

International Conference

India and Africa: An Afro Asian Perspective

REPORT

International Conference on ‘India and Africa: An Afro Asian Perspective’ was organised on 15-16 February 2018 by MMAJ Academy of International Studies (AIS), New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, in collaboration with Centre for African Studies, SIS, JNU and African Studies Association of India (ASA India). The two days conference was financially supported by **Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)** and **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR, NR)**, New Delhi. The conference had 31 presenters with papers and discussions focusing on India and Africa relations and an Afro Asian Perspective.

Conference Proceedings, Day 1

Inaugural Session

The session was chaired by **Prof. Rashmi Doraiswamy** official director AIS, JMI. She had welcomed everyone with the history and past of India and Africa relations and had cited literary and cultural examples.

Dr. Bijay Pratihari, conference convenor, AIS, JMI, had introduced the theme of the conference; ‘India and Africa: An Afro-Asian Perspective’. He had stated that a new of relationship had emerged between India and Africa in the post cold war period. Market, raw materials had gained precedence in formulation of new ties. He had also highlighted the rise of newly emerging Asian powers like Korea, Japan, China and India in Africa and how these powers have provided an alternative to the African nations from their ex colonial masters.

He had concluded by adding a statement that ‘this conference would focus whether the emerging Asian powers are different or same as their ex-colonial masters in the context of Africa’.

Prof Rachel Gesami, Nelson Mandela Chair, Centre for African studies, JNU gave the inaugural address. She began with history and facts about India and Africa relations and had emphasized the fact that the relationship and partnership between the two is a two way street. She had covered a vast arena of themes like bilateral trade, FTI, lines of credit, capacity

building programmes etc. She had further analysed strategic determinants like raw materials, energy sectors, capacity building etc and drivers like Diasporas which in the contemporary times play a key role in India Africa ties.

In her concluding remarks, Prof. Gesami addressed the difference between India and China's code of conduct in Africa. According to her India engages people in processing business whereas China engages the authorities. Her concluding statement of, people to people connect idea and practice of India towards Africa.

Key Note Address

The Keynote address was given by **Prof Ajay Dubey**, Chairman, Centre for African Studies, SIS, JNU and this session was chaired by Amb. Virendra Gupta. Prof Dubey had continued with Prof Gesami's statement and had further added the fact that India and Africa's relationship is based on historical factors and good will and is multidimensional in the contemporary times. He had further mentioned the fact that the Afro-Asian Perspective has always been an important element of the Indian foreign policy. To emphasize on his statement⁵ he had cited the example of former PM Jawaharlal Nehru's first paper at the Brussels congress session of 1927, the Bandung Conference, the Lusaka Summit etc.

Prof. Dubey had further highlighted the fact that in the post cold war period Asia provided a way for African nations to diversify and move away from the tradition ex colonial powers. He had added to it by stating that the future prospects of cooperation in Africa is via an amalgamation of OCED countries like Korea and Japan and the non OCED countries like china and India and had cited the example of India Africa growth corridor.

Hon' Amb Virendra Gupta ended the keynote session by mentioning the evolution of journey of Afro Asian connects. He clarified the fact that Indian ties with African nations reflect an emotional and economic connect whereas Chinese ties with African nations reflect a mercantile and resource based money connect. He had concluded by highlighting the importance of people to people connects in promoting the ties between India and Africa.

Session 1: Afro-Asian perspective: A Conceptual Understanding was chaired by Prof ZM Khan.

Prof. Aparajita Biswas presented a paper on the title "Building India-Africa Connectivity: Past Traditions, New Directions". She had discussed the relationship along with factors of

development between India and Africa. She highlighted the strengthening of economic diplomacy by Exim Bank, the Asia Africa growth corridor. She had further mentioned the works SEWA, Barefoot College etc. She had also highlighted Afro-Asian connect which plays a crucial role in India Africa ties.

Dr. Ruchita Beri had presented the second paper titled “India Africa Growth Corridor: A new framework of cooperation”. She had quoted three main philosophies/perspectives i.e. the Indian, Japanese and African. For Indian perspective she had mentioned ideas like sabka sath sabka vikas, sagar and sagarmala. She had also stated that security and connectivity together are a key for further development of India and Africa connect. In the case of the African perspective she had mentioned ideas like Agenda 2016, peaceful settlement, prosperity, integration, cultural ties etc. In Japanese perspective she had stated that an open Indo pacific cooperation can be used for greater regional integration.

The final paper for the first session was presented by **Dr. Saurabh Mishra, ICWA** on the title “India Africa relations: An Afro-Asian perspective”. He had covered the evolution of Afro Asian perspective from pre to post globalisation phase. He had also covered the framing of India’s African policy and 21st century ties between the two. He had concluded by highlighting the qualitative and scalar changes in India’s engagement with African and other Asian nations.

Session 2: India-Europe in Africa; this session was chaired by Prof SN Malakar

The first paper presented in this session was by **Dr. J M Moosa** on the title “Africa’s Engagement with European powers and India: A Comparative perspective”. He had emphasized on the complex relations between European Union and the African nations. According to him the relations between them are diverse, comprehensive and multilayered. They are multi dimensional in partnership and have evolved from the colonial to the contemporary world. He had also mentioned about the economic partnership between EU and Africa and integrating Africa with the rest of the world. He had concluded with a statement that Europe must reinvent and reinforce itself, if it wants to have a partnership with Africa in this era where alternative Asian powers are gaining prominence.

The second paper presented in this session was presented by **Dr. D.K. Giri** titled “India and Africa in Europe”. Dr. Giri had continued from Dr. Moosa’s presentation. He had discussed the current problems besetting European Union internally that has also has an impact on its

policies internationally. He had talked about the institutional evolution and institutional building by EU in Africa. In conclusion he had discussed EU's developmental policy towards Africa and EU's presence in Africa.

Dr Sheetal Sharma had presented the next paper on the title "Indian Migrants in European Colonies". She had traced the causes of migration, trajectories, regions from where the migration had originated and the destination where it led. She had analysed the stories of migrants in the European colonies. She had also mentioned a term called 'Pride and Prejudice' regarding Indian migrants in Africa. She had also mentioned the story of 'Dukhee Gungah', whose story reflected a journey being an indentured labourer to being the richest man in Mauritius upon his death.

The last paper of the second session was presented by **Dr. Arvind Kumar** on the title, "India Africa forum summit: potential and opportunities". He had talked about the bilateral framework of cooperation between India and Africa. He had also compared different tangents of practice of connect between India and china with Africa. Furthermore he had mentioned India's focus on soft power diplomacy like capacity building; building medical facilities as compared to china's technical and economic connect. He had concluded with the statement that the India Africa forum summit is blueprint of India-Africa cooperation and development

Session 3: India and Africa relations and this session was chaired by Dr. Eon Kim.

Prof SN Malakar had presented the first paper of the session titled "India and Madagascar relations: An Afro-Asian connects". He had talked about the long historical ties with five major island nations and especially Madagascar, wherein he highlighted the fact that Indian diaspora largely dominates Madagascar's economy by contributing 50 percent for its GDP. He had concluded his paper by mentioning the new opportunities for strengthening the developmental paradigm between India and Madagascar.

Dr. Brian Jackson presented his paper titled "Indian Ocean Historiography: Indian-East Africa connections". He argued that one must be specific about any type of cultural analysis. According to him trade historiography and cultural historiography should be brought in together to better understand the analysis of the economic factors. He had also stated that trade brings out movement of people and in turn it affects the cultural identity. He had exemplified his whole argument through multiple texts and historiography traditions

The third speaker of this session was **Dr. Veronica Usacheva** who spoke on a very sensitive issue of “African Nationals in India: New questions to century old Indo-African ties”. She had highlighted a series of violent incidents towards African nationals. She had further added that all these incidents portray a negative image of India in Africa, and is transmitted through social media, which can pose a serious threat towards Indian Diaspora residing in various African countries. Dr. Veronica had urged the need for educating the students about the historical ties between both nations and to promote more people to people interaction that could help in mitigating such problems.

The last paper presented in this session was titled “Asian Tycoon Investment on Land in Africa: Imagination and reality” and was presented by **Prof Yaruigam Awungshi**. He had highlighted that the global food crisis of 2008 as teaming cause that had triggered a new arena of investment for hungry Asian Tycoons in Africa. He had argued that Ethiopia had lots of potential to become a larger growing economy but could not succeed to the extent. He had also brought out into notice the national policy of Ethiopian government, Agriculture development led industrialisation (ADLI). He had concluded by citing various reasons of failure of the project, especially the lack of commitment and fulfilment of policies laid including the concept of ‘collective settlement’.

This session concluded the proceedings of the first day.

Conference proceedings, Day 2

Session 4: India- Africa relations and China, this session was chaired by Prof Aparajita Biswas.

Dr. M. Venkataraman was the first speaker who spoke on “China-Africa economic and political relations and implications to African Democracy”. In this paper he has given a broad perspective on the rise of china as an economic power and also the scope of democracy in Africa. He raised a question of reversals and provided arguments to it. It was highlighted in his presentation that China’s presence in Africa is successful and it can be viewed through its Foreign Policy posture laid on five important principles. He concluded by saying that through this engagement there is Africa’s gain and the implications are multifaceted.

The next speaker of the session was **Dr. Binod Kumar Mishra**, who explained the reasons of “competition between India and China with reference to the Resource Constraints and its fulfilled by African Continent”. He argued that it’s not the economic interest rather its

political interest of China to have engagement with Africa which is evident by its serious strategy to become a major power in 2049. He further elucidated that China just lacks the gain of acceptability in this regard and India should be careful in articulating its policies so that it's no less in securing an important position in Africa and the world.

The last speaker of the session was **Dr. Bijay Pratihari**. He first drew conclusions from the previous speakers and agreed that there is lots of love and Cooperation between China and Africa be its economic or political engagement. He further emphasised various factors that have helped China to have a profound influence in Africa in last three decades. He then talked about its implication, such as it has led to remarkable transformation in China's Foreign Policy. In Conclusion a concern was raised by Dr. Pratihari that manufacturing sector of China can have a negative impact on African Business.

Session 5: India-Africa Relations and Japan, this session was chaired by Prof Yaruingham.

The very first speaker of the session was **Prof Kenneth King** who spoke on "Japan's Changing Engagement with Africa with reference to the human development dimension" where he firstly summarised the history of aid in Asia and Africa. He then elucidated about the Japan's 3X factor's that has helped African countries to gain overall. Prof. King emphasised on people to people interaction. One of the core question raised by him was Japan in India partnership to a Japan and India in Africa partnership i.e. moving from a recipient to a donor through the vision documents of AAGC.

The next speaker was **Prof Srabani Roy Choudhary**. She spoke on "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor: A New Direction to Japan-India Relations" where she brought out the concept of confluence of sea that has helped moved Japan to whole of Africa. She further emphasised upon the overriding goals of enhancing growth and interaction between and within Asia and Africa. It was then talked about objectives of Japan and India on AAGC- Vision documents, where Prof. Roy emphasised on Japan's renewed commitment and the Quality Africa. And the Focus shift objective of India to few African countries to become PAN African. She concluded by highlighting the convergence of strategies of Japan-India partnership.

The third speaker was **Dr. Sushmita Rajwar**. She talked about "Japan and Africa Opportunities for India". She mentioned about Japanese foreign policy towards Africa and how Japanese foreign policy was severely criticised by the Afro-Asian bloc, when it

continued its trade with Rhodesia despite the economic sanctions imposed by the UNSC. She also mentioned their engagement through TICAD. TICAD has been an evolving element in Japan's long-term commitment to fostering peace and stability in Africa through collaborative partnerships. She talked about Asia Africa Growth Corridor 2017 and also discussed how these engagements between Japan and Africa would bring out opportunities that lie for India that already enjoys a goodwill in the African Continent.

The last speaker was **Dr. Bashabi Gupta**. She talked about "Japan and Africa Relations: New forms of International Cooperation in a Globalised World". She mentioned that globalised world incorporates new flows of capital, skills and international cooperation's across the world, a scenario in which Africa occupies a major space. She looked at TICAD- a process in 1993, an effort that has now become a cornerstone of Japanese foreign policy towards Africa. She focused on Japan's relations with Africa in the Post World War II era and its recent efforts at repositioning as a premier development partner in Afro-Asian relations thereby aiming to regain its relevance in the debate on international cooperation in Africa.

Session 6: India-Africa Relations and South Korea, the chair of this session was Dr. Veronica Usacheva

The first speaker was **Dr. Eun Kyung Kim**. She spoke on "Korea-Africa Trade Relations: Implications of Barriers and Benefits". She started with a question- Is Korea's choice of trade partners in Africa strategic? She discussed with a comparison about where does South Korea export to. South Korea exports to Africa till 2016 was 13.1 billion dollars. She also compared China, Japan exports to Africa. She also focused on crude oil and liquefied gases as her research subject with Korea's partners. She talked about three exporter factors-political instability, oil production and export tariff. Her implication was- Is Korea mindful of choosing trade partners with Africa.

The last speaker was **Dr. Suweon Kim**. She spoke on "Africa and two Koreas: The reverse paths of virtual connections". She said while the African-East Asian Connection stretches back to the travel by Zheng He, it was understood mainly in the context of physical mobility, such as trade, investment, migration and travel. She focused specifically on South Korea, North Korea in Southern Africa where the metamorphosis of Juche ideology is still present in elite political discourses. She mentioned that Korea's engagement today is mainly focused on Soft Power. South and North Korea's ideologies sometimes overlaps but sometimes it

contrasts. She mentioned that Africa has been a critical diplomatic stage for both Koreas due to its relative political neutrality compared to the first and second World, and its impact has been significant both locally and internationally.

Session 7: India-Africa Relations, the chair of this session was Dr. Nivedita Ray.

The first speaker was **Dr. Safia Mehedi**. She talked about “Asian Intervention in Africa’s Infrastructure Development”. She mentioned, Africa is witnessing an increase in its social and economic indicators. Many challenges are their especially in infrastructure where there is persistent deficit. She talked about how Africa can benefit from the Asian experience vis-à-vis investment in infrastructure and how Asia can be part of the African development process.

The second speaker was **Dr. Bobby Luthra Sinha**. She talked about “Newer way to look back while moving ahead: Expelled Ugandan Indians, the Swiss Intervention and an Indo-African Perspective”. She discussed how the Ugandan Indians were expelled and did not have a stake. She mentioned the story where the Ugandan Indians were not considered part of the Indian national history either as they migrated before the country became independent. Nonetheless, countries as Switzerland took lead in recognising the incident as a grave international humanitarian crisis. Her whole idea was to look back while strategically planning the moves ahead.

The third speaker was **Dr. Sabiha Alam**. She talked about “Governing Climate Change: The need for an Afro-Asian Perspective”. She mentioned Africa’s “growth miracle” and its associated resurgence is being challenged by climate change and other environmental stresses. Food security is the greatest challenge of the nation. Natural calamities of the nature in Africa are a reality and not a future. She addressed that problem of imbalance between food production and food imports, investments in agricultural infrastructure and revamping of institutions to meet the challenges of climate change in a globalised but unequal world. She also mentioned the interest of the Asian powers in meeting the challenges of climate change governance.

The fourth speaker was **Prof. Tanuja Singh**. She talked about “India Africa Relations: A Vision for New Era”. She talked about India-Africa relation in the new era- as Africa is changing and resources are rich which gives opportunities to the western world. The consumerism is growing fast in Africa. Africa’s goodwill towards India springs from what

India claims to have done for Africa. The main emphasis was on trade relations focusing on imports and exports between both the nations. She mentioned about more sustainable partnerships and public-sector initiatives.

The fifth speaker was **Mr. B.K. Pandey**. His topic was on “India-Africa Trade and Investment Relations”. He mentioned about the India’s Development model where Asia and Africa are playing an important role. This model gives renewed legitimacy to economic model followed by many Asian states. He highlighted the Indian model of Afro-Asian Cooperation in the context of broad Afro-Asian perspective which is based on mutual benefit through a consultative process and through diverse initiatives.

The last speaker was **Dr. Kamla Kumari**. She talked about “Russia-Africa Relations in the changing Dynamics of Geopolitics”. She mentioned how Russia Africa relation is different whether in the bilateral or in the multilateral context. Different land masses have often defined new geopolitical constructs. She briefly mentioned the Indian presence in Russia. She highlighted the strategy of combining historical moralism with present day which makes Russia an important player in Africa. She also mentioned the current trends and the greater involvements which leave an abundance of scope for Russia and Africa relations.

Valedictory Address

The session was chaired by Prof. Rashmi Doraiswamy, Off. Director of the Academy of International Studies, JMI. The rapporteurs’ report was also presented.

Ambassador Shashank, Former Foreign Secretary, Government of India delivered the valedictory address. He stated that at the academic level and NGO level, there should be cooperation on ongoing issues concerning Africa. There should be partnership with other Asian countries and also monetary and technical assistance from Japan and other countries. Island nation/regions should have proper academic needs and see how best they can be developed to establish ties. He said we have a continuous academic/scholarly engagement with many countries. On the issue of violent incidents against African nationals Ambassador Shashank, urged the need to implement policies as to how best the negativities among the African nationals residing India could be reduced as well as for the Indians residing in Africa. He further suggested that there should be more cooperation in various fields between both the partners for peaceful coexistence.