

India's Relation with Africa

India's relations with other countries are important topics in the UPSC international relations segment. In this article, you can read about the relations India has with the countries of the African continent, for the IAS exam.

Overview of India's Relations with Africa

India has fully sympathised with the aspirations of the African people to attain self-reliance. India has transferred technology in various forms such as direct foreign investment in attractive sectors like petroleum, mining and export, agriculture and industry etc.

Trade has been the other mechanism for the transfer of technology embodied in goods and services. However, India's partnership with African countries regarding trade has not been a priority and as a result, continued to stagnate during the period 1960-70s, and even after that. Furthermore, this trade has been mainly confined to a few African countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana etc.

India has also provided extensive facilities for the training of the local people so that they may be able to play an active role in the management and development of various projects. Training facilities have been provided to personnel of these countries in India.

After the decolonisation of Africa, India and the African countries took a similar stand on various international issues. They expressed full faith in the policy of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence. On the wider economic issues like North-South Dialogue also they have worked in complete co-operation and have come to accept the need for closer horizontal co-operation between the undeveloped countries.

Impact of Afro-Asian Resurgence on International Relations

The impacts are:

1. Change in the nature of international relations
2. It gave a setback to imperialism and racism
3. Gave serious setback to the colonial system
4. The democratisation of International Relations
5. Helped in strengthening world peace
6. Prominent role at the UN
7. The increased importance of the UN
8. A significant role in the creation of NIEO.

India and the Liberation Struggle in Africa

India has consistently supported the Liberation Movements in various African countries and took up the cause of the African countries in the United Nation, the commonwealth Conferences and other international forums. First, India tried to impress on the United States that the Trusteeship System should be worked in the interest of dependent people and there should not be any parcelling out of territories on the basis of strategic needs. India also insisted that the Trusteeship powers must supply regular information to the United Nations Organization regarding the measure taken by them or proposed to be taken by them with a view to expediting the grant of independence or self-government to the trust territories.

Economic Assistance to Africa

India did not merely extend support to the African countries in their struggle for freedom but also provided economic assistance during the struggle and after independence, primarily with a view to ensure stability and economic prosperity in the African continent, and to strengthen their hard-won independence.

India provided special assistance to countries like Mauritius, Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, Libya and Algeria. It set up joint commissions of economic and technical cooperation with these countries. These commissions hold periodical meetings and try to promote cooperation by identifying new areas of economic activity.

Faith in Non-Alignment

Both India and African countries profess faith in the policy of non-alignment. They adopted this policy because they wanted to preserve their newly won freedom and independence.

Transfer of Technology

India has fully sympathized with the aspirations of the Africans to attain self-reliance. Trade is one of the mechanisms for the transfer of technology embodied in goods and services. India has also contributed to the economic development of Africa through the transfer of technology. India's trade with the African countries has not been large and continued to be stagnant during the period 1960-70.

Drought Assistance

India has provided funds and foodstuffs at the time of drought. It also made available expertise and technical assistance in the development of agriculture along modern lines and development of irrigation facilities so that these problems can be tackled on a long term basis. India has also shown its solidarity with various African countries at the time of their distress and provided them

with every possible assistance. India has also extended assistance to various African countries in the development of non-conventional energy sources, rural electrification solar energy and wind power.

Credit Facilities

Despite her tight financial position, India has made available to several African countries enormous amounts as a credit on most reasonable terms. It offered credit between 5 to 10 crores to countries like Tanzania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda, Sudan etc. for purchase of India manufactured goods such as textiles and engineering goods, tractors, motorcycles, buses, trucks, bicycles etc.

Decolonisation and Asia-African Resurgence

- Most of the countries of Asia and Africa at the time of their independence were suffering from chronic problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and disease.
- To a large extent, these problems were mainly the result of their long exploitation by the colonial powers. The colonies took away all the important raw materials and dumped manufactured goods, which greatly retarded the economic and social progress of these colonies.
- Though the states of Asia and Africa differed from each other, yet they possess some common features. For example – all of them had a history of western domination of varying duration and degree of severity.
- All of them were underdeveloped and characterized by
 - low standards of living
 - widespread illiteracy
 - parochial loyalties
 - economic stagnation
 - political break down
- The Afro-Asian countries did not possess any factories, roads, railways and means of communication.
- People had a high rate of illiteracy and there were hardly any facilities for higher education. A semblance of Banking service did exist in some of the countries which were created by the colonial powers to promote their own trade interests.
- As these countries did not have any industries, their economies were purely agricultural.
- The political freedom in these countries paved the way for two other revolutions viz : (a) Masters of science and technology for economic growth and efforts to bring about social transformation of their societies, (b) The people of Asia and Africa felt that their political freedom shall be incomplete without progress in social and economic sphere.
- Due to the emergence of Afro-Asian countries, the nature and character of international relations have been changed.
- After independence, these countries extended full support to the nationalist movements.

- With the emergence of Afro-Asian countries, a change has also taken place in the manner of conduct of foreign policy. After the emergence of new states, people began to play an important role in the formulation of foreign policy and international relations have assumed a democratic character.
- The Afro-Asian countries have rendered great service to the cause of world peace by adopting the path of non-alignment and keeping off from the power bloc.
- Though Afro-Asian countries were economically and militarily weak, they tried to place greater reliance on the UN and other international agencies for solutions of various political, economic and social issues.
- Ever since their independence, the Afro-Asian countries have been insisting on the regulation of economic relations among various nations in terms of equality.
- In 1974, the UN G.A. adopted a resolution regarding the establishment of NIEO.

The above discussion clearly establishes that the resurgence of Afro-Asian countries has left a deep impact on the geopolitical landscape of the 21st-century world.