

Common Threads between India and Africa with reference to the History, Culture and Literature

If we go back in time, during the time of Pangea, we would see that Africa and India were like two leaves of the same sapling, joined together, waiting for its growth and gradually, getting separated, looking for something new. But, their common stem remains intact, binding them with each other. Now, at the present, both have become rich in the fruits of their history since ancient times, fruits of culture of their different traditions and literature, whose words are binding and gripping both the countries/ leaves and showing how far they have travelled in time yet how common they still are.

Due to their same origin, both the countries have about the same geographical conditions and climate, where a rich variety of wildlife thrives. Since ancient times, different communities came here, lived and perished but their traditions have not died. This is the reason why both the countries have rich culture, literature & history with common threads that bind them.

India & large parts of Africa have suffered colonial rule and apartheid. They both have struggled against it and an active part was taken in the freedom struggle of both the countries by Mahatma Gandhi & Nelson Mandela. Gandhiji spent several years and took the freedom struggle of South Africa to great heights. If we go back in time, during the time of the Mughal Empire, both the countries traders were attracted towards each other just like two magnets. During times of crisis, both countries' people migrated to each other's countries for safety.

Influence of India is not limited just to this. India is a home of about 15 official languages and more than 1500 dialects. Interestingly, Africa also has about the same number of languages and many dialects are common between these two countries. Africa and India have ancient literature, texts and secrets that are full of vast knowledge. Experience of India extends from epics like Mahabharat to Mughal Empire, monarchy to British rule and finally a democratic and modern India, leading to a digital India. Many writers have written about these experiences on rocks, leaves, white papers and this has made Indian literature rich with history and culture.

Culture of each country is so unique, still it is common between these two brothers. The National Dress of Indian women, the *saree* can easily be seen on the streets of Africa, especially *KwaZulu-natal*. Indian cooking is most popular and many restaurants are sprinkled all over the country, with delicious Indian cuisine. The craze of *samosas* and other Indian snacks have spread there like wild fire. The love for cricket has also spread over Africa and many windows in Africa are broken by a cricket ball! Several tribes stay in many parts of Africa & India.

Threats, major ones, are challenging the survival of History, Culture and Literature of these countries. India and Africa, mainly due to less advanced technologies are more vulnerable to terrorism, than other advanced nations. Climatic changes are occurring in these two countries due to pollution from fossil fuels. International and national heritage monuments are being destroyed. Internal fights are destroying the unity of the people and gradually ruining the countries too. Traditional knowledge is being taken from India & Africa and is being exploited by other advanced countries. The forest cover is depleting in both the countries and their national heritage of wild animals is slowly getting depleted.

India & Africa share their happiness and misery. They really are bonded brothers and the common threads between them are uncountable. Our dreams are the same and one of them is that our relationship becomes stronger.

Penned By:
B. Anshuman
VIII
Jawahar Vidya Mandir,
Shyamali, Ranchi