

An Appraisal of India-Nigeria Historical and Contemporary Relations

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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 21st 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 21st 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 20th 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 19th and early 20th 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

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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 20th Century

India's 20th 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 16th 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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