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BILATERAL RELATIONS  
**INDIA - NIGERIA**

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Republic of India and the Federal Republic of Nigeria have built strategic and commercial ties. Both countries recognise English as an official language and they are both members of the Commonwealth of Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement, having a shared history of being under the rule of the British Empire. India has a High Commission in Abuja and a Consulate in Lagos, and Nigeria has a High Commission in New Delhi. Indian business firms have invested estimated \$15 billion in Nigeria. India is Nigeria's leading investors, with a investment base of about \$20 billion. The figures on the amount of Nigeria's investment in India if any are not known. India-Africa trade has slowly been increasing with trade volume of USD 55.9 billion in year 2020-2021. The distance between Nigeria and India is 7607 kilometres.

India is the third largest consumer of oil after the United States and China. With the rapid growth of the Indian economy that is the fifth largest in the world today the demand of oil has greatly increased. India imports oil from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Russia, USA, Kazakhstan, Iran, UAE and Nigeria.



# BACKGROUND

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India's relations with Africa date back to 30 BCE when there was trade between Egypt (under Roman Emperor Augustus) and India. Up to 120 Roman ships set sail each year from Myos Hormos (Al-Qusayr) in Roman Egypt to India. In the same period, Indian dhows frequented East African shores selling Indian handloom products, spices and other goods. Archaeological evidence recently found in Egypt shows that Indian merchants that traded with the Mediterranean region were inhabitants of the Coromandel Coast of India. That exhibits the extent of India-Africa relations at that time.

Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama (1497 CE), in search of a short trade route to India, was helped in his journey by Indian merchants and traders on East African shores. Some 20,000 black Africans known as Siddis were brought by Arabs to India as far back as the 7th century. These black Africans have integrated well and are confined to small villages in the Indian states of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat, and a few live in the city of Hyderabad. These Africans are descendants of the Bantu peoples of East Africa. Some Africans were brought to India by the Portuguese and later by the British. Other Africans came to India as merchants, sailors and mercenaries.

Upon Britain gaining control of India, 34,000 Indians, mostly Punjabi Sikhs, went to East Africa as bonded labourers in 1896 to build the hazardous 660 mile long Uganda Railway. For every mile of the rail line built, four Indian labourers lost their lives, with a total count of 2,493 killed. In year 1898, Indian labourers that worked on a rail bridge over the Tsavo River in Kenya were terrorized by two man-eating lions that killed an estimated 135 Indian labourers.

India gained independence in 1947; Nigeria followed and gained independence in 1960. India strongly supported independence of African countries from colonial rule and established its diplomatic mission in 1958 - two years before Nigeria officially gained independence from British rule. Soon after Nigerian independence, the Indian government got involved in helping establish a military and several other projects in Nigeria. India aided Nigeria in building military establishments like the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) at Kaduna and the Naval College at Port Harcourt, along with other military training facilities. Several Nigerian military personnel attended the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) in Wellington, Tamil Nadu, India. The current President of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari attended the DSSC in the 1970s. Other Nigerian presidents who attended the same college are Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (1965) and Ibrahim Babangida (1964). A few other top Nigerian military officers also attended India's Defence Services Staff College. Upon Nigeria gaining independence, Indian businesses set up shops in Nigeria.

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Both nations possess diverse natural and economic resources and are the largest economies in their respective regions. Both are members of the Commonwealth of Nations. Currently India's concessional line of credit to Africa is almost \$9 billion, with present projects taking up \$7.4 billion. Over 25,000 African students including Nigerians make use of Indian scholarships, and India sent a grant of \$10 million to the UN to fight Ebola and another \$2 million to Guinea to tackle the disease.



# DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

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India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Nigeria in September 1962 to meet Nigeria's first Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa. Later two Nigerian Presidents were Chief Guests at India's Republic Day celebrations i.e. in 1983 President Shehu Shagari and in 2000 on India's 50th Republic Day celebrations was President Olusegun Obasanjo. Nigerian leaders regularly visit India with President Obasanjo in November 2004, Vice President Goodluck Jonathan in November 2007. Vice President Goodluck Jonathan was also at the first India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April 2008. During a State visit to Nigeria by Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in October 2007, 'India and Nigeria adopted the Abuja Declaration for Strategic Partnership. In year 2015 Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari was in New Delhi in October to participate in the 'Third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III)' that was attended by 50 African nations in New Delhi. Following the summit there was a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Buhari that enabled the two nations to review their bilateral relations. On the occasion Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced \$600m (£393m) in assistance for development projects in Africa at the Summit. PM Modi also announced a concessional credit of \$10 billion to Africa that included Nigeria and 50000 Indian scholarships to African students at the third India-Africa Forum Summit.

Later Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari visited Nigeria from 26 to 29 September 2016 and met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo that gave both sides another opportunity to deepen their bilateral cooperation and friendship. In year 2019 Senator Hadi Abubakar Sirika, Minister of State (Aviation) of Nigeria visited India from 14 to 15 January 2019 to attend the Global Aviation Summit in Mumbai on 15th January 2019. On the side lines of the summit, Senator Hadi Abubakar Sirika met with Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation of India. According to News Agency of Nigeria as part of plan to combat COVID-19 India donated \$50 million worth of essential medicines in July 2020 to Nigeria and other African countries. The seven tonnes of Indian consignments (586 cartoons) for Nigeria were received by Nigeria's Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire. India was the first Asian country to become a member of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). Between 2002 and 2021, India provided over US\$11 billion in concessions to African countries. India donated 150 metric tons of medical aid to 25 African countries, and supplied over 24.7 million doses of COVID vaccines to 42 countries in Africa including Nigeria as of February 2021.

# ECONOMIC RELATIONS

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India- Nigeria trade in 2018-19 amounted to US\$13.89 billion. Despite the ever present threat of Nigerian 'Boko Haram' terrorists organisation and 'Black Axe mafia' Indian firms are the second biggest employers in Nigeria after the Nigerian Federal Government. More than 135 Indian firms operate in Nigeria. Indian firm in Nigeria are in greatly diverse fields e.g. pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, electrical machinery and equipment, plastics, chemicals, etc. Some of the major companies include Bharti Airtel, Tata, Bajaj Auto, Birla Group, Kirloskar, Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Skipper, Godrej, Simba Group, NIIT, Aptech, New India Assurance, Bhushan Steel, KEC, Dabur, etc. Indian investment in Nigeria amounts to US\$15 billion and rising according to the Indian High Commission in Abuja. Indian exports to Nigeria during the period 2018-19 were US\$3 billion and India's imports from Nigeria during same period 2018-19 were worth US\$10.88 billion. Nigeria was the fifth biggest seller of crude oil and third biggest seller of LNG after Qatar and UAE in year 2020 to India. In year 2020-2021 USA stood second after Iraq as the biggest seller of crude oil to India. Indian exports to Nigeria are Pharmaceuticals, automobiles, cars, iron and steel, rice, plastics, clothes and fabrics, engineering equipment, and power sector components such as transformers, insulators and circuit breaker etc. India is Nigeria's biggest trading partner in Africa, with trade volume of about \$16.35 billion in year 2019-2020. India is Nigeria's leading investor, with a investment base of about \$20 billion. India-Africa trade has slowly been increasing with trade volume of USD 55.9 billion in year 2020-2021. India is the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investment of USD 54 billion. India is also the third largest trading partner of Africa after China and USA. India accounts for 6.4% of total African trade. Figures on the type and fields of Nigeria's investments into the Indian economy are unknown.

## OIL TRADE

India is the third largest oil consumer after USA and China. India uses 5.5 million barrels of oil per day. India buys crude oil from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Kazakhstan and UAE with significantly reduced amount from Nigeria in year 2021. In year 2020-2021 USA took second place in India's Oil imports with Iraq topping the list again. Since year 2018 India buys cheaper Basra Oil from Iraq and the crude oil purchased from West Africa including from Nigeria rank fifth in India's crude oil purchases. annually. India has recently bought oil from Brazil and Mexico also. In year 2022 India is expected to purchase US\$ 100 billion worth of crude oil much of it at present comes from Iraq, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

# CULTURAL RELATIONS

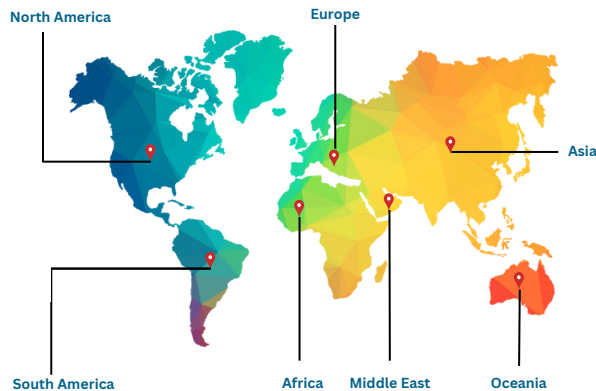
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Over 55000 Nigerians live in India, while estimated 25,000 Indian passport holders reside in Nigeria according to the Indian High Commission in Abuja..

There are frequent contact and visits between leaders of both countries at the highest level. Nigerian students started coming to India for higher education in year 1955 that was followed from 1960 onwards the Indian Council for Cultural programmes awarding scholarship that fully funded Nigerian Students to study in India The government of India launched a 'Study in India' portal in March 2018 to encourage deserving and bright student to study in India. In the 1970s- 1980s period there were Indian teachers, doctors, nurses and similar personnel working in Nigeria. An Indian 'Namaste Nigeria' cultural event was celebrated in Abuja on 5 May 2018 to which Nigerian Princess Ginika Nwafor-Orizu, Chief Cultural Officer and Otunba Olusegun Runsewe, Director General, Nigerian National Council were the Chief Guests. The Indian Cultural Association (ICA) holds functions in Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Kano and Ibadan. There is an Indian Language School in Lagos, for Indian language learning. There are over 55000 Nigerians living and working in India. Nigerians reside in cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Goa, Hyderabad and Jaipur. Neither the Indian police nor the Nigerian High Commission in New Delhi have the exact figure on the number of Nigerians residing in India today or on the jobs Nigerians do in India. Few Nigerians have married locals and settled in India.



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