

## **India - Sudan Relations**

India-Sudan relations go back in history to the time of the Nilotic and Indus Valley Civilizations. There is evidence of contacts and possibly trade almost 5,000 years ago through Mesopotamia.

In 1935, Mahatma Gandhi stopped over in Port Sudan (on his way to England by boat) where he was welcomed by the resident Indian community. In 1938, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stopped over in Port Sudan on his way to Britain and he attended a function at the home of Chhotalal Samji Virani. The Graduates General Congress of Sudan formed in 1938 drew heavily from the experience of the Indian National Congress.

British Indian troops fought alongside their Sudanese counterparts in Eritrea in 1941 winning the decisive battle of Keren (earning the Bengal Sappers a Victoria Cross for mine clearance in Metemma, now on the Sudan-Ethiopia border). The first Sudanese Parliamentary elections in 1953 were conducted by Shri Sukumar Sen, the then India's Chief Election Commissioner (the Sudanese Election Commission, formed in 1957, drew heavily on Indian elections norms and laws).

A Sudanization Committee established in February 1954 to replace British officials finished its work in April 1955 with budgetary support from India for compensation payments. India opened a diplomatic representation in Khartoum in March 1955. In April 1955, the interim Prime Minister of the Sudan, Ismail Al Azhari and several Ministers transited through New Delhi on their way to Bandung for the first Afro-Asian Relations Conference.

At the 1955 Bandung Conference, the delegation from a still not independent Sudan did not have a flag to mark its place. Taking out his handkerchief, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote "Sudan" on it, thus reserving a place for Sudan in the international community.

India and Sudan have maintained cordial and friendly relations. Sudan Block in India's National Defence Academy was set up with the funding of one hundred thousand pounds from the Sudanese Government in recognition of the sacrifices of Indian troops in the liberation of Sudan in the North African Campaign during World War II. In 1958, India offered a six-acre plot (for a nominal price) in the posh Chanakyapuri area of New Delhi for the Embassy and residences of Sudan.

In 1993 and 1994, India voted against UN resolutions critical of Sudan, and opposed moves in 1994 to make Sudan compulsorily withdraw from the IMF. In his address on 31 December 2005 on the eve of Sudan's fiftieth Independence Day, President Bashir made a special reference to Sudan's strong ties with India. Strong political relations continue between the two countries in different regional and international fora. India supported Sudan at the UN in the aftermath of Heglig attack.

### **Bilateral Visits**

There have been high level visits between the two countries. Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru visited Sudan in July 1957 soon after its Independence. In April 1963 Vice President Dr. Zakir Hussain visited Khartoum and in December 1975 President Fakruddin Ali Ahmed came. President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam paid a State visit to Sudan from 20-22 October

2003, a Presidential visit after 28 years. Apart from meetings with President Bashir, Rashtrapatiji addressed the Sudanese Parliament and delivered a talk at the University of Khartoum.

From the Sudanese side, the Prime Minister of the Interim Government, Ismail El Azhari, visited India in 1955 and again in 1967 as President of the Sudan. President Ibrahim Abboud came in 1964 and Jaffer Nimeiri made a state visit in 1974. President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir transited through India in July 1999 and again in July 2002.

In addition to the high-level visits, there have been regular visits between the two countries at ministerial levels. Recently, EAM paid an official visit to Sudan in February 2014.

### **India-Sudan Joint Ministerial Commission**

The India-Sudan Joint Committee (formed in January 1995) was upgraded into a Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) in June 1997. The JCM first met in 1997 at New Delhi, and again in Khartoum in 2000. JMC is to be held at the level of Foreign Ministers.

### **India-Sudan Foreign Office Consultation**

The first consultation between the two foreign offices was held in September 2000 in Khartoum. The 6<sup>th</sup> round of India Sudan Foreign Office Consultation was hosted in New Delhi on December 11, 2014.

### **Agreements between India and Sudan**

India and Sudan have almost 30 bilateral agreements covering trade, science and technology, media, culture, consultations, business, small industries, legal matters, air services, agriculture etc.

### **Economic and Commercial Relations**

Financial Year	Bilateral Trade(Million USD)		
	India's exports	India's imports	Total trade
2005-06	294.65	32.62	327.27
2006-07	403.49	89.08	492.57
2007-08	407.51	433.14	840.65
2008-09	485.07	415.53	900.60
2009-10	461.06	475.00	936.06
2010-11	488.46	613.78	1102.24
2011-12	717.37	438.18	1155.55
2012-13	754.94	133.34	888.28
2013-14	862.17	436.19	1298.36
2014-15	882.47	569.66	1452.13

*Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India*

India is the second largest exporter to Sudan after China. India mainly sells sugar and confectionery, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, machinery and equipment, transport equipment, iron and steel, manufactured goods, textiles and apparels, foodstuffs etc. and India buys mineral and fuels, raw hides and skins, agricultural products, leather, metals and ores etc.

## **Indian Companies in Sudan**

Several Indian companies are now active in Sudan, including, ONGC Videsh Ltd, BHEL, TCIL, Progressive Construction Ltd, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, Bajaj Auto etc. and various hospitals (Apollo, MIOT, MAX, Narayana Hrudayalaya etc) are also represented through their agents.

## **Projects and Lines of Credit**

In April 2006, India's Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources funded a solar electrification system (implemented by Central Electronics Ltd) for Khadarab village about two hours from Khartoum, bringing light for the first time into the lives of some 1,500 villagers. The project has been replicated in several other villages.

A number of Lines of Credit have been extended to the Government of Sudan since 1980. Total Lines of Credit worth of about USD 737.07 million have been extended by the Government of India to the Government of Sudan in various sectors such as- USD 50 million for supply of electrification, equipment, photovoltaic cells, diesel coaches, copper rods, textile machinery, and rehabilitation of locomotives from India to Sudan, USD 41.9 for SINJA-GEDARIF Transmission and Sub-Station project, USD 350 million in 2006 for combined cycle power plant (125 MWX4) in Kosti, USD 15,15,03, 05, and 10 million for Supply of agriculture inputs, Technical and laboratory equipment, scientific equipments, solar electrification and Sudan Railways respectively, USD 25, 10 and 17 for Sinja-Gadarif Transmission line ,Micro-industrial projects and Development of livestock production and services respectively, USD 150 million for Mushkor Sugar Plant at White Nile State and USD 45.17 million for capitalization of interest overdue on all LoCs.

## **ITEC & other Capacity Building Measures**

Under the fully Government of India sponsored Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC), up to 150 slots for short term courses are offered every year. For the year 2014-15, more than 1000 Sudanese nationals already applied against these slots. A large number of Sudanese nationals are also benefiting from short duration courses extended under Indo-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)-II. Sudanese diplomats too have been attending Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) organized by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.

## **Cultural Relations**

An 18-member folk art music and dance troupe from Sudan visited India in March 2002 and a 28-member Modern Music troupe in December 2005 under ICCR sponsorship.

In May 2006, a nine-member Indian International Gondwanaland Expedition led by Shri Akhil Bakshi spent five days in Sudan as part of its 25,000 KM goodwill journey by road in Mahindra Scorpios through 17 countries.

Sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Smt. Sonal Mansingh led a five-member troupe to Sudan in November 2006 and in August 2007, ONGC sponsored performances by the Mumbai-based Rang Puhar song and dance ensemble in Khartoum and Juba on the occasion of Sudan's Oil Day (31 August). In November 2007, ICCR

sponsored the visit of an 11-member Bharatnatyam troupe led by Smt. Jayalakshmi Eashwar. In November 2008, ICCR sent Pioneers of Quepem, a folk song and dance ensemble from Goa.

A large number of Sudanese nationals have found India as their favourite destination for education. Pune, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Aligarh had been traditionally popular centres with the Sudanese students.

### **Indian Community**

The pastoral Beja, some 5% of Sudan's population, are a Hamitic people, one of Sudan's oldest groups. Immortalized for their martial spirit by Rudyard Kipling as the "fuzzy wuzzies" for their shock of curly hair, the Bejas claim origin from India. Their language, spoken from the chest (heart) rather than from the lips, could be related to ancient Prakrit.

Out of about 3000 Indians in Sudan (numbers have been continuously dwindling in the recent past), the settled Indian community in Sudan (now about 1500) is about 150 years young. In addition to the settled Indian community, there is a large expatriate population in Sudan. They are working as professionals in key sectors of the Sudanese economy. There are a few Indian civilian officers working in United Nations missions in Darfur and in Abyei in addition to other UN organisations.

The first Indian Luvchand Amarchand Shah, a Gujarati trader who imported goods from India, is believed to have come to Sudan from Aden in the early 1860s. When his business expanded, he brought his relatives from Saurashtra, who in turn invited their own friends and family. This is how the Indian community grew and developed in Sudan.

From the small towns in the eastern part of the country, (Port Sudan and Suwakin) the early Indian pioneers moved into the interior of the country and settled down in Omdurman, Kassala, Gedaref and Wad Medani. Until the 1970s, we had an Honorary Consulate in Port Sudan.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Khartoum Webpage:

[www.eoikhartoum.in](http://www.eoikhartoum.in)

Embassy of India, Khartoum Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Indianembassykhartoum>

\*\*\*\*

**July 2015**