



BILATERAL RELATIONS
INDIA - PHILIPPINES

INTRODUCTION

India Philippines relations, also known as Indian-Filipino relations or Indo-Filipino relations, refers to the bilateral relations between the India and the Philippines. Diplomatic relations between India and the Philippines was established in 1949. India maintains an embassy in Manila, whilst the Philippines maintains one in New Delhi. A Treaty of Friendship was signed between the Philippines and India on 11 July 1952.



HISTORY

Early History

Indian elements in Philippine culture point to early relations between the two societies. However, some works posit that the influx of Indian cultural elements into the Philippines is understood only in terms of the developments in the intervening regions between these two areas, the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago, where there was an intensified process of Indian influences from the 2nd through the late 14th centuries CE.

Through the Srivijaya and Majapahit empires, Indian influences would have reached the Philippines from the 10th through the early 14th centuries, based on the events in these two regions, and through direct migration from the Indian subcontinent to the Philippines. Artifacts of Indian orientation have been found in a lot of islands in the Philippines.

The golden image of the female Bodhisattva which was found in Agusan, was related to the development of Buddhism in Southeast Asia dating back to the late 13th and 14th centuries. The introduction of Sanskrit words and literature may be dated to the 10th and 12th centuries. Until now, Sanskrit words are still found in abundance in various Philippine languages.

Then there is the folk narrative among the Maranao, known as Maharadia Lawana which shows an Indian character and whose story is very similar to the Indian epic Ramayana. The existence of rajanates in Philippine classic history, especially in Cebu and Butuan, also points to heavy influences from Indian cultures. Hinduism was also prevalent in various societies in the Philippines, notably in central and southern islands, along with the banks of Manila Bay and Laguna de Bay.

Colonial Era

During the period 1762-1764, during the various Anglo-Spanish wars, 600 Sepoy (or native Indian) troops arrived in the Philippines as part of the military expedition of the East India Company. When the British troops withdrew, many of the Sepoys mutinied and refused to leave. They settled in what is now Cainta, Rizal. The region in and around Cainta still has many Sepoy descendant.

During the 18th century, there was robust trade between Manila and the Coromandel Coast of Bengal, involving Philippine exports of tobacco, silk, cotton, indigo, sugar cane and coffee.

Post World War II era

The Philippines established diplomatic relations with India on 26 November 1949.[5] The first Philippine envoy to India was the late Foreign Secretary Narciso Ramos.

Five years after India's independence in 1947, the Philippines and India signed a Treaty of Friendship on 11 July 1952 in Manila to strengthen the friendly relations existing between the two countries. Soon after, the Philippine Legation in New Delhi was established and then elevated to an embassy.

However, due to foreign policy differences as a result of the bipolar alliance structure of the Cold War, the development of bilateral relations was stunted. It was only in 1976 that relations started to normalize when Aditya Vikram Birla, one of India's successful industrialists, met with then President Ferdinand E. Marcos to explore possibilities of setting up joint ventures in the Philippines. This resulted in the establishment of Indo-Philippine Textile Mills, Inc. (Indo-Phil), then the largest Indian investment in the country. Indo-Phil currently employs 2,000 Filipino workers and supplies 40% of Philippine domestic demand for yarn.

The Trade Agreement between the Philippines and India was signed on 29 May 1979. In 1995, following the first Philippine Trade Mission to India, a Joint Working Group and a Joint Business Council were set up to assess and identify potentials for trade as well as identify new areas for collaboration. Since then, bilateral meetings have been held regularly.

21st Century Relations

Policy Consultation Talks between the two countries were established in 2000. The talks, which are held annually and conducted by senior officials of the foreign ministries of the two countries, aimed at discussing bilateral issues and regional and international issues of common concern.

Both countries signed a Joint Declaration for Co-operation to Combat International Terrorism to complement the ASEAN-India Joint Declaration to Combat International Terrorism which was adopted by the Heads of Government and States of ASEAN and India on 8 October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia. The declaration seeks to enhance intelligence and information sharing on counter-terrorism measures, strengthen capacity-building efforts through training and education, capability and readiness, including training and technical assistance; and to continue working together in the fight against the cyber crime and terrorist misuse of cyber space.

The first RP-India Security Dialogue was held in Manila on 12 March 2004. The Philippines and India agreed to establish a security dialogue that would serve as a policy forum for sharing security assessments and for reviewing and giving direction to co-operation in bilateral/regional security and defence matters.

In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Philippines-India diplomatic relations, and pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 1924, the month of November 2009 was proclaimed as Philippines-India Friendship Month by then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

The ASEAN-India Free Trade Area agreement signed by India in 2009 also includes the Philippines as signatory.



JOINT COMMISSION ON BILATERAL CO-OPERATION

The agreement to establish a Joint Commission on Bilateral Co-operation was signed during the State Visit to India of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on 5 October 2007. The establishment of the Joint Commission on Bilateral Co-operation aims to further strengthen and develop the co-operation in the field of trade, economic, scientific, technological and other fields of co-operation. The meeting of the Joint Commission will be co-chaired by the two countries' Ministers for Foreign Affairs who will meet once every two years.

The inaugural session of the Joint Commission was held on 15 March 2011, co-chaired by Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert F. Del Rosario, and was held in New Delhi. During the meeting both sides agreed to move forward on co-operative initiatives in various fronts (trade, agriculture, defence).

During the 2018 ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi, where the Delhi Declaration was signed, Philippines-India relations was one of the two most focal bilateral discussions made. India is targeting billions of investments in Philippine markets, notably in the pharmaceutical, information technology, energy, and transportation which would lead to the creation of 10,000 jobs.



CULTURAL RELATIONS

Filipino culture had Indian influences. About 30 percent of the Tagalog language were loanwords from Sanskrit. The use of brass, bronze, copper and tin in Philippine decorative arts and metal works also had Indian origin. Early Filipino literature and folklore also had Indian influences such as the Maranao epic of Darangan and the Ifugao tale of Balituk. The Philippine folk belief regarding eclipses, where some narrates that the dragon called Iha bites the moon or sun to cause the phenomenon is related to the Indian belief regarding the being Rahu from Hindu tradition.



MILITARY RELATIONS

The Philippines supported India's candidature for the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the term 2011-12 and there is regular consultation between delegations of both countries in the UN and other multilateral fora. Several Foreign Service officers from the Philippines have attended the ASEAN diplomats' course that is held at the Foreign Service Institute in India. Indian navy and coast guard ships regularly visit the Philippines and hold consultations with their counterparts.

INS Satpura and INS Kadmatt visited Manila from 3-6 October 2017, Indian Coast guard Ship ICGS Samarth visited Manila from 7-10 January 2017, INS Sahyadri and INS Shakti visited Manila on a goodwill visit to Subic Bay from 30 May -2 June 2016, INS Sahyadri visited Manila from 1-4 November 2015, and from 20 to 23 August 2014, ICGS Samudra Paheredar visited Manila from 19 to 22 September 2014, a flotilla of four Indian ships from the Eastern Fleet, namely INS Shakti, INS Satpura, INS Ranjit and INS Kirch visited Manila on a goodwill visit from 12 to 16 June 2013.

The participation of officers of the armed forces of both countries in various specialized training courses in each other's countries has intensified, as have visits by National Defence College (NDC) delegations, including the first-ever NDC visit from the Philippines to India. A delegation from the College of Defence Management of India visited the Philippines from 23 to 31 October 2015; a delegation from Army High Command Course of India visited the Philippines from 10 to 14 November 2014.

Government of India sent an Indian Air Force flight with relief material for the victims of super typhoon 'Haiyan, which struck the Philippines on 7-8 November 2013. Following the tragic loss of life, livelihood and property as a result of the typhoon Pablo/Bopha, which struck the southern Philippines in December 2012, the Government of India provided disaster relief assistance of \$200,000 to the Philippines Government and \$100,000 as disaster relief assistance following the October 2013 earthquake in Bohol.

India announced an immediate relief assistance of \$500,000 (equivalent to 25 million pesos) on 11 July 2017 for the relief and rehabilitation efforts underway in the city of Marawi which had come under siege on May 23, 2017, after armed terrorists belonging to the Maute group, owing allegiance to ISIS took over the city. Ships from the Indian Navy and Coast Guard regularly visits the Philippines.

TRADE RELATIONS

According to India's Ministry of External Affairs, India-Philippines trade is at around \$1.6 billion. Economic relations have grown gradually over the years. Despite the impact of the India-ASEAN FTA in Goods, the India-Philippines trade has, so far, been at around \$1.981 billion in 2016-17. In the year 2016-17, India's exports amounted to worth US\$1487 million and imports worth US\$494 million. India-Philippines trade in 2018-19 has been at around US \$ 2.32 billion (Exports from India to Philippines-US \$ 1743 million and Imports from Philippines by India- US \$ 581 million).

However, a number of growth drivers suggest a major and sustained growth in two-way trade and investment, helped by the conclusion of the India-ASEAN Trade in Services and Investment Agreements. Indian investment in the Philippines is mainly in the areas of textiles, garments, IT&ITes, steel, Airports, chemicals, Automobiles and pharmaceuticals.



INDIAN COMMUNITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

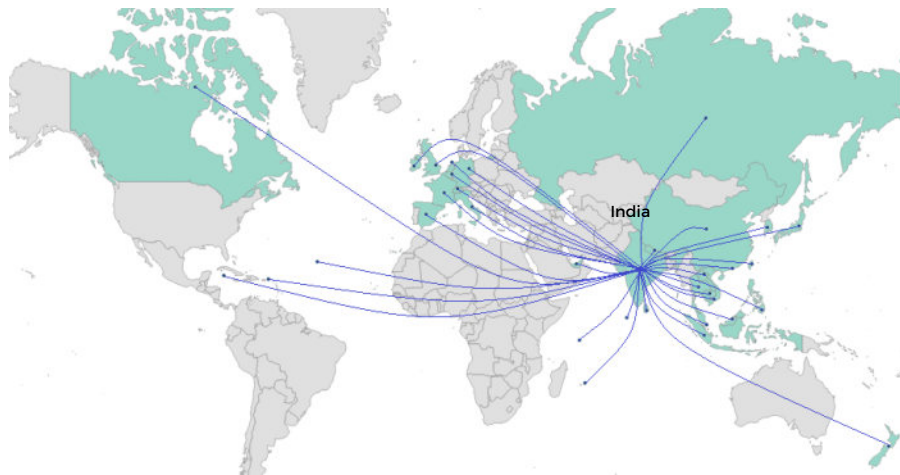
The Indian community in the Philippines, according to the Bureau of Immigration, is estimated to be about 1, 20,000. Around 5,000 persons of Indian origin have acquired Filipino citizenship. Punjabis and Sindhis, constitute the bulk of the community. Since the last ten years, there are a growing number of professionals, estimated in the range of about 1500 persons, who are working in the Philippines, in organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, International Rice Research Institute, UN agencies, as also in multinational corporations, BPOs and with Indian joint ventures in the country.

The Philippines is also beginning to emerge as a destination for Indian students. There are more than 10,000 Indian students pursuing medical courses in various universities in the Philippines. Currently nearly, 50 per cent of the students at the prestigious Asian Institute of Management in Manila are from India. The flying schools are also attractive as instructions are in English and students do not have to learn the local language.

Several universities in the Philippines, such as the University of Santo Tomas, the University of the Philippines, the University of northern Philippines, the University of the Visayas, Adamson University, the University of Mindanao and others have opened special 'India chapters' in their prestigious libraries, which houses the collection of books on India [gifted through the Public Diplomacy division of the Ministry of External Affairs]. A bust of Mother Teresa has been installed in the University of Santo Tomas, gifted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.



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