

India – Ethiopia Relations

Historical linkages between India and Ethiopia go back about 2,000 years of recorded history. Trade between the two countries flourished during the ancient Axumite Empire (1st century AD), which is seen to be origin of modern Ethiopia. A sizeable Indian community consisting of merchants and artisans, settled down in this country in the latter part of the 19th century. Ethiopia, under Emperor Haile Selassie (1941-1974), saw a large number of Indian teachers in Ethiopia. Full diplomatic relations were established in 1950 with Sardar Sant Singh as the first Ambassador. The current Ambassador is Shri Sanjay Verma, also accredited to Republic of Djibouti and the African Union.

Political Structure

After the overthrow of the Marxist Derg regime in May 1991 the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) a coalition of 9 parties led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi established a transitional government. A new constitution was adopted in December 1994 and elections were held in May and June 1995. The country has 9 regional states drawn along accepted ethnic/linguistic lines and 2 city states. One of the major features of the new Constitution is the right of secession of the constituent provinces. Ethiopia has a President, Dr. Mulatu Teshome, who is the nominal Head. The executive power vests with the Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn. Foreign Minister is Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The Parliament is bicameral and the two Houses are known as House of Peoples Representatives (Lower House) with 548 directly elected MPs and House of Federation (Upper House) with 120 MPs elected by the State Councils of the nine Regional States. The appointment of Ministers is approved by the Parliament. Presently in a house of 548 there is only one opposition member. National elections are scheduled in May 2015.

Bilateral Visits

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi visited India in November 2007, in 2008 for the India Africa Forum Summit in 2008 and in February 2009 for the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit. From our side, President S. Radhakrishnan (in 1965), Vice President Zakir Hussain (in 1967), President V.V. Giri (in 1972) and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (May 2011) visited Ethiopia. Vice President Hamid Ali Ansari visited Ethiopia in May 2013 for the Golden Jubilee celebration on the foundation of the African Union.

Bilateral Trade & Investments

In 2013, India-Ethiopia trade was US \$ 1.260 billion. India's exports were worth US \$ 1.224 billion comprising primary and semi-finished iron and steel products, drugs and pharmaceuticals, machinery and instruments, metal, plastic and linoleum products, paper and paper products, yarns and textiles, chemicals, transport equipments, etc. India's imports were worth US \$35.50 million comprising mainly pulses, semi-precious stones, leather, cotton, oil seeds and spices. Bilateral trade in the first ten-months of 2014 approached US\$ 1 billion. Ethiopia's total trade in 2013 was US \$ 15.5 billion. Exports stood at only US \$ 3.3 billion while imports were over US \$ 12.2 billion.

Indian companies maintained their reputation as being in the top three foreign investors, as newer Indian multinationals established business interests in Ethiopia. Indian companies have approved investment of over US \$ 4 billion. Of this, an estimated US\$ 2 billion is already on the ground or in the pipeline. There are 608 Indian projects approved by the Ethiopian Investment Commission in Ethiopia. About 48% of Indian companies are in manufacturing and 21% in agriculture.

At over US\$ 1 billion, Ethiopia is the single biggest recipient of Indian LOCs in Africa. This includes US \$ 65 million for a power transmission and distribution project under rural electrification programme, US\$ 640 million for development of three sugar factories and US \$ 300 million for a Railway Line Project (sector Asaita in Ethiopia to Tadjourah port in Djibouti).

Cooperation for Capacity Building

The number of training slots under ITEC has gone up from 25 in 2007-08 to above 200 in 2014-15. India also offered 54 Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships to Ethiopian students for University studies in India in 2014-15. Under the IAFS scheme 11 scholars went to India for higher studies. Under the CV Raman International Fellowship Programme for African Researchers, 6 Ethiopians were awarded fellowships. Five participants from the African Union and 5 from the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) were also sent for ITEC courses. Ethiopia has so far utilized 150 ITEC slots in 2014-15. The Pan African e-Network project was launched in Ethiopia in July 2007. The Tele-Education Centre at Addis Ababa University and the Tele-Medicine Centre at the Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa are working well and are considered very useful by the Ethiopian side. A record number of 83 Ethiopian Students enrolled for six different programmes being offered by India under the *e-network* programme for African countries.

Cultural Relations

Embassy organizes performances of ICCR-sponsored cultural troupes in various cities every year. In 2014, Kathak dance performances by internationally acclaimed Ms.

Prerana Deshpande and her group were organized in Addis Ababa and Adama. A first-ever *Indo-Ethiopian Film Festival* was organized on 31 May and 1 June 2014 at the Addis Ababa University. Indian Embassy collaborated to support the *9th International Addis Film Festival*. Photo Exhibition on *Religions of India* by Amit Mehra and *Churches and Christian Culture of Goa* by Benoy Behl, was held at the National Museum and later taken to Ambo University in October and November 2014. The Embassy showcased the works of Indian photographer, Mahesh Shantaram at the *3rd International Addis FotoFest in December 2014*.

Indian Community

The first Indian settlers in Ethiopia were from Gujarat. During imperial times, there were also tens of thousands of Indian teachers in schools all over Ethiopia which fell very significantly during the Derg regime. Presently, the Indians in Ethiopia are over 6,000 – the majority being the new investors and their employees, and lecturers/professors in local Universities. Today, every tenth Indian in Ethiopia is an academic professional and every third Indian works for an Indian investor. Active Indian associations include, the *India Business Forum, Hindu Mahajan, Indian Women's Association, Indian Association, Telugu Association, Tamil Sangam, India Education Forum*, and the *Indian Medial Professionals Forum*.

Useful Resources

Embassy of India, Addis Ababa website:

<http://www.indembassyeth.in>

Facebook page:

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

Twitter: IndiaInEthiopia

December 2014