details see, Singh 2013: 208). During our own field work with the ADF and interactions with rehabilitation patients/ walk-in cases of drug users and their families, it became clear that Indian families value and derive solace from a family oriented, personalized care provided by community-based approaches. The ADF has been able to recognize the need for such one to one, individualized approaches for catering to those who seek help from it. It remains flexible to undertake unconventional methods of rehabilitation paying the necessary heed to local social preferences, when the need be. The organization actively dialogues with the local and national media and political actors.

ADF's team aims to meaningfully ameliorate the growing scourge alongside its vision of trying out innovative rehabilitation ideas and services. This initiative against substance abuse which has vociferously emanated from the thresholds of the Indian South Africans proves that the peoples' bilateral is not a passive recipient of globalization and international networks. Inspired by the socio-politically competitive visions of the local community, the ADF<sup>19</sup> came into being in 2005. It is a multi-tasking effort and space to cater

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<sup>19</sup> For a review of ADF work, challenges and activism, refer to, 'Global Perspectives. Chatsworth, A Chance for Change', at BBC.com, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00qdrpz> first Broadcast on 05.05.2012; Accessed on April 14, 2014.

to those whose needs are not entirely fulfilled by governmental and non-governmental organizations. The ADF devotes time to victims of drug abuse and their families, conducts awareness drives and workshops with schools in Durban, arranges de-addiction programmes and Art of Living classes at Chatsworth Youth Centre. Its specific birth context was the impulse to counter the growing menace of ‘sugars’, among the South African Youth. Pillay<sup>20</sup>, who defines his ongoing community work on behalf of the ADF, as a ‘self-help based, micro social action’, remarks that over the years the ADF has evolved as an organization to understand and cater to the needs of people from all religions and communities.

Arising from Indian South African background it has incorporated the needs to gain the trust among Indians and people of other communities living in Chatsworth and its vicinities. This has been an extremely important step given that the social profile of Chatsworth (where ADF is based) is steadily changing post-Apartheid (BBC Broadcast, May, 5, 2012) and it is no longer an exclusive Indian township (Luthra Sinha 2015)<sup>21</sup>. There are others who may require the same attention and helping hand besides Indians, just as much as they can chip in and come forward to collaborate with and give ADF the support it needs locally, from people of diverse backgrounds.

Indian South Africans, like many other communities in the transitioning South Africa became a vulnerable ground for social degeneration which included rising cases of domestic abuse, alcoholism, and drugs and disillusioned, escapist behavior. Such problems have not completely ended with the end of Apartheid. Newer challenges have arisen such as the new phase of proliferating substance abuse among the Indians in Durban, (Luthra Sinha 2014). ADF endeavours to help the communities in Chatsworth and areas around it especially with respect to the current as well as the, ‘hand-me-down’ drug problems inherited from the past. ADF goals and strategies are different from other self-help based social organizations who engage in similar community action on the problem of drugs. The

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<sup>20</sup> Interview conducted by the author: February, 7, 2013.

<sup>21</sup>. Of these, Mandrax (ab)use was definitely one, which the communities struggled dominantly with just when the epidemic of ‘Sugars’ was all set to unfold in the opening years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Durban. (Also see, Luthra Sinha and Chetty, 2014, pp. 382-, 383 ).

Refocus and Upliftment Foundation (RA-UF)<sup>22</sup> also works among the ISAs and is favoured by the Muslim families of Indian-Asian origin. RA-UF caters exclusively to de-addiction and re-habilitation needs among the affected youth. We found that the RA-UF center had affected youth from all kinds of background and communities including coloured, black, white and Indians<sup>23</sup>.

There are other action groups such as the Cape Town initiated organization, 'People against Gangsterism and Drugs' (Pagad) that arose from an Indian- Asian Muslim background. Its actions have been likened to vigilantes as it shot into prominence owing to its policy of confronting the drug lords directly. Pagad began with the best of intentions, as a Cape Town citizens' bid to battle against crime. Elements within Muslim community predominantly in the Western Cape launched Pagad out of frustration at the ineffectiveness of the police in dealing with the problems of crime, violence and drug abuse in many townships (Peltzer, Shandir, Johnson and Phaswana-Mafuya 2014). The organization which also has a chapter in Durban now finds itself accused of criminal activity. Vigilantism began peacefully in Cape Town, as residents patrolled neighborhoods to discourage drug dealers, many of whom appeared to enjoy impunity from a corrupt and under-funded police (BBC World Africa 2000)<sup>24</sup>.

Rafiq and Suleiman, my informants from the Pagad chapter in Durban explained that their organization has a widespread community base

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<sup>22</sup> See, <http://www.iqraatrust.org/index.php/projects/representative-selection-of-projects-iqraa-trust-projects/healthcare/222-refocus-and-upliftment-foundation-rauf-durban>. Accessed June 5. 2014.

<sup>23</sup> This information is based on my interactions with youth undergoing rehabilitation during a visit to the main centre of RA-UF. Observations on RA-UF are derived from my participation in group discussions and workshops in Durban coordinated by the organization's staff, volunteers and families interested in the de-addiction awareness drives. I found that though the youth came from multiple backgrounds and communities, they were all boys. RA-UF chief coordinator, Ibrahim Dawood showed me a new centre which was still under construction and was being built specially keeping the needs of women rehab patients in mind, (January 21-24, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Pagad: Vigilantes or terrorists? Wednesday, 13 September, 2000, BBC World Africa. UK. Online: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/923701.stm>. Accessed 9.6.2014

too. Many Muslim parents in Durban call the activists at home so that their errant children can be given information and lectures on de-addiction. At the time of its origin in Cape Town, it was a culmination of similar social fears and apprehensions. People as parents, leaders and youth were aware of the reach of drug dealers. Drug dealers usually owed allegiance to one or a number of criminal gangs, who would also control activities such as gun running and prostitution in many of the townships surrounding Cape Town. A close sense of community and a shared moral stance, many times stemming from religious convictions against drugs, meant that the Pagad neighborhood watch groups were strongest in predominantly Muslim areas. Pagad is still strongly associated with Islamic fundamentalism. Our informants, however, denied the label and projected a secular attitude. Maintaining that Pagad has social validity for those who call upon it, they elucidated how the organization is also involved in community upliftment efforts, social dialogue, besides charity such as free provision of food, clothes and medicines among victims of substance abuse<sup>25</sup>.

Hence we see that many kinds of community efforts have arisen to cement the efficiency –void between states, governments on the one hand and people on the other. The bureaucratic states that are running behind in techniques or in the willingness to perform, are running behind not only in comparison to the ever efficient and ever-growing powerful body of drug traffickers but also lag behind in social action, the kind that becomes visible through various organizations. Though all kinds of people's action is not accepted as correct or endorsed wholeheartedly by the society, yet the deafening silence of governments is at least broken by peoples' movements such as the ADF and / or other groups when they show their grit to stay awake in a challenging arena.

On the one hand smuggling is widely tolerated, law enforcement is fitful and inefficient, and politicians are easily bribed or are even involved in the drug trade themselves. On the other hand many officials between India and South Africa region are deeply concerned by the effects of the drug trade, but are often confronted by people and networks more powerful than they – not to undermine how other factors like the regional emergence of a sophisticated financial infrastructure in countries such as Ghana and Nigeria

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<sup>25</sup> Author's interaction and interviews with the PAGAD members in Durban during the period of January 20, 2014 to February 10, 2014.

further enhances the involvement of newer global demand chains. It draws home the point made by Bayart one and a half decade ago, namely, that expertise in smuggling, the weakness of law enforcement agencies, and the official tolerance of, or even participation in, certain types of crime, constitute a form of social and political capital that accumulates over time (Ellis 2009; Bayart, Ellis & Hibou 1999).

Yet at the same time, what is refreshing, but perhaps low scale and often not visible is the people's bilateral space where a struggle to break the codes of this hegemony of networks is tirelessly being waged by the sheer grit of local leaders and collective community effort. Pillay incorporates innovative techniques from India such as the course on, 'Art of Living' as part of the rehabilitation programmes at his workshops. Sam Pillay (Interview, January 15, 2013) from the ADF comments,

The ADF firmly believes that it is essential to deal with the psychological aspects of addiction since this makes up to 95% of the rehabilitation process. Most addictions prey on the mind of the individual and thus it is essential to redirect the mind-set of the person in rehabilitation. This is why the Art of Living Foundation 'Upliftment Program' was adopted as a mandatory and crucial aspect of the rehabilitation process. We have felt that the community responds positively to innovative mind training strategies to keep the victims or even perpetrators of substance abuse sociopathy off it. For our purposes, Art of Living is one such contemporarily relevant technique for inner peace and healing. Besides that it is accepted by youth and other age groups all over the world. What's more- it has an Indian touch too.

This above statement points to the fact that despite the impasse in the political relations between India and South Africa, it was not only the clandestine bilateral that became powerful but also over the years the cultural and symbolic inter-connections between Indian South Africans and their country of origin continuously lead to the evolution of a creative people's bilateral.

In fact, prevalence of diverse community movements among the Indian South Africans is not a new phenomenon. They have been note worthily catering to socio-political needs of the community in local and

national contexts. Though Indian South Africans have always been acutely aware of their Indian roots and derive inspiration from their culture and customs, they have been first and foremost been dedicated to performing their share in the political and social struggles for bringing on and building up of a new South Africa. The Indian South Africans continue to see themselves as proudly South African, while at the same time projecting their symbolic ties with their remote homeland, in a specific South Africanised way, (Luthra Sinha 2014). They continue to keep their efforts on as is clear from the anti-substance abuse politics that clearly enriches the PBS between India and South Africa with its dynamic and diverse approaches to the drug scourge. The use of Art of Living by the ADF is one such innovatively connective example wherein the people of India and South Africa skillfully utilize their human and cultural resources to solve substance abuse dilemmas.

During the course of fieldwork, I attempted to delineate the world of people's memory, imagination and social action arising from the various kinds of bilateral spaces between India and South Africa. Besides the insight into anti-substance abuse social and community based movements enfolding in Durban among the Indian Diaspora, this focus also throw a critical look at how do India and South Africa prioritize their bilateral affairs ? Can a juxtaposition of the dominant discourse with the people's counter-discourse help in searching for that qualitative pause, for that ameliorative public voice that lies submerged in the seemingly homogenous bilateral global space and time between India and South Africa? How does one give meaning to their shared, entangled and contextual memories amid evolving debates and joint insights for a broader perspective worrisome trends such as drug trafficking and the ensuing socio-economic political scourge in their common bilateral? Looking at the emerging competitive as much as collaborative economic and political aspirations of India and South Africa, one only needs to gently remind that their bilateral needs and duties do extend beyond considerations of market and supermarket diplomacy. Investment in social welfare, for example cannot stay at the bottom rack of mainstream globalization. Somewhere a beginning has to be made to rise to the occasion mutually. To this end the people's bilateral, by investing in socially profitable ventures, shows one positive way to cement the India-South Africa ties further.

## **Part V Concluding Interpretations and Suggestions**

This paper was inspired by the world of people's discourses', day to day memory and analysis that opened up for me during the field work and participant observation among actors from the ADF. Later, in search of more grounded knowledge on the issue, I expanded my fieldwork to cover opinions and actions of other stakeholders such as victims, vigilantes and state actors (such as Police), NGOs and CBOs. Subsequently, the one question that plagued my reflections was, 'Is the India-South Africa bilateral sphere only that which constitutes formal treaties and signed declarations between two countries? If yes, then how do we explain those who constitute the bilateral space that becomes alive during activities such as illicit drug trafficking between the two countries? Clearly there is a parallel bilateral sphere in operation between the two countries (specifically w.r.t illicit drug trafficking) which I have then referred as the Clandestine Bilateral Sphere (CBS). What invites attention is that this CBS has been in place at a time when the two nations had embittered relations in the mainstream bilateral and India's anti-Apartheid policies and sanctions were at their height. The CBS constantly gained momentum even during the following two decades. Subsequently, by the end of 1970s, the narco-trafficking between the two countries became all set to rise even further. It is safe to deduce that proceedings and announcements in the formal bilateral sphere or the MBS sometime do not suffice to understand activities and possibilities carried out in the parallel bilateral that extends between two countries.

Hence it is important to understand, analyze, and contextualize the illicit trafficking of drugs such as Mandrax, with new and varied insights. One way of looking at the Mandrax phase between India and South Africa is that it provided an initiative and an impetus to the evolution of a CBS between India and South Africa. Since this study envisaged a qualitative focus on peoples' action, imagination and practices vis-à-vis the origin of the use of synthetic drugs among the Indian South Africans, a need arose to incorporate the concern of a third layer of reality that surrounds these bilateral spheres. This reality pertains to the informal bilateral space which I term as the People's Bilateral Sphere (PBS). The PBS occupies the informal operating space between the two countries and many times bears the brunt of or internalizes the gaps between the formal and the clandestine bilateral by leading the thinking and damage control processes at the tail end of the



problem- where forgotten characters such as street drug runners and impoverished drug mules as well as vulnerable youth caught up variously in cycles of substance abuse between India and South Africa abound.

The peoples' bilateral, that lies ensconced between two kinds of spaces- the mainstream and the clandestine, is a space full of tough but enriching and eye-opening accounts, memories and lived experiences of the common stakeholders. Hence it is difficult to separate one from the other but certainly it can be said that for the sake of epistemological clarity, it helps to speak of the separate layers involved in the bargain i.e. the state with all its treaties and declarations cum agencies and bureaus; the powerful non-state drug networks and cartels; and the common stakeholders bearing the brunt of the illicit trafficking, it is the latter's quandary that is the most vulnerable. From the point of view of a bottom's up concern, many practical ideas can be derived from hearing the involved actors on ground.

By utilizing the accumulated knowledge and experience of the many social activists and people's organizations involved in curbing the menace, one hopes to utilize visions emanating from the tail end of the issue- which also happens to be the demand end of the illicit cycle. Usually, the dominating global discourses on comprehending illicit drug production, use and trafficking are driven substantially, if not exclusively, by economic criterion. Understanding the scale of the finances involved can be of great use to those working in the related fields<sup>26</sup>. Though some studies (see UNDOC: 2005, World Drug Report) take one step further step towards providing policy relevant answers to such questions, my paper proposes a worm's eye view take of the situation to make in order to build on a compassionate globalization.

The CBS between India and South Africa continues to exist in stubborn juxtaposition to their new millennium mainstream diplomacy and globalized neo-liberal interactions. How much the two bilateral spheres support, enhance, oppose, intermesh or promote each other is beyond the purview of this paper. But what is interesting to note is that although they

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<sup>26</sup> Who earns the most in the global illicit drug business? How does the size of this market compare with legitimate enterprises? Which substances and markets are the most profitable? How are the monetary incentives changing over time? Which sectors of the market are most vulnerable to economic sanctions?

exist in parallel worlds, both forces are perpetually engaged in negotiating common socio-economic and political zones of control, networking and operation. The CBS does not exist in a vacuum. It makes use of networks and facilities which are under the close scrutiny of the state in many instances. The MBS in India and South Africa, therefore has much to answer and account for especially to the people who continue to suffer for policy lapses on prevention of illicit drug trafficking and substance abuse.

Simply by maintaining that illicit drug zones and networks between the two countries are dangerously powerful, lethally extravagant, brutally organized and challengingly global does not take away the onus from the Indian and South African State to perform: Admitting nonchalantly that the MBS lags behind and falls shamefully short of officers, resources, know-how and attitude, is a brutal political excuse, a blatant deception of the trust their common law abiding citizen's place upon them; if not a criminal neglect of common public welfare. For the many problems that are spawned off due to this lapse are lived in excruciating detail by the stakeholders: those who witness deteriorating socio-economic, criminal situations alongside physical-psychological aspects of substance abuse.

It is, hence, not only the economic, supermarket diplomacy that has gone bilateral, multilateral and global but it also the illicit drug trafficking that has been steadily tracing its path between and beyond the two countries. Economically, drug trafficking leads to an inter-mingling of the legitimate with the illicit capital (ECOSOC Report 1996), businesses and networks, compounding the possibility of delineating and exposing such crimes<sup>27</sup>. At the same time, it is essential to recognize the deep social roots of the international drug problem and the need for cooperation on a much broader

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<sup>27</sup> The link between crime and drugs is increasingly affecting societies. Trafficking begets other criminal activity, such as violence between groups competing for market share at the wholesale and retail levels. At the same time, the sums involved give criminals substantial resources with which to organise themselves efficiently, with little or no regard for the fiscal regulatory and legal constraints on normal businesses. Their capital resources are increasingly being used to finance diversification into legitimate business activity. Such intermingling of illicit and legitimate activities poses a serious threat to tackling the drugs problem. For details see, Report to the ECOSOC, 1996: p. 5.

basis than simple enforcement. The drug trade is dependent on demand and only by developing preventative strategies that strike at the underlying factors that lead people to use drugs in the first place can we curb drug abuse and trafficking (Leduc, Diane & James Lee 1996). These factors, or root causes, such as sexual abuse, broken homes, illiteracy, physical abuse, and lack of parental guidance are more social in nature than they are problems of crime. It is therefore a generally proposed notion considering the status quo that nations must take an integrated approach to fighting the international drug problem. This would involve law enforcement, education, treatment and economic development (Brown 1994) efforts from the mainstream bilaterals.

Hence an intensified cooperation between the two states making their mutually signed policy documents more meaningful would be a helpful way forward. India with its vast credibility as well as expertise in the IT sector can chip in effectively in this war on drugs. Further, knowledge derived from the lived experiences of ordinary actors affected by sociopathy around drug addiction provides a platform to understand the ways in which runners and traffickers empower themselves. It is with this ethnographic knowledge that social movements rising among the Indian Diaspora aspire to reduce the impact of traffickers. Needless to say, if such a role is difficult to perform for states and governments with all their economic, technical and administrative resources, it is more challenging and dangerous to enact by the common stakeholders: Yet the people's sphere and the people's bilateral has not shied away. The Globalizing states need to discover and pay attention to these alternative voices.

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# **‘Mothers of the Indian Nation’: The Impact of Indian Women Nationalists on South African Women**

**Kalpana Hiralal**

## **Abstract**

This paper examines the India-South Africa relations in the context of historical political ties. The arrival of indentured and later ‘passenger’ Indians laid the foundations for India’s perennial presence in South Africa. Whilst the late nineteenth century was dominated by labour issues the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa which India supported. This paper examines the role of Indian women nationalists, how they shaped and defined the political consciousness of women in South Africa. Both countries followed a trajectorial path of colonial oppression and the struggle for independence. India by the early twentieth century had produced iconic and activist women such as Sarojini Naidu and Pandita Ramabai. Both Naidu and Ramabai challenged colonial and traditional notions of patriarchy and fought tirelessly for women’s emancipation. Their public discourses on women’s emancipation may have been perceived as ‘radical’ and ‘revolutionary’ given the traditional gender norms that governed Indian society. However, for women in India and South Africa they were inspirational heroines and role models. By exploring the influence of Indian women nationalists on South African women of Indian origin this paper adds to the debates on political and intellectual transoceanic links between India and South Africa. It also highlights the significance of the ‘homeland’ in the diaspora and how it can shape and define the political identities of immigrants.

**Keywords:** Sarojini Naidoo, Pandita Ramabai, India, South Africa, diaspora, women

## **Introduction**

In South African historiography transoceanic links between India and South Africa has begun to gain momentum (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014). Scholars have begun to explore transoceanic connections between India and South Africa, recognising ‘the global alignments within which South Africa and India have been positioned’. As Isabel Hofmeyr and Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie have noted, ‘Linked from the seventeenth century by global flows of labour (first slavery and then indenture), the two regions have long been yoked together by the mechanisms of imperial modernity and anti- colonial resistance .... In a globalising world where most disciplines are taking a transnational turn, these questions have assumed a new urgency. How does one figure the shifting relationship of the national and the international? How does one understand different moments of globalisation? ... . How does contemporary globalisation relate to the transnationalism of European imperialism? .... A consideration of South Africa and India provides an opportunity to intervene in these debates by examining both previously obscured transnational histories’ (Cited in van der Spuy & Clowes 2012: 352).

In particular, the role of gender in transoceanic links between India and South Africa has illuminated the importance of women in the migration process, ‘Women played an important role in promoting culture and religion, but Hindu women also adapted to new dress forms, given Cape Town’s demographics. .... There are stories of agency, independence and freedom counterpoised by narratives of abandonment and separation. All these are relevant in a gendered understanding of migration – illuminating lives of women who did travel and of those who did not travel’ (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014: 655). More recently the role of gender in the transoceanic links has sought to explore the role of Indian women nationalists on the political trajectories of South African women (van der Spuy & Clowes 2012). Spuy and Clowes have examined the relationship between Sarojini Naidu and well known Capetonian political activist, Cissie Gool. They argue that Naidu had an indelible influence on Gool encouraging her to challenge political patriarchy and seek her own political voice, ‘Sarojini Naidu’s personal, political relationship with Cissie Gool had been established in domestic spaces, and it was both there and in the public performance of her unassailable authority that Naidu made a difference’ (van der Spuy & Clowes

2012: 363). This paper adds to these current debates by examining the role of women nationalists in India and how they shaped and defined the political consciousness of women of Indian origin in South Africa. Both South Africa and India were colonised nations and in both countries women played an integral part of the liberation struggle. In India, women such as Sarojini Naidu and Pandita Ramabai, challenged colonial and traditional gender norms and became vociferous advocates of women's emancipation. Hence they became inspirational heroines not only in India but in the diaspora as well, including South Africa. During Sarojini Naidu's visit in South Africa in 1924 she inspired Indian politicians, traders, teachers, school-children, labourers, mothers and wives. Her support for Indian education, equality and non-racialism earned her the respect and admiration of the Indian community. In a farewell speech to Naidu, the Indian community described her as the 'soul of every Indian in South Africa' (*Indian Opinion*, 30 May 1924). According to Amod Bayat, Chairman of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), 'It was the happiest moment in the life of the Indian community of South Africa when you graciously accepted the Presidentship of the South African Indian Congress, and the work that has been done and is being done under you is epoch making in many respects. And the Indian community in the future will be all the better for it' (*Indian Opinion*, 30 May 1924).

I chose Sarojini Naidu and Pandita Ramabai because of their profound status and impact on women in India and South Africa. Both were wives and mothers who convincingly campaigned for women's emancipation and India's freedom. Naidu was referred to as 'The Nightingale of India' because of her poetry and oratory and her ability to inspire audiences. Her presence in South Africa enlightened women who viewed her as a role model, mother figure, and subsequently had an impact on their own political consciousness. While in South Africa in 1924, she campaigned for three months, urging men and women to fight for equality and freedom. Naidu referred to the plight facing Indian South Africans as temporary and added that these difficulties 'have no abiding place in the evolution of Africa' (*The Leader*, 19 July 1985). Naidu was an inspiration to women such as Ansuya Singh, Dr Goonam and many other women of Indian origin who grew up in this historical milieu (Govinden 2008: 277).

Pandita Ramabai, too, was a remarkable woman whose advocacy for women's emancipation and conversion to Christianity inspired fellow Christian Indians in South Africa. In this paper her impact is largely narrated

from the vantage point of well-known academic, Devarakshanam (Betty) Govinden. Govinden, in *Sister Outsiders*, succinctly captures Ramabai's impact on her family and on South African Indian womens' writings, '...It is worth noting that Ramabai and Sarojini Naidu, were admired by both Indian men and women, as in my family, who still continued to live in and accept a traditionally sexist society and imperialist world' (Govinden 2008: 80). Govinden grew up in an apartheid society and raised in an Indian community that clearly adhered to traditional gender norms. Her experiences shaped both her political and academic identity. She studied at Salisbury Island, a '*tribal college*' or '*bush college*' for Indians which was a 'blight on our educational landscape' as the curriculum was 'narrow and doctrinaire'. Yet despite this, the Island provided Govinden, an opportunity to acquire higher education, 'my world was slowly broadening', it was here she developed a passion for English Literature, where she grew to 'love Shakespeare, Milton and Chaucer...' It also laid the foundations for Govinden's feminist identity. Her readings in post-colonial and postmodern theory helped her to read 'against the grain' of the 'insularity' of Island education which was to impact on her academic writings. She sought to document the marginalized and lost histories of women, bringing forth the missing voices and agency of the colonized within a feminist analysis. In so doing she created an awareness of exclusionary practices in women's writings in general and Indian women's writing in particular and the importance of highlighting difference and heterogeneity in women's experiences (Govinden 2011: 53-62; Hiralal 2013: 129-134). Govinden, like Ramabai, sought to raise gender awareness and displayed a firm belief in social justice and freedom. Whilst they came from different historical periods they shared a common ancestral 'homeland', India. Govinden states, 'There were many references to Sarojini Naidu in the family conversations and she acquired a legendary status for me as I was growing up. It is only now, however, that I am beginning to appreciate the full stature and greatness of these two women' (Govinden 2008: 79). By exploring the influence of women nationalists of India on South African women of Indian origin this paper adds to the current debates on historical transoceanic links between India and South Africa. It also highlights the significance of the 'homeland' and how it defines and shapes the political identities of immigrants in the diaspora.

### **Diasporic Consciousness and the ‘Homeland’**

The arrival of indentured Indians to Natal in 1860 and later ‘passenger’ Indians (also known as free Indians), laid the foundations for India’s pervasive link with South Africa. For Indian immigrants, migration also created a sense of dislocation, confusion, disempowerment and a sense of loss. The need to replicate their ‘homeland’ led to the creation of ‘India’s of the mind’ in South Africa (Rushdie 1991: 10). It gave rise to the building of temples, mosques, and the preservation and adaptation of their customs and rituals. Amongst ‘passenger’ Indians the Indian link was maintained through regular trips to India and caste related marriages. Hence there was a desire by these immigrants to reclaim their identity in the homeland, a yearning as Rushdie states, ‘[E]xiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt’ (Rushdie 1991: 10). This diasporic consciousness manifested itself in emotional and cultural ties with the motherland. James Clifford suggests that ‘Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension’ (Clifford 1994: 312). Some scholars have called for the significance of re-evaluating diasporic spaces, the ‘need for such inter-diaspora (rather than separatist) study re-plots our histories, explores new intersections and ‘contact zones’ and that the ‘diasporic space is particularly prone to cultural constructions vis-à-vis a ‘homeland’ (Grewal & Kaplan 1994: 7). At the turn of the century the Indian immigrants and their descendants were subjected to waves of discriminatory legislation which hindered their political, economic and social mobility. This oppressed environment created a sense of displacement and exclusion amongst the Indian community. For many Indians, India’s struggle icons, and key individuals served as inspirational heroes and heroines amidst their hardships. Thus Indian women in South Africa found a natural affinity with heroines on Indian soil, ‘There was clearly an explicit connection – an umbilical cord – that was being maintained between India and South Africa by their adulation of these women’ (Govinden n.d.).

### **Women’s Status in South Africa 1860-1950**

The impact of Sarojini Naidu and Pandita Ramabai on women of Indian origin in South Africa must be seen in the context of political and social

forces in India and South Africa. Both Naidu and Ramabai were vocal in their condemnation of patriarchy and British rule in India. At the time British colonial rule which not only advocated racial superiority of the coloniser but also further enforced patriarchy under the guise of ‘modernity’. The ‘Women’s Question’ was central to the colonial state and indigenous male elite and became the ‘touchstone of the colonial-nationalist encounter, inscribed with the trope of modernity and the legitimization of political power’ (Sen 2000: 3-7; Thapar 1993: 82). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Indian society was highly patriarchal. Traditional gender norms governed and defined women’s political space. A group of enlightened social and religious reformers sought to improve the status of women’s position in Indian society. They sought to eradicate the worst evils of Indian society such as the caste system, untouchability, *purdah* system (female seclusion) , *sati* (Hindu practice of a widow throwing herself on to her husband’s funeral pyre), child marriages, social inequalities and illiteracy. For reformers, women’s emancipation was a ‘prerequisite to national regeneration and an index of national achievement in the connected discourse of civilization, progress, modernity, and nationalism’ (Sen 2000: 7). Pandita Ramabai by the late nineteenth century had publicly attacked many aspects of Hindu patriarchy. She wrote, ‘Our only wonder is that a defenceless woman like Rukhmabai dared to raise her voice in the face of the powerful Hindu law, the mighty British Government, the 129,000,000 men, the 330,000,000 gods of the Hindus; all these have conspired together to crush her into nothingness. We cannot blame the English Government for not defending a helpless woman; it is only fulfilling its agreement made with the male population of India’ (cited in Sen 2000: 11). Sarojini Naidu by the early twentieth century had not only achieved fame through her brilliant poetry but also for being the first woman to be elected as President of the Indian National Congress. Naidu and Ramabai’s highly public profile had illustrated to the men and women in the diaspora that the realm of politics need not be male dominated and that ‘gender need not stifle their political ambitions’ (Van der Spuy and Clowes 2012: 348).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries South Africa shared similar gender norms and patriarchy defined the political space. Politics was largely male-dominated with men assuming leadership positions and women relegated to the domestic sphere. The main racially constructed disenfranchised political organisations such as the African National Congress



(ANC), NIC, and the African Peoples Organisation (APO) were male-centric. Women were only granted full membership to the ANC in 1943. The NIC too, privileged men; its constitution denied women the right to vote. Struggle activist Dr Goonam recalls her excitement in the 1940s at the organisation attempt to democratise the Congress, 'While I was prominent on the platform and there was a large turnout of women at the rally, we did not participate in the voting on that day because the NIC's constitution denied that right to women. At the very first meeting of the new executive, an urgent amendment was made to the archaic constitution, whereby women were given full membership on equal basis with men. I then paid my subscription fee of one shilling and went on a campaign to enlist women members to our Congress' (Goonam 1991: 101). There was no doubt that women such as Ramabai and Naidu had an impact on Goonam. In her autobiography, *Coolie Doctor*, Goonam alluded to the inspiration she acquired from women in India, 'Women in India are the vanguard of the freedom struggle and their achievements have been remarkable' (Goonam 1991: 102). Women in India at the time were actively involved in the nationalist struggle. This was most noticeable in the protest marches during the partition of Bengal in 1905, they supported Congress's programme of boycott of British goods (the Swadeshi Movement), and engaged in numerous rallies, sold *khadi*, picketed cloth and liquor shops and made salt. In South Africa patriarchal attitudes towards women shaped and defined women's political role, as 'many husbands were not happy with their wives' staying away from home and made it difficult for women to attend meetings' (Giesler 2006: 66). Hence, women within the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) took upon 'women's work' such as fund-raising and catering' (cited in Giesler 2006: 66). However, it would be wrong to assume that women did not actively participate in political campaigns. At the turn of the century Indian women's defiance of the marriage laws and the African women's protests of pass laws in the Orange Free State in 1913, is indicative of women's capacity to become a powerful political weapon in times of struggle. The remarkable and courageous efforts of Indian women in the Satyagraha campaign of 1913 certainly made Gandhi aware of the political power of women as participants in his non-violent struggle (Hiralal 2009). Similarly, Naidu and Ramabai, challenged traditional gender norms and showed that the political terrain needed to be democratised and that women could play as important a role as men in bringing about political change.

## **Sarojini Naidu**

Sarojini Naidu was born on February 13 1879 in Hyderabad, India, to a Bengali family of Kulin Brahmins. She was a great poet, nationalist leader and orator and played a pivotal role in India's freedom struggle. Her contribution to English poetry, her feisty advocacy for women's emancipation and their education, and India's freedom are legendary (*Indian Opinion* 22 February 1924). She studied for a while in England and later returned to India and 1898 married Dr Naidu, a non-Brahmin with whom she had four children. Whilst Naidu was an ardent poet it was politics that defined her stature. She was actively involved in politics after 1903 and her contemporaries, such as *Rabindranath Tagore*; Muhammad Ali *Jinnah*, Annie Besant, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Gandhi and Jawaharlal *Nehru* admired her fiery and tenacious spirit. In India she worked tirelessly for Hindu-Muslim unity and travelled throughout the country and lectured on the welfare of youth, women's emancipation and nationalism. She was an ardent admirer of Gandhi and was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1925. She was Gandhi's 'faithful lieutenant' when the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched in April 1919. She addressed crowds, quelled the riots and sold proscribed literature. She was jailed five times during the nationalist struggle (Kumar 2015: Chapter 1; *Modern Review* May 2024: 631).

Given her credentials, Naidu was the ideal Indian ambassador to South Africa to mediate over Indian grievances with the South African government. She subsequently arrived in South Africa in February 1924. She was invited to South Africa by the NIC and on arrival met and engaged in a series of political discussions with General Smuts, Patrick Duncan and all the opposition leaders of the South African Parliament. Her fearless eloquence captured the attention of many Europeans, although some viewed her disdainfully 'at first treating her with some suspicion and coldness, later on flocked everywhere to hear her' (*Modern Review* May 1924: 631). Her great oratory skills clearly articulated the Indian cause but equally important was her support for non-racialism, 'The greatest of all the benefits, which has been conferred by her visit, is probably that she put throughout the Indian cause completely in conjunction with that of the African native. She claimed no privileges for the Indian, which were not also claimed for the African. She struck boldly at the root of all the mischief, the Colour Bar itself' (*Modern*

*Review*, May 1924: 631).

Well known columnist and historian IC Meer described Sarojini Naidu as 'India's greatest 'ambassador' to South Africa'. On her arrival to South Africa, Naidu visited several cities, including Durban, Pretoria and Cape Town. During her visit the South African Parliament was considering the Class Areas Bill introduced by the Interior Minister, Patrick Duncan, supported by General Smuts, the Prime Minister and leader of the South African Party. The Bill sought to introduce compulsory segregation of Indians in trade and residence. Sarojini was highly critical of the South African government. According to Meer, this 'sari-clad black woman' holding discussions with the Prime Minister and attending Parliament found many of the speeches in Parliament 'full of blind prejudice, selfishness and ignorance' (*The Leader*, 19 July 1985). Sarojini's visit coincided with the newly formed South African Indian Congress (SAIC) in 1923. She chaired a session at the SAIC conference and made recommendations that a Round Table Conference be held between the Governments of India and South Africa with participation by the SAIC 'for the adjustment of questions involving the rights, liberties and responsibilities of Indians domiciled and born in South Africa' (*The Leader*, 19 July 1985).

Sarojini made a huge impact on South African women. She believed that women could serve as catalysts for social change and could therefore play a pivotal role in the struggle for South Africa's freedom. In her speeches she encouraged women in South Africa to have a political voice, to engage in political leadership and deliberations,

Women were born to be strong and to unite the whole world in a common love and peace. India has always stood for peace in this world, and I want the day to come when in the history of a peaceful South Africa the historian will show that the Indian women of South Africa by their unselfishness and wisdom were able to bring unity between the white man, the brown man, the black man and the coloured man . . . ask yourselves what you can do to make South Africa better. Think of your duties rather than your privileges (Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, n.d.: 407-11).

Naidu believed that women could also play a pivotal role towards non-racialism:

You ask for justice from the white man, but do you ever ask yourselves if you have been right and just to the African and coloured populations? ... If you have failed, there is no peace in this land ... you must mend your own faults. If you have not done your duty as citizens you must begin to do your duty at once ... Let us see how the Indian women of Africa can build up South Africa. Then we must not forget the suffering people. What can we do for these, whether they are Indian, African or coloured? ... Women must be kind ... You must not wait for the Government ... You must pay your debts to this land, and the best way is to have your children so educated that they will be noble citizens. You can pay your debts by lifting the status of the Native and the coloured people. You have another duty. You must say to your men, 'if you fight you are foolish.' We are going to live in peace. Men might be different race from race, but women cannot be different; a common motherhood makes them alike. I never hope to hear an Indian woman say, 'I am different from the white women, the coloured women, the Native women'. I do not care what your religion is, you are woman, and women were meant to lead the earth, and when women do that the world will become good. Do not think only of yourselves, but fight for your rights because you are women... (Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu, n.d: 407-11).

She arrived in Durban in March 1924 to a tumultuous reception and was overwhelmed by the love and affection showered upon her, 'she at times gave way to emotion and tears streamed down her cheeks' (*Indian Opinion*, 21 March 1924). The local white newspaper, the *Natal Mercury* reported on her visit:

... the Indians of Durban and district assembled to welcome to the town Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poetess and political worker who is presently touring South Africa. The distinguished visitor arrived shortly before 2 pm ... In spite of [a crowd numbering perhaps 4000] there was no disorder when Mrs. Naidu was escorted from the special train in which she had travelled ... with about 200 compatriots .... The engine of the train bore the message, 'Welcome to Shrimrti Sarojni Devi,' and was decorated with foliage, while on the platform there was a guard of honour wearing pink turbans, and

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representatives of the Indian National Volunteer Guard. Outside the station the visitor entered a carriage drawn by a team of greys, and was escorted to Albert Park by the majority of those who had assembled to meet her ... Mrs. Naidu ... (*Natal Mercury*, 10 March 1924).

Naidu also addressed local women organisations such as the Indian Women's Association and had met women from the Gujarati Hindu community. Her sheer presence and political stature encouraged the Gujarati Hindu women to form a women's organization. This led to the formation of the Gujarati Mahila Mandal which held its first meeting on 2 November 1930 at the Surat Hindu Association Hall in central Durban (*Natal Mercury*, 10 March 1924; *Indian Opinion*, 14 November 1930; *Sunday Tribune Herald*, 18 August 1985). In her speeches to women Naidu highlighted the possibilities of encompassing the multiple roles of wife and mother and political autonomy. Naidu, also profoundly stressed the importance of education for girls. Education she believed was the key for women's emancipation, but warned that it was the responsibility of women to take the initiative:

[W]omanhood has many responsibilities, and one thing we should look after is the education of our children. ... we are going to start the schools ourselves, especially for our girls. We are not going to allow them to be ignorant. If our men will not provide schools we will do so... (*Indian Opinion*, 4 April 1924; *Natal Mercury*, 9 March 1924).

Naidu also visited Cape Town and lived with Abdul Hamid Gool and his wife, Cissie. Cissie Gool was a well-known political activist in the Cape in the 1930s and 1940s. She was often known as the 'Joan of Arc of District Six'. Cissie's active participation in politics began whilst at university. At the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1930 she organised a march to Parliament to protest against the Women's Enfranchisement Act which was introduced in the same year. Her maiden political speech was at this meeting where she protested against the granting of the vote to white women only. She was of the opinion that 'talk was not enough' but action was needed. Cissie subsequently led a march to Parliament and demanded to see General JBM Hertzog, then Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa. Cissie was a

strong-willed, independent and feisty woman influenced by the radical politics of the time. She was at loggerheads with her father's political philosophy which was more conciliatory, accommodationist involving dialogue, petitions and letters. Cissie believed in effecting change through a radical approach, through forceful actions of rallies and mass meetings (Srassroots April 1983). In the 1930s the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany paved the way for new political ideologies. In South Africa it gave rise to many Anti-Fascist clubs. Cissie was an outspoken critic of fascism and in 1935 was one of the founding members of the Anti-Fascist League which protested the growing threat of fascism in Europe. She was also actively involved in the formation of the National Liberation League (NLL) in December 1935, together with John Gomas, James La Guma and Goolam Gool. Cissie served as President of the NLL at its inception but resigned in 1937 and was re-elected in 1938. The NLL was anti-imperialist and worked towards non-racialism and unity among the working class. In 1938 both Cissie and her mother, Helen, were actively involved in the establishment of a League for the Enfranchisement of Non-European Women. She forged links with the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and ANC joining them in a civil disobedience campaign in 1936 (Srassroots April 1983). According to Spuy and Clowes Naidu was a 'role model for women, such as Gool' (2012: 343). Gool was highly critical of the media for their attacks on Naidu during her Cape Town visit in 1924:

In a letter to the *Cape Times*, marking this watershed moment in her life, Gool wrote:

Your virulent attack on Mrs. Naidu ... compels me, as a woman with whom Mrs. Naidu has stayed since her arrival in Cape Town and who has been to every one of her meetings without any exception, to give my impression of her speeches and the good work she has done during her visit here. You are absolutely wrong when you say that her 'motives underlying all her speeches are to raise prejudice and to damage relations of white and black in South Africa'. Let me, a non-European woman who has up to now remained silent but who has watched the trend of political affairs in South Africa, especially the relationship between white and black, give you my view of Mrs. Naidu's visit and her speeches (in van der Spuy & Clowes 2012: 343).

On 22 May 1924, at the farewell meeting at the Durban Town Hall, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu referred to the plight facing Indian South Africans as temporary and added that these difficulties 'have no abiding place in the evolution of Africa' Naidu left South Africa on 25 May 1924. Historian Meer states:

When Sarojini Naidu arrived in South Africa she was accepted as a leader of the colonial world and she was greeted with the slogans 'Long live Gandhi, Long live *Khilafat* Movement and God is Great, *Allahu Akbar*.' These were significant slogans in 1924 when the Indian national liberation movement had achieved maximum unity and when Gandhi was addressing huge Muslim gatherings in support of *Khilafat*. In this national and international atmosphere Mrs. Naidu campaigned in South Africa for three months and *Indian Views* rightly observed that never in the history of South Africa had a visiting personality been shown so much love, affection and respect by the deprived people of this country, as had been done to Sarojini Naidu who charmed them with her oratory in both English and in Urdu (*The Leader* July 19, 1985).

Even after Naidu's departure from South Africa, she was fondly remembered and revered. When Naidu was arrested for her anti-nationalist struggle she received widespread support in South Africa. Sorabjee Rustomjee, a merchant at a well-attended meeting in Durban on 22 1930 stated, 'Not a week passes by without the imperial bureaucracy showing its nailed fist to one or more of our national leaders in India' (*The Leader*, November 15, 1985). Indian women too, were forthcoming in their support. A protest meeting was held at the Gandhi Library in Durban on 24 August 1942. Among the women present were Marie Naicker (wife of Monty Naicker), Mrs. Sushila Manilal Gandhi, Mrs. A.P. Singh, Mrs. D. Sundram, Miss K.M. Naidoo, Mrs. P. Desai, Miss Shanta Kalidas, Mrs. S. Dhupelia and Mrs Hajra Seedat. The meeting condemned the imprisonment of Kasturbai Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit and Mira Behn as 'an offence against womanhood' and called for their immediate release (*The Leader*, 27 March 1987).

Naidu visited South Africa for the second time in the early 1930s. She was part of the Second Round Table Conference which began on 12 January 1932. According to Meer:

the only person who did not seem to fit in with the White racists and the numerous ‘Sirs’ of the British was Sarojini Naidu, who had come to South Africa after spending a term of imprisonment at Poona for defying the might of the British Empire. She was the only voice of free India - the voice of the future India. It was hence natural that we were looking forward to hearing and reading her speeches. The crowded City Hall in Johannesburg on January 6, 1932, heard with rapt attention Sarojini, say to Indian South Africans that they must make their contribution to the common cause of South Africa and help to build up a new and great tradition in South Africa. Her speeches were like a fresh breeze both at Pretoria and at Kimberley. We did not approve, when Sastri at the Cape Town reception on January 12, 1932, at the City Hall said that the presence of Sarojini in the delegation required explanation and he hoped she would reveal the secret history of how she came to be part of it. Was she asked or did she ask, Sastri jokingly wanted to know. As we had expected Sarojini's reply came swiftly. ‘Mr. Sastri’, she said, ‘will be sorry that he demanded a public explanation. I only came here because my leader was not quite sure of the wisdom of the men of the East (laughter) - and insisted on being reinforced by the immemorial wisdom of the women of the East’ (*The Leader*, November 15, 1985).

It was this fiery spirit and tenacity that endeared her to men and women in the diaspora.

### **Pandita Ramabai**

For many Indian Christians in the diaspora Ramabai was an inspirational figure. Pandita represented a symbol of hope and courage. As a ‘colonial subject’, she became a ‘great transgressor’ of colonial discourse of oppression and imperialism and her strength of character was admired by both men and women afar. Govinden recalls the impact of Sarojini Naidu and Pandita Ramabai on the lives of her family:

My family was clearly identifying with the same social and religious space that Ramabai was claiming and occupying. I realise now that



the fact that Ramabai's being seen as a great Indian Christian woman on the sub-continent would have accounted for the appeal she had among my grandparents and parents (Govinden, n.d, Personal Collection).

Govinden to some degree attributes her parents enlightened attitude towards her education to the influence of Ramabai, '... when I think of the way my mother and father, in spite of their straitened circumstances, believed in the necessity and value of my own education, at a time when it was still acceptable to keep girls 'behind', and how they accorded me opportunities for advancement, I cannot help feeling that women like Ramabai played some part in their nascent emancipation' (Govinden, n.d., Personal recollection). Ramabai efforts to retain some aspects of 'Indianness' whilst at the same time forging a Christian identity, endeared her to Christian Indians in the diaspora who themselves were faced with a similar situation. According to Govinden, 'Identifying with 'Ramabai' seems to be part of this effort to create a separate socio-religious space. Language and dress, cuisine and cultural practices were retained and fostered. As I think of it now, my grandmother dressed in a similar fashion to Ramabai, wearing only a high-necked, long-sleeved blouse with her sari; this was common among older Indian women at the time in South Africa' (Govinden, n.d, Personal Collection).

In recent years there has been a growing interest in Pandita Ramabai among feminist scholars and historians (Govinden 2008; Hansdak 2003; Kosambi 2000). Historical works have sought to acknowledge her contributions to gender issues and rightfully RE-claim her position in the Indian history (Hansdak 2003; Kosambi 2000). *Meera Kosambi's* study on Ramabai not only illuminates Ramabai's accomplishments but also her contributions to the discourses of 19<sup>th</sup> century colonialism, nationalism, patriarchy. She provides a deeper insight into Pandita's complex personality and the social and political forces that shaped and defined her identity. Uma Chakravarti's (1998) study on Ramabai seeks to reclaim the voice and history of Pandita Ramabai. She argues that Pandita's scathing criticism of Brahminical patriarchy and her conversion to Christianity has largely been the reason for her marginalization in nationalist history (Chakravarti 1998). Pandita Ramabai was undoubtedly a woman ahead of her times. She has been described by scholars and historians as one of the 'makers of modern India'. A.B. Shah, argued that she was 'the greatest woman produced by modern

India and one of the greatest Indians in all history' (Tharu & Lalita 1991: 243). She has also been described as 'mother' of the Indian nation. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita stated in *Women Writing in India*, Ramabai was 'a legend in her own lifetime' (Tharu & Lalita 1991: 243). Pandita Ramabai was born in 1858 to a learned family who belonged to the Brahmin caste. She was encouraged by her parents to acquire an education. She lost her parents and siblings at a young age but despite this personal setback, she continued with her travels around India and abroad, which played a critical role in the formation of her political and feminine consciousness (Burton 1998: 3-4). Her mastery of the Sanskrit language, so impressed her peers that she was bestowed the title of 'Pandita' (learned woman) and 'Saraswati' (the Hindu goddess of learning). She later married a man of her choice who belonged to the 'Shudra' caste (lower caste), almost as a matter of protest against what she viewed as hypocrisy in the changing social landscape in India. This raised eyebrows among many within her social circles. At the time of her marriage Ramabai was disillusioned with Hinduism and its practices, especially on child marriages, the dowry system and argued that collectively they contributed to women's inferior status. Unfortunately her husband died soon after their marriage and she was left with an infant daughter, Manorama. During her travels Ramabai became more sensitised and conscientised on women's inferior status, particularly of widows. She engaged in various debates and public discussions to fight for gender equality. She became very vocal of indigenous and colonial notions of patriarchy and their attempts to 'domesticate' Indian women. At the age of 25 while studying in England, she converted to Christianity in the Anglican tradition. At first she was warmly embraced by her new faith but eventually her questioning of fundamental Christian doctrines (Trinity, divinity of Christ) and her refusal to submit meekly to a male hierarchy inflicted with a colonial mentality (an Indian woman could teach Indian but not British students) turned her into a threat (Govinden, n.d. Personal Recollection). Ramabai also produced several notable works. Amongst them, *The Cry of Indian Women* was published in 1883; *The High Caste Indian Woman* in 1887; *The Peoples of the United States*, which was published in 1889 (Govinden n.d. Personal Collection).

## **Conclusion**

This paper has alluded to the importance of the South African-Indian histori-

cal links and how transoceanic histories can help us understand and unravel the importance of how political, cultural and religious identities are constructed and constantly evolving. Naidu and Ramabai were iconic and 'revolutionary' women who inspired a generation of women who were cloistered in traditional patriarchy. These women, to some extent provided the fodder for the nurturing and development of women's political identities in South Africa. Govinden has raised the importance of exploring this issue, 'More critical reflection is required on the construction of the 'Indian woman' in the context of the dominant ideologies of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism in both India and colonial Natal of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century' (Govinden, n.d., Personal Recollection). Contemporary discourses on India's bilateral relationships with African countries are too focussed on the material exchanges through trade and industry. These bilateral relationships rest upon a history that is yet to be adequately understood and covered in more research. Not enough is known about the substantive contribution that India has made in preparing people in a country such as South Africa to change mind-sets and break down insular boundaries in order to cut across gender, ethnic and racial prejudices. Both Britain and India were patriarchal to the point of making women not only secondary citizens but also reduced them to the status of *persona non grata*. The fact that they were denied opportunities in education, free and open political participation as well as voting rights were an indication of what hurdles they had to cross before due recognition was given to them. The lives of Sarojini Naidu and Pandita Ramabai provide abundant information about how the challenges that they faced served not only to enhance their personal profiles in politics but to challenge entrenched prejudices through universal messages that transcended the myopic boundaries of male dominated spaces.

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# Searching the Diasporic Roots – A Genealogical Journey into Family History

**Sultan Khan**

## **Abstract**

This paper illustrates how a genealogical approach can be creatively used to trace one's ancestry despite decades of isolation from his/her place of origin. This emerged from the author's initial curiosity to explore his ancestral origin in the northern parts of India decades after the arrival of his grandfather as an indentured migrant to South Africa. Rummaging through his deceased father's documents, the author came across identity documents of his grandparents who were indentured to a sugar plantation on the coastal belt of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. With the help of a historian, a search through the archives' depository, and a year of memory recall (oral history research) with elder members of his extended family, the author was able to formulate a family structure of his paternal roots. Through rigorous internet searches on the geographical location of the villages of origin of his ancestors, the author constructed a hypothetical map of his ancestral roots in the Indian sub-continent. Equipped with this information, the author undertook a journey to India and through trial and error eventually reached his final ancestral destination. This paper recounts the author's experience before, during and after finding his roots, and locates this search within a wider global interest in family history and diasporic roots. This article highlights how curiosity can become a source of encounter with the 'unknown' and how this can result in constructing a genealogy which was supposedly lost.

**Keywords:** Indians, Identity, Roots, Diaspora, Genealogy, Indenture, South Africa

## **Introduction**

Indentured labour in South Africa under British colonialism had a profound effect on the Indian diaspora alienating them from their ancestral umbilical cord. Although there were two strands of Indians that came to the shores of the then Natal colony from the 1860s onwards, indentured Indians of different ethnic and faith groups dealt a major blow in every facet of their lives as compared to their merchant class counterparts. The merchant class, due to their economic well-being and by virtue of being better educated, managed to keep in touch with their kith and kin in the ancestral village. They were able to communicate via the postal service since they were located in the urban centers and being financially better off; they could afford making periodic journeys to the motherland to be reunited with their family of origin. For the indentured Indian, given the gloom and hardship of plantation life, scattered in remote parts of the colony made contact with their forebears an impossible assignment. However, some indentured Indians through the help of their merchant class counterparts were able to write letters to their families and used them as postal conduits. Often their shops which had a formal address were used for occasional contact with their family. These letters were written in their vernacular language. Given the slow pace of mail service which was dependent on ships calling to and from India and delays in the delivery of mail to remote parts of the colony, keeping contact with family was discontinuous and protracted. As a result of that, the first generation of indentured Indians virtually lost contact with their family roots and post indenture they have come to see the colony as their permanent homeland.

This paper helps to construct how the author was able to trace his roots through rummaging his late father's personal documents in finding a lead to track his third generation relatives in a remote part of India. The structure of the paper commences with a conceptual framework on tracing ancestral roots followed by an account of recounting the history of the first generation of indentured Indians in the country. This is followed by a reflexive account which constructs the authors experience before, during and after establishing contact with his ancestral family. The paper documents the author's experience in the different phases of tracing his roots which helps him construct a family tree of his family lineage both in South Africa and India.

## Conceptual Framework

It is quite some time since the social scientists have started to link contemporary genealogical work with the rich histories of kinship that have long been dominated by anthropologists. A growing field in the study of family history is genealogy as an identity-work and for purposes of cultural identification. Sociological interest in family history research is growing, but there are many areas left unexamined (Barnwell 2015:1-2).

Tracing one's descent falls into the field of genealogy. Historically, genealogy as a method of studying family history was derived from German philosophy, particularly the works of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), but is most closely associated with the French academic Michel Foucault (1926-24) (Crowley 2009:2). Genealogy studies are based on research plans to answer family history-related questions. As a research tool it uses vital, tax, church, census, military, legal, cemetery, and property records, plus personal papers, books, magazines, and the Internet as sources of information. They locate and interpret original records and other sources that utilize first and second-hand knowledge. These accounts according to Jary and Jary (2000:241-242) are important where it is common for the older members of society to be the genealogical experts.

The concept of genealogy was amplified by Michel Foucault. Sembou (2011:1) asserts that a simple definition of Foucauldian genealogy would be a type of history. Moreover, Foucauldian genealogy is a history of tracing 'origins' and, as such, it questions the idea of origins or deeper meanings. It unearths the forced relations operating in particular events and historical developments. Foucault describes genealogy as an 'effective history' (Sembou 2011:2). It debunks the assumption underlying conventional historiography that there are 'facts' to be interpreted; rather, facts are themselves constructed out of the researcher's 'will to truth'. Hence it is a specific type of truth.

In the epic book titled *'The Order of Things, An Archaeology of the Human Sciences'*, Foucault (1966) examines the organizing principles of human perceptions and knowledge. It implies that genealogy examines the 'history of the present'. Genealogy for Foucault is an explanation of where we have come from; its purpose is to tell us how our current situation originated. Notwithstanding the focus of genealogy, one may argue that all history has these features. Some of Foucault's archaeologies can be said to have had



similar features, but their purpose was to look at epistemic shifts discretely in themselves, without insisting on this practical relevance (Kelly 2010).

The study of family histories is a methodological tool that helps to document past family structure and heritage. This can be noted in de Kadt's (2004) study on the case history of German settlers in KwaZulu-Natal during the colonial period. She asserts that each family has a starting point which compilers of texts intend to preserve information about the past for people of today, to keep alive their memories, to bring picture of the past to life, to retain a legacy and broadly strengthening a sense of community (de Kadt, 2004:98-99). In a similar vein, Rosenthal (2002:175) postulates that biographical research works with life stories have been written down or narrated in interviews. He argues that since the 1970s, family history studies have established itself in the social sciences and the humanities. It applies concepts that are both theoretically and methodologically sound and focuses on individual biography that aims to make sense for particular experiences of phases in the context of an individual's entire life.

There is also an argument that family history research helps to satisfy ones need to search for their roots in a post-modern and uncertain age. It helps to develop a sense of security and identity which Tanya Evans and Patricia Curthoy (2013:285-286) call an "insight into self-hood". By exploring ones family tree one gets submerged into history since it helps to transform it and make it personal. Family history studies provide a key sense of identity and enable to historicise their past so that they could understand the present better (Evans & Curthoy 2013:285-286). This is especially so in light of the fact that the family as an institution is not static. As an institution it may be slow to change, but individual families by their very nature are continually changing, accommodating new members, adjusting to the loss of old, responding individually and collectively to birth, maturation, and decline (Ulrich 2008:70). It is in this context that recording of family history is an invaluable method to ensure that future generations are afforded an opportunity to identify with the past.

In the study of family history, class and gender are important factors that need to be noted. Rich families are always able to record, safeguard and treasure artefacts that have some meaning to their ancestry as compared to poor families. In poor families, Evan's study (2012:209) on the use of memory and

material culture in the history of the family in colonial Australia reveals that the poor families hardly accord any importance to the safe keeping of material artefacts. This may be due in part to the cycle of poverty that has a debilitating effect on their lives hence holding onto these artefacts is hardly a priority as compared to the challenges imposed on them to eke out a daily living. Evans (2012:208) also noted gender differences in the way males and females responded to the safe keep of artefacts as part of their history. Females more than males kept clothing as artefacts over generations as compared to their male counterparts who tend to keep diaries, portraits, paintings and a large number of objects of obvious economic value.

It may also be noted that history about ordinary people is seldom written. It is often the opulent, famous or even the notorious that make the annals of history. Schmidt and Braga Garcia (2010:289-290) contend that the history of ordinary people and their experiences are often lost and doomed to oblivion, either because the sources have been disposed of, or because they have been omitted from textbooks, the media, and official files. With ordinary people one may find relics arranged in drawers or pushed aside in small hide-away places, to keep dreams alive, to engender memories and to keep hopes. The history preserved by these people contains human experience over time which helps to maintain a link between the present and the past, based on historical investigations carried out by the people themselves.

In line with Foucault's methodological approach in the genealogical tradition and guided by the works of several authors on family history studies mentioned earlier, a case history is constructed by examining key documents on the origins of the author's grandfather in 1860. This entailed an examination of birth certificates which contained important details about the author's grandfather's place of origin which was verified with archival records on the origins of indentured Indians in South Africa, oral reports on the area where his grandfather was indentured and lived, documentation of oral history solicited from two daughters who are still living and memory recalls from the authors childhood passed on by his father.

Waetjen and Vahed (2013) cite in their work as to how birth and death certificates, marriage certificates and pass certificates for indentured Indians contain important information about their origin. This information can be used to further corroborate the family lineage through digitized copies which is to be found in a Documentation Centre archive at the former University of Durban-Westville. The original collections of these documents are all housed

in the Durban Archives Repository. Given the advancement made to digitize these documents, one can with ease trace their family of origin in India. In this study, information obtained from the Durban Archives Repository helped the author to undertake a rigorous Internet search and examination to locate the map of India before and after partitioning which helped to delineate the locality. This was corroborated with information appearing on the birth document.

## **Recounting the History of the First Generation of Indentured Indians in South Africa**

The first batch of immigrant Indians were indentured labourers who reached the colony of Natal on 16 November 1860 on the ship, SS Truro. A total of 342 indentured Indians were on board. Thereafter, between 1860-1861, five more ships brought in a total of 1,360 men and women (Sulliman 1997). These were first of the 152,184 'human cargo' to be shipped to the shores of Durban over 51 years comprising 62 percent males, 25 percent females and 13 percent children (Ministry of External Affairs, 2000). They were subjected to a contract which included free transport from India, an agreement to work for 10 shillings a month for three years (later extended to five years), free food, accommodation and medical attention (Burrows 1952).

In so far as their ethnic and religious composition was concerned, two-thirds were Tamil and Telegu speaking Hindus originating from Mysore and surrounding areas. The remaining from what is now known as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Kolkata, Malabar, Madras and West Bengal. Only 12 percent of the total population of this cohort of immigrants was of the Islamic faith, while some two percent were Christians. In so far as literacy was concerned, many have had no formal education but managed to sustain strong memories of their customs, traditions and rituals which they preserved diligently (Ministry of External Affairs, 2000; Vahed 2001:194). Their settlement patterns spread across the city, the colony and outside of it. In the city they settled largely on the periphery of white owned estates such as Riverside, Cato Manor, Clairwood and Magazine Barracks. In so far as the colony was concerned, they were largely settled on the coastal belt of Natal to work on its fertile land for agricultural purposes. Hence they were settled in white owned estates on the

coast in towns such as Isipingo, Umzinto and Umkomaas to the South of Durban. To the North of Durban they settled in towns such as Verulam, Tongaat, and Stanger (Maharaj 1994) and as far as Richards Bay. In other parts of Natal, some indentured Indians settled in the Province's capital in Pietermaritzburg and hinterland towns of Dundee, Newcastle, and Ladysmith.

Around the 1870s a second group of free passenger Indians began streaming into the colony in search of economic opportunities. They followed on the footsteps of their indentured counterparts who were by now the trailblazers of the Indian presence in the colony. Within this group there were a fair number of Gujarati speaking Hindus but a large proportion were Muslims originating from the Gujarat districts of Surat, Kholwad, Rander, Kathor, Baroda, Bardoli and Navsari (Randeree 1997:70). They constituted about 10 percent of the total Indian population and comprised mainly traders (Ministry of External Affairs, 2000). These Muslims were mistaken by the colonial whites to be Arabs due to their pronounced dress code and features. Nonetheless, both religious groups enjoyed enormous trading opportunities, privilege of movement in the city to pursue their business interests and ventured both into remote towns of the colony and the Transvaal where they set up trading posts. Many of them owned family businesses that engaged the services of better educated extended family members as compared to their indentured Indian counterpart. The latter group was less educated and lacked capital to make any significant investment in business (Bawa 2006). Accountants, lawyers, teachers, priests and other professionals supplemented the already established Indian business community both in the colony and in the Transvaal (Ministry of External Affairs, 2000).

In contrast, the social and economic condition of the early generation of indentured Indian was subjected to widespread exploitation. Long hours of work on daily food rations, living in cramped regimented dwellings constructed of stone and zinc, or wattle and daub, poor sanitary and health conditions, the absence of medical care facilities, racial prejudice and physical abuse took its toll on the well-being of these so called '*strange looking people*' from Asia. Social and health related problems in the form of suicide, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, mental illnesses, violence, infidelity, desertions, tuberculosis, diseases, infanticide, death related to burns were some of the many hardships encountered by the early settlers (Meer 1980) that militated against the preservation of family life, values and maintaining ties with their ancestry.

Socio-cultural and religious dilemmas were also a major source of challenge. Given the diversity of languages spoken in the colony (Tamil, Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Telugu, Urdu, Kokani, and Meman—a dialect of Sindhi) (Mesthrie 1991) it restricted social interaction within certain linguistic groups and at the same time excluded others. Where certain linguistic groups were in the minority it is not surprising that they would be isolated from the dominant ones. Being in a strange land and stripped of social networks and religious and community support structures, further added to their social isolation.

Given the unequal ratio of males over females, which in 1885 was 2:1 (Palmer 28-29:1957) for the entire indentured population, it further added to being isolated as the prospect of forming intimate relationships became remote. Although some arrived as a family unit, many were single males, socially engineered by the colonialist masters so that they may remain unencumbered for a longer duration of time to sell their labour. It was perceived that family life and accompanying familial responsibility would distract them from providing undivided commitment to their colonial master's pursuit of economic gains. Females were often obliged by economic necessity and sometimes fear to cohabit with a number of men simultaneously without the protection of marriage for the explicit purpose of male sexual gratification (Meer 1972). Provision for the recognition of marriages whether contracted in India or in South Africa was non-existent. In the absence of such institutional mechanisms to recognize marriages it was not uncommon for men and women to form short-term unions and separate as soon as quarrels occurred. This situation was exacerbated when the coolie agent in assigning labourers arbitrarily paired any male or female together and assigned them for indenture as husband and wife (Palmer 28:1957). In many instances formal consent was provided to the coolie agent out of convenience in order to overcome the fear of loneliness which accompanied this form of labour arrangement. Getting men to accept responsibility for children born within a relationship was often difficult due to the denial of paternity. The limited number of women among the many men often escalated into competition for companionship resulting in violence, suicide and murder (Palmer 1957).

While their initial recruitment had been for work in the plantations, Indian labor was also later deployed to the railways, dockyards, coal mines, municipal services and domestic employment. Although they were not happy

with the racist laws and taxes, only about 23% of Natal Indians had returned to India by 1911, when the much abused indenture was finally terminated. Many of the Indians had acquired little plots of land and became kitchen gardeners and hawkers, retailing their produce to the White and merchant communities in adjacent suburbs and towns. In a nutshell; the indentured Indian had to overcome many challenges. Finally, they had to wage a relentless fight against the evils of colonialism and later apartheid that they completed in partnership with all oppressed people in the country (The Indian Diaspora 2000:77-87).

## **Oral Historical Account from Family Members on their Ancestry**

Interestingly, despite studies on families have advanced significantly, there has not been a strong body of sociological research devoted to the study of family history, despite its increasing prominence as a popular pastime in recent decades. Scholars are now beginning to recognize the value of personal, 'small,' and 'micro' histories for fleshing out official or dominant narratives. Similarly social scientists are beginning to link contemporary genealogical work with the rich histories of kinship that have long been the domain and fascination of anthropologists (Barnwell 2015:1). It is in this context that this section is constructed from narratives derived from oral history on the family genealogy.

During my early childhood, my father, Houssain Ahmed used to visit the grave site of his mother and father at the Muslim cemetery in Verulam, north of Durban. It was a ritual that continued throughout his living years especially on a Thursday evening, during important religious occasion and in the mornings of the two *Eid*.<sup>1</sup> My father used to offer prayers at the gravesite and little did I know what this prayer was all about. In my teenage life this ritual continued and one day I asked my father why I had to accompany him and participate in this ritual. His response was, 'so that someday you will

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<sup>1</sup> Muslims, world over celebrate two religious festivals during the year known as *Eid*. The first is *Eid-ul-Fitr* which is celebrated after observing the month of Ramadaan during which period Muslims fast and the second known as *Eid-ul-Adha* which they commemorate in memory of Abraham and his son Ishmail.

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remember your roots'. I did not take him seriously at the time but followed this ritual with him until his demise on 10 January 2007 at the age of 87.

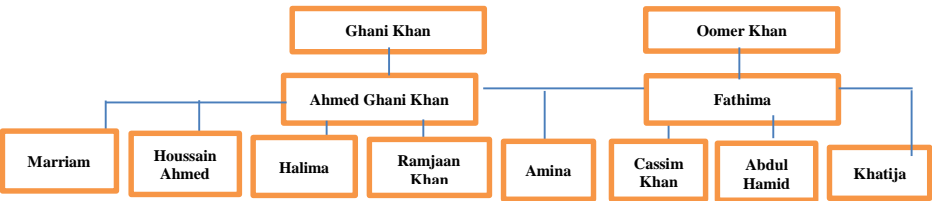
It was during the 1987 floods that ravished many parts of KwaZulu-Natal that my father was distressed about my grandfather's grave site being lost due to the identification stone being washed away when the Umdhloti River burst its banks. His distress centred on the fact that this was the only landmark that reminded him of his heritage. He made every attempt to locate the exact site of his fathers and mothers gravesite but to no avail. Nonetheless he continued to visit the gravesite and prayed for his parents besides a palm tree which survived the flood and served as a landmark. At this time I was 27 years old and pursuing a Master's degree in sociology part time and was curious to know my ancestry.

My father narrated that my grand-father's name was Ahmed Ghani Khan (indentured number 143171) and my grandmother was Fathima. Ahmed was indentured on a sugar cane plantation in New Guelderland, Stanger, owned by a George Stewart. According to the ships' records my grandfather arrived in May 1910 on board the Umzinto XLVIII. He was of Pathan descent from the village of Kamihoji in Bahraich and boarded the ship in Calcutta (now Kolkata). He was 19 years old when he arrived and died at age 60 in 1941. My grandfather met his wife on another farm in New Guelderland. Details on how they met and married are not known.

Fatima was a colonial-born, meaning that she was born to parents who had arrived as indentured migrants. She was the daughter of Oomer Khan and Kallu Sukkhan according to records provided by my colleague Goolam Vahed. The records revealed that Oomer Khan, indentured number 93488, arrived in May 1902 on board the ship Umzinto XXVII. Khan was 26 years old when he arrived. On the ship's list, his Zillah (district) is given as Sindh (Bombay), but his village is given as Bhagadad, suggesting that he or his ancestors were likely from Iraq and had possibly settled in Bombay. Khan was assigned to work on a farm owned by Theodorus Colenbrander and Gerhardus Soebang in New Guelderland, Stanger. My maternal grandmother, Kallu Sukkhan, indentured number 77041, was 22 when she arrived in Natal in March 1899 on board the Congella XXIX. She was from the village of Tilhura in Bareilly. According to the ship's records, she was a single woman migrant and was also assigned to Theodorus Colenbrander and Gerhadus Soebang in Stanger. Both being single

and Muslim, in a context where there was a shortage of women, it is no surprise that Oomer Khan and Kallu Sukkhan married. One of the ways in which family researchers can gain additional information is through a search of the estate papers. Unfortunately, there are no estate papers for either Oomer Khan or Kallu Sukhan as they did not leave sufficient assets.

**Lineage in South Africa**



A vivid memory that my father had of Oomer Khan which stands perpetuity at the Verulam Muslim cemetery was a mango tree which he had planted and a concrete bench he had constructed around it. In so far as the second generation is concerned, which is depicted in the family tree above, with the exception of Amina and Khatija, all other siblings from my paternal side are deceased. Apart from the scant records about my grandparent’s origin, none of my siblings including myself have any recollection of them. Hence the only memories we have are those from oral history about the paternal first generation from stories narrated by my father.

My father recalled that when he was around five years old (c. 1925) they moved into a house on a plot of land in Umdhloti Drift which his father purchased. On this land, his father cultivated vegetables which he sold to the residents in the neighborhood, on foot. There were a few others in the neighborhood that engaged in this type of economic activity and often provided support to each other in carrying out this informal economic activity. Through the proceeds from the vegetable garden, he succeeded in purchasing two other properties in the town center in Verulam and another adjacent to the existing house in Verulam. His father managed to send him to school at Umdhloti Drift and he attained a standard six qualification, which was a very high qualification for that time. On completion of his education he took up employment at the Verulam Box and Timber Company as a machine operator. Whilst in the employ of this company he had a traumatic experience when he lost his left



index finger. Thereafter he took up apprenticeship with Bobbys Coach Works in Clairwood as a coach builder and qualified as an artisan. During his work life, he attempted to study law through correspondence but could not complete his degree due to family and work commitments. Nonetheless he succeeded in completing a few law courses.

My father was the eldest son in the family and he had seven other siblings, three brothers and four sisters. As my father was born in 1920, it can be assumed in the absence of proper documentation that his parents married in 1918 or 1919. My father lost his father when he was a very young man and had to take full responsibility for his younger siblings and his mother. Despite his mother being illiterate, she became the custodian of the different properties which his father had left behind.

Around the late 1960s, he together with his youngest brother Abdul Hamid purchased a clothing factory known as Super Clothing in Grey Street. The factory, due to competition from other emerging enterprises was a dismal failure, resulting in huge financial losses. It was forced to liquidate and the family home that they occupied was mortgaged. Due to their inability to sustain payment the property was liquidated. Despite this financial set back, my father was able to build another house on an adjacent property which became the family abode together with his younger brother Abdul Hamid who jointly owned it. My father was responsible for ensuring that all four of his sisters were married. His two brothers Ramjaan and Cassim left the family home at an early age. There was a family dispute over the property which my grandfather left and my uncle Ramjaan took possession of two properties in central Verulam which he sold to set up a lucrative taxi business. Cassim Khan met his wife Zaitoon from Riverside and moved to Chatsworth in the 1960s, severing all family ties. He was the only son who was excluded from his mother's bequest due to a mental illness that resulted in periodic absence from the family home. Later, in the early 1980s my father bequeathed his portion of the property which he owned jointly with Abdul Hamid to Cassim. Khatija, the youngest sibling, although married, continued to stay at the family residence due to a promise made by my father to his mother to care for her after my grandmother's demise.

## Tracing the Genealogical Roots

Upon the demise of my father I had to clear his locker where he stored his documents. I came across his birth document and that of his father's. His father's name was Gunni Khan as it appeared on the birth certificate was wrongly spelt by the colonialist. His name was in fact Ghani. He originated from a village called Bahraich, in Northern India. I was excited to make this discovery and Googled the map of India to see whether this village existed. Much to my surprise I noted that this village was located on the southern part of the Nepal border and within the province of Uttar Pradesh close to the capital of Lucknow. I was surprised to learn that my ancestry was rooted in North India as I assumed that my forbears originated from the South of India just like all indentured Indians in South Africa.



Having located the exact locality on the map, I discussed my discovery with my sister Zubeida Houssain who had the opportunity to visit the farm in Guelderland in Stanger with my father three years before his demise. I was informed that Mr George Stewart junior had no recollection nor had any artefacts or records about the farm and its early inhabitants. Nonetheless I persevered by discussing the paternal ancestry through my two aunts Amina and Khatija. Both of them had very little memory recall as they were infants when they lost their father and mother but provided a similar anecdote that my father had related to me. I tried searching for a map of Bahraich village specifically, but with little success. At this stage my curiosity heightened and with the map depicting the capital of Lucknow coupled with the birth certificate of my father and the indentured document of his father I decided to make a journey to India in search of my ancestral roots.

It was in January 2014 that I made the journey to Lucknow in the midst of the Indian general elections. I was cautioned by family and friends not to make this journey due to the history of internecine political violence between Hindus and Muslims which was common at a village level. Despite these caution, I braved my way to Lucknow. My first stop was at the Lucknow University where I hoped to find maps of Bahraich. The geography department was least helpful and they informed me that the maps have changed after the demarcation that took place in 1948 during Partition. I did not relent. I befriended two PhD students from the sociology department who spoke Hindi, Urdu and English to accompany me to make the journey to Bahraich. At first the students were reluctant due to being caught up in possible political conflicts that usually played out at the village level. With much persuasion, the students agreed to make the journey with me.

We left early morning on a hired vehicle to Bahraich traversing many small villages (Maharu, Mallipur, Gonda & Jamunha). The journey was a tense one. I was disturbed to see a large number of peasants accompanied by children toiling on the remote farms, scantily dressed with many having their heads clad with brightly colored turbans to ward off the sun rays. The roads were of poor quality with tractors and trucks dominating the better part of the journey. At each village, we made a stop asking the locals how to get to Bahraich due to the poor road signage. Some provided us with clear directions on how to get to the next village that will lead us to Bahraich. Others guessed, resulting in us

losing direction, whilst a few had no recollection on how to get to this village. Time was running out and we had already travelled some three hundred kilometers. Finally we reached Bahraich. I was excited to have arrived on the land of my ancestors but at the same time felt anxious as to whether I will be able to locate them.

In Bahraich, I called at the nearest post office. A very stern looking, unfriendly post official attended to me. I presented the documents that I had on me and the map to him requesting directions to the village named Kamihoji. He looked at me suspiciously and commented to his colleague in Hindi that he '*wondered what this people wanted in the height of the election*'. The students let me know that I will not get any information from him as the post official was already suspicious about us. He referred us to the local municipality a few streets away from the post office. At the municipality there were queues of people waiting to be attended to by the municipal officials and we became anxious about time and not knowing when we will be attended to. A guard stood at the entrance of the municipal office and beckoned people with a long stick (*lathi*) to stay in queue. We did not know as to whether we should pass the queue and enquire as to whether there was a planning department at the municipal office. The students addressed him in Hindi, explaining that I was from South Africa and wanting to find my ancestral relatives (*rishtedar*) in the village. He beamed with excitement and said in Hindi '*aja bhai*' (come brother). I was touched by his reception and we were directed with his '*lathi*' to the reception area. The reception area was sparsely furnished with dusty antiquated furniture. A burly, unshaven middle aged man sat at the desk and wanted to know what we wanted. The students explained to him and requested to be directed to the section that dealt with plans and maps, which later turned out to be the district planning department.

We climbed the stairs to two floors to the district planning office that stored maps. The office was poorly ventilated and smelt foul, but contained maps of the area on dusty shelves which was neatly arranged. Fortunately, the person that helped us was an elderly official who attended to the GIS (Geographical Information System) for the district municipality. We explained what we were looking for and he shook his head and said in Hindi '*yeh gow me Musalman nahi melinga*' (in this village you will not find Muslims) and his forehead creased as he was thinking. We presented the documents provided by historian Professor Goolam Vahed which identified the village as Kamihoji. He pulled out another faded map from the shelf that contained the 1948

boundaries and informed us that upon independence Bahraich was divided into smaller districts and most Muslims are to be found in an area called Shrawasti some thirty kilometers from the municipal office. He then explained to us that the spelling of the village Kamihojhi was wrong and it was instead Kanibhoji. I realized that this once again was the error of the colonialists who recorded information incorrectly. Nonetheless, we learnt that Kanibhoji was a village located in the village Shrawasti.

We drove towards Shrawasti and on the way we made several stops to enquire from locals to make sure that we were on the right course. The last ten kilometers to Shrawasti comprised gravel and the driver meticulously navigated the vehicle in between cows, donkey driven carts, bicycles, motor bikes and cattle. It was a bumpy and dusty ride until we reached Shrawasti with only one street, incomplete formal houses and houses constructed of mud and thatch alongside it. We met an elderly man on the roadside and showed him my grandfather's indenture documents. On the document we least realized that parts of it were written in Urdu. The man read it loudly and frowned. He later stated that we should drive for a short while and we will arrive at a small settlement called Kanibhoji and we should request to see the tribal leader also known as *Pathan*. On our way we noted houses with green, red and orange flags. I enquired from the students what the significance of these colored flags was. I was told that the green flag denoted a Muslim home, the red a Hindu and orange a Sikh. This was one of the ways to identify homes as there were no addresses and people are identified by their religious affiliation based on the color of the flag. We stopped at a house with a green flag and enquired as to where we could find the *Pathan*. We were told to drive further until we arrived at a big tree alongside the road and to find out thereabouts.

At the tree we stopped and got off the dusty vehicle. The students spoke in Urdu with a young male stating that we would like to meet the village elder (tribal leader). The man shouted loudly '*saab!saab! koi mehman agiye*' (Sir!sir! some visitors have come). A tall, lean man, dressed in a white long shirt known as *Kurta* adorned mostly by Muslim men trotted on a walking stick to support his limp leg, made his way to the tree from the corner of an incomplete brick and mortar house. He introduced himself as Hashim Ali (*Pathan*). The young man who received us, hurried to several houses, collected chairs and placed them in a circle typical to a *Panchayat* (where people met

seated in a circle for a village meeting). The students greeted the elder and introduced me stating the purpose of our visit. As we sat in a circle, we had to contend with swarms of flies and bleating sheep that echoed from around the mud and thatch homes whilst the tribal leader perused the documents which we provided him. In a short while we were surrounded by a large crowd who were curious to know our purpose.



**Mr Hashim Ali studying the documents of my grandfather**

### **Encounter with Family Members in the Ancestral Village**

Mr. Ali became engrossed with the documents we provided him with. He read out aloud the Urdu notes on the document several times and he frowned as if he was recollecting his thought. Suddenly he smiled and wanted to know whether there was a ‘*moulana*’ (Muslim priest) in my family. I beamed and nodded. The tribal leader stated that he recalls several years ago a priest from South Africa came to find his relative in this part of the village and was not sure whether it was the same family but he knows that there was a photograph

taken with him and his relative, but he will find out in a moment. He requested the young man, who seemingly appeared to be his assistant to locate a person by the name of Iqbal. Whilst we waited, he requested one of the boys to bring cool drinks. We were served in plastic cups and he laughingly stated that we need to bear with the flies.

As he chatted with me through the students two men appeared panting for breath through the group of people that stood in a circle. The tribal leader mentioned in Urdu who I was. The two men cried with ecstasy and embraced me. I was overwhelmed with joy but at the same time felt anxious as I did not know how to relate to them. As they embraced me they went on saying with tears rolling on their reddish cheeks *mera rishtedar*, *mera bhai* (my relative, my brother). I had a sinking feeling of not knowing how to respond to their emotional state and for a moment I was moribund with my eyes becoming moist with tears. One of them who I learnt was Iqbal ran into his mud and thatch house and returned with a photograph. I was amazed. The photograph was taken some 15 years ago with my first cousin who was studying in Pakistan to become a *Moulana* (priest). *Moulana* I recalled, when he returned to South Africa after having spent 14 years in the continent mentioned that he met with the family, but nobody back home took him seriously or bothered to find out further.

I was then ushered to the Khan homestead which was not far from the tree where I was greeted by hordes of my ancestral relatives. At the homestead, there was excitement and both Iqbal and Jamal rushed into the house and brought a bed for me and the PhD students to sit on. I realized that it served a dual purpose, both as a lounge suite and a bed to sleep on. It also made me realize the depth of poverty amongst my ancestral relatives.

The students did an onerous task as both interpreters and scribe at the same time whilst I was still recovering from my emotional state of mind during the encounter. When one was serving as an interpreter the other was taking notes. Through the notes compiled by the student, I was able to construct the ancestral family genealogy.



**My two relatives Jamal Khan on the right and Iqbal Mohammed on the left**

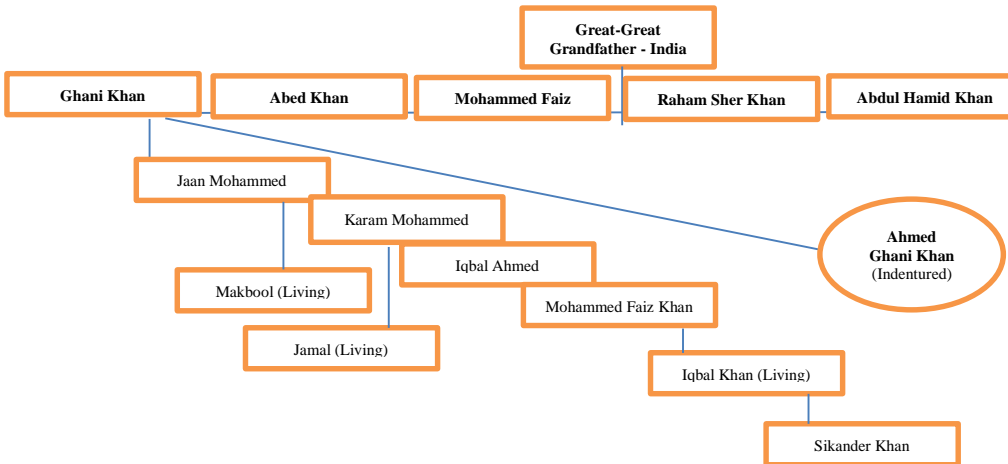
In mapping my family lineage in India I have come to understand that my great, great, grandfather's father had three wives who begot five sons . One of them was Ghani Khan. My great grandfather had five sons of which one, Ahmed Ghani Khan was my grandfather who was indentured. There are four living descendant's from this lineage. Makbool Khan the son of Jaan Mohammed Khan, Jamal Khan the son of Karam Mohammed, Iqbal Khan the son of Mohammed Faiz Khan and Sikander Khan the son of Iqbal Khan. This lineage took much time to comprehend given that it extended through four generations, but drawing a family tree of the lineage in India made this much easier to comprehend.





The bed in floral image and some of the Khan family members

### Lineage in India



## **Conclusion**

The paper highlights through the case study of the author's family as to how indentured Indians in South Africa have been stripped of their ancestral lineage. It also speaks of the plight of the first generation of indentured Indians and the circumstances that have contributed in them severing ties with their kith and kin in their ancestral homeland. While this is the case, there is still hope to trace their roots using a genealogical approach in their pursuit. However, not everyone will be fortunate enough, such as the author to trace one's roots. It is through sheer coincidence that the author was able to locate important links through birth documents of his grandparents, archival material through the assistance of a historian and oral history from his parents and the author's surviving relatives in the country. For the many Indians of indentured heritage, that has no such access to artefacts that bears testimony to their origin, will have to live with their ancestral roots shrouded in mystery.

## **Acknowledgement**

The author is indebted to Professor Goolam Vahed at the University of Kwa-Zulu who helped to source archival material on my family both in the country and India, Prof Radhamany Sooryamoorthy for commenting on the methodological part of the paper, colleagues and family members for their support and inspiration whilst undertaking field research abroad under very trying conditions.

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# **‘To the villages of India’: Case Studies on a Reflexive Search for an Indian Identity**

**Shanta Balgobind Singh**

## **Abstract**

This paper is about my family roots in India and how its manifestations demonstrate a dual identity that depends upon India and South Africa for its consolidation. It is a reflexive account of how immediate members of my extended family retraced their roots to India and carried it across from South Africa in ways that exhibited both ‘sameness’ and ‘differences’. One of the core issues in this episode in trying to find their roots was to link up to kin in the remote village of Bihar viz. Harpurwa, and to compare their lifestyles with who remained behind. Glaring differences emerged out of the first meeting, especially by virtue of their South African kin showing affordability and demonstrating curiosity at tremendous expense to themselves. In doing so several important issues emerged out of identity building that middle class families in which South African families have become engaged. This paper will attempt to address these issues through the lenses of my personal experiences, especially in the pride and care that middle class families took in developing their enterprises against unbearable racialised conditions, educating and supporting their off-springs beyond marriage, and determining their space in terms of their ethnic identities because the political environment in which they prevail imposes such restrictive thinking upon them. But above such constrictions is the pride and place that they believe they have as ‘Indians in South Africa’.

**Keywords:** India, Indians, Identity, Roots, South Africa

Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works  
for the welfare of his fellow men (Mahatma Gandhi).

## Introduction

This research article is about the experiences that three family members had in their quest of tracing their ancestors back to the villages of India. The reflexion on one's life history is not only an indication of the accomplishments of many Indians families in South Africa who have achieved success over adversity, but is also very important to one's sense of identity. The question of identity has both personal and intellectual interest for the researcher. Unpacking the identity discourse is part of the researcher's personal identification as an Indian born in South Africa. Situating her experience as a 4<sup>th</sup> generation (3<sup>rd</sup> to be born in South Africa) South African Indian within the larger context of Indians in South Africa is an important reflexive account of how immediate and extended family retraced their roots to India and carried it across from South Africa in ways that exhibited both 'sameness' and 'differences'. This has impacted the researcher in gaining a deeper understanding of her own family's trials and tribulations that they had to endure within an individual context. Likewise, the study of the Indian Diaspora in South Africa especially since 1860 has helped the researcher to understand the larger South African Indian environment. According to Ashton and Hamilton (2003:27), *'the past that inspires genealogists, local historians, and collectors is not random but connected to their personal identity, most often their genetic heritage . . . the family is the principal site for exploration and teaching about the past across all cultures'*. The case studies in this paper are a record which helps to frame questions for more demanding studies on the identity of South African Indians. Formal viewpoints from two generations (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>th</sup>) were taken into account and informal interviewing of more than one generation within the family was conducted. The researcher justifies the selection of the case study method to understand the participant's identification with their ancestral land, India.

The first case study conducted with the researcher's father was undertaken in 2010. This case study will be briefly referred to in this research. It entailed going into the trials and tribulations of his life, his search for his identity and the contributions made to his ancestral village. This reflexive account comprises the researcher's father trying to reconstruct the past; not just the objective process by which he found his roots but also as an inner journey which he underwent to connect and trace the link to his identity in the context of South African society. The present three case studies in this research pertains to the researcher's extended family (father's brother Satish), and immediate

family (researchers brother Santosh together with his wife Ashitha) who sought to trace their roots and try to identify with people rooted in their ancestral land. This research used a variety of techniques including structured interviews and digital voice to record the three case studies. Furthermore, besides the interviews, *data was collected from archives, newspapers, and published reports.*

## **Contextualization of Indians in South Africa**

It is a known fact that the first shipload of indentured Indian labourers came to work on the sugar plantations of the Colony of Natal, South Africa on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1860. In reality Indians arrived in the Cape as slaves in 1652. Soon after Jan van Riebeeck set up a Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, to supply provisions to Dutch ships plying to and from India and the East Indies, people from India were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery to do domestic work for the settlers, as well as the dirty and hard work on the farms. From then until late eighteenth century when the import of slaves from Asia was prohibited, many hundreds, if not thousands, of persons from India – mainly Bengal, Coromandel Coast and Kerala – were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery. The number of slaves exceeded the number of white settlers by early 18th century and they did the hard work of developing the land. Most of the Asian slaves worked on the farms and were treated as cruelly as the Africans. There were almost as many, if not more, slaves from India as from Indonesia. The slaves were, however, dispersed and lost their identity in the course of time. The Indians became part of the ‘Malay’ community – so called as Malayo-Portuguese was the lingua franca in the Asian ports at that time – and their descendants later came to be identified as ‘Cape Malays’ (Cape Muslims) as the Muslim community expanded (Jaide 2009:1).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thousands of Indians were brought to work on the sugar plantations in South Africa as indentured labourers. On the 16 November 1860 a group of 342 Indians, comprising men, women and children, arrived at the port city of Durban on board the S.S Truro. They were the first of 384 such arrivals of ‘human cargo’ containing as many as 152 184 people that were shipped to South Africa over the next 51 years. Of them 62% were men, 25% women and 13% children. Two thirds of these emigrants were from

the then Madras Presidency, Mysore, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal (The Indian Diaspora 2000:76). The initial purpose of importing Indians was to tend the sugarcane and sisal plantations of the British settlers. Their settlement and distribution across the Natal colony was staggered and subject to the economic conditions of the entire British Empire and its relationship to other imperialist forces. Around this time in India, the 1850's and the 1860's, imperial control made united Indian political action more possible than any previous time (Lal 2006: 26). While their initial recruitment had been for work in the plantations, Indian labour was also later distributed to the railways, dockyards, coal mines, municipal services and domestic employment. Even though they were not happy with the racist laws and taxes, only about 23% of Natal Indians had returned to India by 1911, when the much abused indenture was finally terminated. Many of the Indians had acquired little plots of land and became kitchen gardeners and hawkers, retailing their produce to the White community. In a nutshell, our Indian ancestors had to overcome many challenges. Initially, they had to submit themselves to hard labour and servitude without due appreciation. That was followed by mindless racial oppression. Finally, they had to wage a relentless fight against the evils of apartheid that they completed in partnership with all the oppressed people (The Indian Diaspora 2000:77-87).

Thus the period 1860 to 1911 is an important and integral part of the history of South Africa as it was during this turbulent period when over 150000 indentured labourers were imported to work mainly on the sugar plantations belonging to the colonial planters. Within this group of indentured labourers was the researcher's paternal great-grandfather, Mr. Mehi Sahu known as (Mahilall), who was lured into coming to South Africa- 'the land of gold'

### **The Promise of a Land Full of 'Gold'**

Mehi Sahu, Toti Sahu<sup>1</sup> (referred to as Mahilall), lived in the village of Harpurwa in Nepal, about eight kilometers north of the border with India. At the age of twenty- five Mahilall migrated from the northern

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<sup>1</sup> The title 'Sahu' denotes the aristocratic caste lineage. This belongs to the 'Sonar' (jeweler) caste.

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## *Case Studies on a Reflexive Search for an Indian Identity*


parts of India, from the village Harpurwa which is 2, 3 kilometres from the district of Sarlahi which is a bordering district of Nepal.

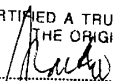
**Figure 1: A copy of the ships list from the National Archives of South Africa on the arrival of Mehi Sahu to South Africa.**

(Information extracted from Register: G)  
(Please note that the information below is based on an interpretation of the handwriting from the register)

	Name of Ship	:	Sophia Joahim
	Date of Departure	:	09 June 1883
	Date of Arrival	:	14 August 1883
2.	Name	:	Mehi Sahu
3.	Father's Name	:	Toti Sahu
4.	Sex	:	Male
5.	Caste	:	Sonar
6.	Age	:	25
7.	Height	:	5ft 4,5"
8.	Next of Kin	:	Nuckchedi: Brother
9.	Zillah	:	Nepal
10.	Pergunah	:	Asibhoo
11.	Village	:	Hurpoorwa/Hurpurwa
12.	Colonial No.	:	29953
13.	Bodily Marks	:	Scar at temple

Certified a true copy.

  
HEAD: DURBAN ARCHIVES REPOSITORY

CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY  
OF THE ORIGINAL  
  
MARIAN NAIDOO  
COMMISSIONER OF OATHS  
PRACTISING ATTORNEY, P  
907/8 MARITIME HOUSE  
143 SALMON GROVE  
DURBAN 4001

Mahilall escaped from the villages of Harpurwa<sup>2</sup> when he injured his sister-in-law in a fit of rage when he got home and realized that the food was not cooked after a hard day of work in the rice fields. Due to fear of being reprimanded by his brother he went to the village of Sitamarhi. Starving, dirty and tired, he was enticed with food by a man who worked as an agent for the British Government in recruiting people to go to the British Colony of South Africa. When the British recruiter learnt that Mahilall was Sonar by caste he persuaded him not to go back to the hardships in the village of Harpurwa and lured him by saying that he could have unlimited supply of free gold in South Africa. Mahilall was told that the British people in South Africa needed Indian labour because the local African population was not skilled enough to work. The agent further conspired with him that the Indians were accustomed to working under the British Raj and would not encounter any difficulties. Besides, for the work that Mahilall did in South Africa, he was promised that he would be paid a monthly salary in gold. He was expected to serve a five-year contract and could thereafter return to India or Nepal, a wealthy man or remain in South Africa. All expenses, relative to his return to Nepal at the expiry of contract, would be borne by the British Government. Mahilall was told that all he needed to do in return was build the South African economy and teach the local African population.

Such an honourable gesture, all expenses paid and the promise of gold was too appealing for Mahilall to resist. The following day, together with his newfound friends, they boarded an all-expenses paid train to Calcutta, where they were going to meet other recruits and thereafter board a ship to South Africa. The train journey from Sitamarhi to Calcutta (now renamed Kolkata) was a long one. Upon arrival to their

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<sup>2</sup> Harpurwa village is located in Bajpatti Tehsil of Sitamarhi district in Bihar, India. Bajpatti is nearest town to Harpurwa village. It is one of 58 villages in Bajpatti Block along with villages like Madhuban Basaha and Bhagwanpur Chaube. The nearest railway station of Harpurwa is in Sitamarhi. (Census 2011, Statistics South Africa).

destination they were accommodated at a massive compound belonging to the British Government and provided with rations. Other recruits, both male and female were also at the compound. Many had infants with them and were mostly from the state of Bihar.

**Figure 2: Map of India indicating distance from Bihar to Calcutta (Kolkata)-red spot**

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### **The Journey and Arrival of Mehi Sahu (Mahilall) in South Africa from the Villages of India**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1883, Mahilall together with the rest of the recruits boarded the ship Sophia Joakim, at the port of Calcutta. They were all inspected and herded onto the ship like cattle, being identified by any bodily scarring that one may have. Furthermore each person was tagged with a colonial number. Mahilall's colonial number was 29953 and his serial number was 253. A total

of 418 adults set sail for the shores of South Africa aboard the *Sophia Joakim*. Amidst great hardship; i.e. lack of food, working in the kitchens, toilets, decks of the ship and severe illnesses the recruits reached the shores of Durban on the 14 August 1883. They had spent 68 uncomfortable days under unpleasant conditions at sea. Durban was a 'culture shock' for the new recruits. For the first time they encountered African people; neither understood each other's language; Hindi and isiZulu. The Indian recruits were quarantined and checked by medical officers and a few days later were picked up by British farmers. The promised gold was nowhere in sight. For the British farmers the Indian's were cheap, skilled Indentured labour. Due to the fact that they did not know English, their thumb-print was taken as an endorsement of their five year labour contracts. Mahilall (29953) was allocated to the Waterloo Sugar Estate. He served his five year contract<sup>3</sup> at the Waterloo Estate in Verulam on the north coast of Natal. The area of Waterloo still exists today along the Umdloti Beach road, and is occupied predominantly by the African population who live in low-cost housing which is still dispersed with sugar cane plantation. Mahilall's indenture expired on the 20 August 1888 after serving his five year contract (Figure 2). Instead of returning to India Mahilall chose to settle in South Africa. On his own he leased some land in New Glasgow, and cultivated sugar cane.

He married a South African-born lady, of Indian origin – Bechuni Kalichurn. Mahilall decided to make South Africa his home and decided to plant his roots firmly on the South African soil. Mahilall's marriage to Bechuni, produced the first generation of South African Indians in the family; 14 children – 10 sons and four daughters. The sons were Rattan; Ramlakkan; Jhingoor (Ramnarain); Roopnarain; Ramdaw; Dulan; Balgobind; Seepurshad; Seegobinand and Nundkishore. The daughters were Ramkalia (Brathmanie); Golabiah; Basmuthie and Phoolmathie. The children were all born in New Glasgow. One of the sons; Balgobind was the researcher's grand-father. Balgobind was the first generation born in South Africa. He married Toothpathy Doorga in 1925.

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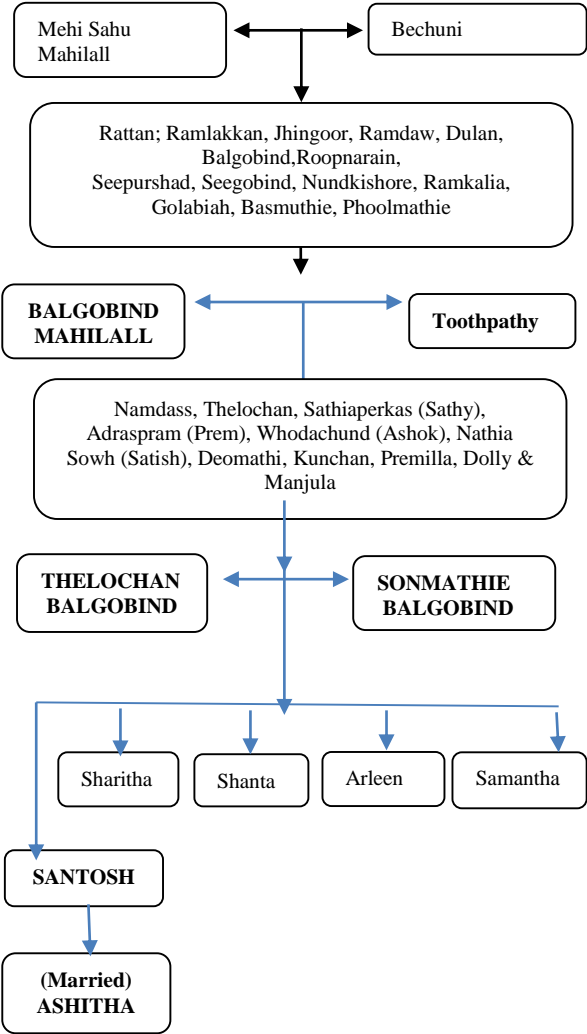
<sup>3</sup> Indenture spawned harsh laws that governed every aspect of the migrant's lives. They had to work for five years for the employer to whom they were assigned. Overwork, malnutrition and squalid living conditions formed the pattern of daily life for most agricultural workers; Indentured Indians had few ways of resisting (Lal 2006: 243).

**Figure 3: Map of Coastline of Natal, indicating Durban and Umdloti (The area of Waterloo)**



Balagobind and Toothpathy had thirteen children, twelve of whom were born in New Glasgow and one in Red Hill, Durban. Two of these children died when they were small. The surviving children comprised of six boys and five girls.

**Figure 4: Genealogy of Mehi Sahu Mahilall**



The eldest was Namdass. The researcher's dad Thelochan was the second child. The third was Prem, fourth Domathie, fifth Sathy, sixth Kunchan, seventh Dolly, eighth Premilla, ninth Ashok, tenth Satish<sup>4</sup> and eleventh Manjula. At the time of writing this research, four of the sons, Namdass, Prem, Sathy and Thelochan had passed away.

To take care of his big family, Balgobind a pioneering man had his own sugar cane farm and used to transport sugar cane to the mill on ox wagon. In 1930 he bought a lorry and began carting sugar cane to the mill on his lorry. For extra income he lugged other farmers' cane on his lorry to the mills. Being an innovative man he also rented his lorry in order to augment his income further. Balgobind got tired of farming and was encouraged by the success of his transport business to venture into investing his profits to purchase taxis and buses for expanded transport business activities (Singh 2010:84). On the 30<sup>th</sup> December 1962 at the age of fifty four Balgobind passed away and on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1979 his wife also passed on.

### **‘Tracing of Roots’ by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation to India**

In 1971, the researcher's father, the late Thelochan Balgobind (the first member in the family to attempt tracing his ancestral roots), accompanied by his wife Sonmathie, his sister Deomathie and her late husband Sukhraj Kasipersadh, set out to Nepal in search of the Mahilall family roots. In his quest to discover his roots and understand his heritage, Thelochan encountered a host of difficulties. His forefathers came to South Africa as indentured labourers therefore their names, village and district address were entered on their emigration passes. However, the search became complicated because the names of places and their spellings had changed over the centuries; villages had been incorporated in different districts and there were different villages with similar names (Singh 2010:87). Amidst much trials and tribulations Thelochan and his accompanied family were eventually successful in finding their village. After verification by elders in the village, the entire community came out to meet them. There was great joy and commemoration following this reunion.

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<sup>4</sup> Mr Satish Balgobind is one of the case studies in this research.

### ***Analysis of Case Study 1***

The researcher's first case study for this paper was with Satish Balgobind, the youngest brother of Thelochan. On the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1993, Satish, accompanied by his wife Susheela his brother Thelochan and sister-in-law Sonmathie undertook a trip to their ancestral village of Harpurwa. They flew from New Delhi to Kathmandu where they stayed overnight in a hotel. The next day they hired a four wheeler vehicle (the terrain through which they had to travel was treacherous, having to pass through many gorges) and travelled down the Himalaya Mountains to their ancestral village of Harpurwa. Upon reaching their destination, the entire village turned out to meet them (prior to their departure Thelochan had communicated with the 'new found family' in India their intention to visit the village with members of his immediate family from South Africa). The relatives from South Africa stayed the night of 25<sup>th</sup> October 1993 in the village of Harpurwa.

At the time of this study Satish Balgobind was 68 years old and the second generation of Indian to be born in South Africa. He is a retired, married man who had been to university in South Africa. He has 4 children (3rd generation born in South Africa) and 6 grandchildren who are part of the 4<sup>th</sup> generation to be born in South Africa. When Satish was asked to describe his current economic status, he was very modest and indicated that he is within the middle-income group and achieved this through *hard work, commitment and honesty*. In the researcher's opinion Satish would fall into the higher income category due to his economic status within the South African Indian community. The reason that he wanted to meet his family in India was because he had an enquiring mind, genetic factors and he always displayed a keen interest in his origins as a South African Indian<sup>5</sup>.

The first contact that he had with his relatives from the village induced a feeling of immense joy and inner- satisfaction within him. He was so proud that he finally made contact with his relatives. He was also humbled by their simplicity and the love shown to them. *'They didn't leave our sight. They actually bowed at our feet, and asked a million questions. They are all very poor but are big hearted. The humility of our people was overwhelming. How do we repay them for the love and affection bestowed on us'?*

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<sup>5</sup> As discussed earlier the tracing of the family roots to India was done by the researchers father Thelochan Balgobind.

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**Figure 5: Satish (beard and glasses) with brother Thelochan, wife Susheela and sister-in-law Sonmathie with relatives from the village of Harpurwa**



**Figure 6: Satish and Susheela (right) with Thelochan and Sonmathie (left) standing before religious deities<sup>6</sup> worshiped in Harpurwa**



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<sup>6</sup> The religious deities depicted in this photo are the same as the deities worshipped by some Indians in South Africa.

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Although their life style was very simple and Satish was able to identify with them in terms of their 'Indianness' i.e. culture; religion, festivals and weddings; he was of the opinion that *'there was no comparison to the lifestyle that we as South African Indians enjoy. We may maintain our value system but we are really spoilt in South Africa; there is too much focus on massive houses, cars, wealth. In the village this is not an issue. The common thread between us is our religion and religious practices. There was a commonness in the worship of the same 'Gods' and belonging to the same caste'*<sup>7</sup>.

When the researcher asked the question: In South Africa, despite unbearable racialised conditions, we had and have greater privileges than our relatives in the rural village? His response to this was: *'This is not true, the people of India have democracy; India is the largest democracy in the world. They do not need privileges, all they need is the opportunity to work and they are content and happy. Parents in the village depend on their children for financial support'*.

In identifying with India he points to the fact that he would always like to maintain his 'Indianness', even in South Africa. *'I am a proud South African Indian'*, He described India as a 'magnet' and had he been younger he would have loved to settle there. *Having found his relatives in the villages of India this has increased his desire to visit India more often in order to build the bond between the two families'*.

Satish keeps in contact with his relatives via email and the social media i.e. face book. On the flip side when asked what were some of the adverse impact in making contact with your relatives? The response was *'they will usually ask you for money or some form of assistance'*.

In October 2015 Satish and Susheela visited his maternal ancestral roots in Patna, India. This was also a heart-warming experience where they were able to meet a few of the older generation of the family who were still alive and living in the village.

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<sup>7</sup> In the context of the wider social stratification of Indians in South Africa, the class situation becomes dominant rather than caste. In India there is also an emerging class stratification which is taking over the caste stratification.

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## ***Analysis of Case Study 2***

The second case study for this paper was with the researcher's brother Santosh Balgobind<sup>8</sup> who is 58 years old and is the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation to be born in South Africa. The same questions as with the first case study were asked by the researcher and what was intriguing was the difference of opinion between the two generations in terms their sense of identity with India. Santosh is a university graduate who is self-employed. He married Ashitha in 1981 and is considered to be part of the higher socio-economic group in South Africa. The process of achieving this status was not an easy one. For Santosh there was a desire and importance in him to know where he originally came from, *'to have some kind of identity'*. Fortunately for him much of the groundwork in tracing his roots and the search for his identity was carried out by his dad Thelochan, whom he assisted in *'tracing birth certificates, checking with government records, university archives, and the ships register. Furthermore the village had to be tracked and the head in the region had to verify and provide additional information'*.

In December 1994 Santosh at the age of 38, accompanied by his wife Ashitha went to the village of Harpurwa to try and identify with his ancestral roots. Despite the very primitive, basic rural lifestyle in the village, there was a *'sense of excitement and satisfaction'* when he met with them, *'their warm welcome and ability to want to make their guests as comfortable as possible with the little resources that they had was impressive'*. They were able to identify with their recently discovered relatives from the village by their religious customs and manner of dress<sup>9</sup>.

When the researcher asked the question: In South Africa, despite unbearable racialised conditions, we had and have greater privileges than our

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<sup>8</sup>Santosh Balgobind is the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation to be born in South Africa. He married Ashitha who accompanied him on his many trips to the villages of his ancestral land. Although Ashitha visited her husband's family in India, she has not visited her ancestral land which was also traced by her family members in South Africa.

<sup>9</sup> Indian women in the rural villages of India generally wear saris or a 'shalwarkameez' (pants and long dress). However with westernisation this is changing especially with the younger generation.

relatives in the rural village? His response to this was: *'Yes. South Africa is a developing country with approximately 55 million people. Our forefathers came here for a better life but also endured great hardships in the early years. It is only now that the current generation is educated that job opportunities have opened up'*.

In identifying with India Santosh's arguments are: *'We as South African Indians are a new breed. Our thinking, values and mentality is different from the Indians in the rural village. They may be our roots but there is a big difference in our way of life and thinking. We cannot be on the same wavelength except for our roots'*.

To the question, are the family ties that we as Indians display here in South Africa a continuation of the trends in the village of India? In his opinion *'the family ties were the same. Indians all over have the close bond between family members especially when there is poverty and lack of resources. Presently in South Africa affluence and independence is the cause of the breakdown of the family ties'*.

**Figure 7: The entire village, including young and old came to welcome the family from South Africa**



Furthermore he went on to add: *'a parent's support never ends for a child, especially in the Indian culture and practise. Generally when a child gets a job and marries, he/she goes on their own. It depends on the child, some need more support than others who become independent quicker because of their earning power or character'*.

Although Santosh thinks that India is a beautiful country he would never want to settle there. He thanks his forefathers for leaving the village and coming to South Africa despite the hardships they encountered. When asked what were some of the adverse impact in making contact with your relatives? The response was: *'they seem to be very money conscious and expect to be given hand-outs for everything, especially the younger generation'*. Contact is maintained with relatives from the village via email, phone and the occasional visit when they are in India.

### ***Analysis of Case Study 3***

In this case study the respondent (Santosh's wife Ashitha) was asked to discuss her experience and identification with the people from the village. The following narrative is a portrayal from a female perspective in uniting with the ancestral village and its inhabitants. Ashitha Balgobind, also a third generation Indian to be born in South Africa commented:

*In December 1994 I accompanied my husband when he embarked on a trip to his ancestral village of Haripurwa. It was by no means easily accessible. We flew to Kathmandu and then to Janakpur and from there it was a long journey by car. The memorable part of the visit there was that we were treated like royalty. On arrival we were garlanded and welcomed by the family. Besides the families, friends and neighbours came by to meet the 'relatives from South Africa'. I was taken aback by their warmth and hospitality, trait that's eminent amongst the Indians in South Africa. Language was a problem for me as I only spoke English and a little Hindi.*

*I noticed that the women in the family were shy and hardly spoke, they had their heads covered with their sarees and sat away from the men. We were served fresh chicken curry, prepared using*

*freshly ground home spices with rice for dinner. Their style and taste of the food is different from that of South Africans.*

*Their living conditions are very basic, as there was no piped water and a pump was being used, we carried a few cases of bottled water with us. When we used the toilet we had to throw a bucket of water to flush it. It was quite a difficult one night stay. We were given a room on the upper floor as the home was double storey. During the night I was terrified as I could hear the rats running on the ceiling. I found their living conditions to be rather primitive, at that point in time which was 20 years as there was no proper sanitation and electricity. We awoke the next morning to see two men armed with rifles in the house. When we enquired about them we were told that they were there to protect us as our hosts were afraid of thugs (dacoits) attacking us. We were also escorted out of the village by armed guards.*

*In December 2012 my husband and I visited his grandmother's family in Aara for a day. This village is approximately 2 hours from Patna. Here again we were showered with love and affection and a warm welcome. I have visited India several times and have noted that although there may be similarities between the Indians in India and the Indians in South Africa, we are essentially different.*

*As I reflect on my two visits to the villages in India, I am thankful to my forefathers for making the move to South Africa. Although we as Indians have been discriminated against, pre and post-apartheid era, we have been living a better quality of life here in South Africa, compared to the rural Indians in India where most of our relative's live. We are still in contact with our relatives and we are sure we will visit them in the future.*

*Something that we should bear in mind is that the relatives that we visited were actually the more affluent people in that village, so there were some people even worse off than them. In another relative's home, the goats were housed indoors. Twenty years ago, many of the teenagers were well aware that education was the key to uplifting their living standards. Now most of them have graduated with masters degrees and are working in bigger cities and some even have migrated to the USA and the eastern countries.*

In this research paper, and from the above case studies discussed, is an indication of how the present outlook of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation South African Indians recognizes that family histories can influence ones sense of identity and belonging in contemporary society.

## **Conclusion**

Although the identity of people is rooted in their birth in a particular ethnic, religious and cultural setting, there is sometimes the longing and deep desire to trace ones true sense of belonging. South African Indians, having been in the country for approximately 155 years, have been forced by political conditions during colonialism, apartheid and post-apartheid years to endorse their identities and cultures as Indians. It includes the self-motivated yearning as well as a feeling of 'belonging' for many of the people of the Indian population to explore their origins back to the villages of India. The image of India as a place of origin remains a recurring characteristic in the current discourses on the Indian Diaspora. The three case studies in this research is an indication that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation South African Indian identifies more with India as their 'motherland' and would never consider settling in India. They consider themselves to be South African. The 3<sup>rd</sup> generation are of a different view and although they identify with India in terms of the media, movies, festivals and religious traditions, they would not want to live in India either. A sense of identity is not just a construct of where one originated but both a construct of ones identification with the place and land of birth and a product of historical movements and a purposefully inculcated ideology.

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Mngadi, S. 1994. 'Popular Memory' and Social Change in South African Historical Drama of the Seventies in English: The Case of Credo Mutwa's *Unosimela*. *Alternation* 1,1:37-41.

Fanon, F. 1986. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Markmann, C.L. (trans.). London: Pluto Press.

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