

## **India-Ethiopia Relations**

### **Political Relations:**

Historical linkages between India and Ethiopia go back to about 2,000 years. Trade between the two countries flourished during the ancient Axumite Empire in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Indian traders were attracted to the ancient port of Adulis in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD trading silk and spices for gold and ivory. The Hapshis were known to have arrived in India in the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Portuguese assisted the Christian King in Ethiopia to repel invaders, and with them came Indians from Goa. The first time the Indian troops came to Ethiopia was in 1868 as soldiers of Robert Napier, the British Commander –in –Chief in Bombay and the second time was in 1935 when Italy invaded the country.

Soon after achieving independence, a goodwill mission led by Sardar Sant Singh was sent to Ethiopia. Diplomatic relations at legation level were established in 1948. Full diplomatic relations were established in 1950 with Sardar Sant Singh as the first Ambassador.

A sizeable Indian community consisting of merchants and artisans, settled down in this country in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Post-war Ethiopia, under Emperor Haile Selassie (1941-1974), saw a large number of Indian teachers in Ethiopia, even in the remotest parts. This, more than anything else, explains the tremendous goodwill that India enjoys in Ethiopia.

An agreement to establish a Joint Commission at the Foreign Minister's level was signed in July 2007. The first meeting of the Joint Commission was held in New Delhi in December 2010. A Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations was also signed in July 2007. The first round of Consultations was held in New Delhi in March 2010 and the second meeting was held in Addis Ababa in January 2012.

### **Important Bilateral Visits**

Emperor Haile Selassie visited India in 1956 and again in 1968. Col. Haile Mariam Mengistu, visited India in 1983 for the NAM Summit. He later paid a State visit to India in 1985. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi visited India for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Federalism in November 2007. He again visited India for the 1<sup>st</sup> India Africa Forum Summit in 2008. He also participated in the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit in February 2009 and February 2011. Former Foreign Minister (present PM), Hailemariam Desalegn visited India for the first meeting of the Joint Commission in December 2010.

From India, President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan visited Ethiopia in 1965. This was followed by the visit of Vice President Zakir Hussain in 1967 and President V.V. Giri in 1972. Smt. Indira Gandhi visited Ethiopia as Minister of Information and Broadcasting in 1964. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, then External Affairs Minister, visited Ethiopia in July

2007. Minister of State, Ms. Preneet Kaur, visited Ethiopia on 27-31 January 2011 to attend the African Union Summit. She again visited Ethiopia on 1-2 September 2012 to attend funeral of Late PM Meles Zenawi. PM Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Addis Ababa during the India Africa Forum Summit –II held in May 2011, which was the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Ethiopia. Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Anand Sharma and External Affairs Minister, Sh. S.M.Krishna, also visited Ethiopia for IAFS-II. Vice president, Sh. Hamid Ali Ansari, visited Ethiopia on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2013, to attend the Golden Jubilee celebration of the African Union.

### **Economic and Commercial Relations:**

Today, economic and commercial relations are the most important plank of our relationship. A trade agreement, signed by the two countries in 1997 provides for the establishment of a Joint Trade Committee (JTC) and meetings are held from time to time. The Joint Business Council was established in June 1997 through an agreement between FICCI/ASSOCHAM and the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce. A Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement was signed on 5 July 2007. Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was signed in May 2011.

### **Bilateral Trade:**

Up to October 2013, India-Ethiopia bilateral trade was US \$ 1.082 billion. India's exports was worth US \$ 1.053 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 \$ 28.210 million comprising mainly pulses, semi-precious stones, leather, cotton, oil seeds and spices.

### **Bilateral Investments**

India is the second largest foreign investor in Ethiopia with approved investment of US \$ 4.8 billion. Of this, an estimated US\$ 2.5 billion is already on the ground or in the pipeline. There are 622 Indian projects approved by the Ethiopian Investment Agency in Ethiopia. About 34% of Indian investment is in the field of agriculture.

### **Development Partnership**

Ethiopia values India as an important partner in its development efforts. Apart from commercial relations, India's main relationship with Ethiopia is in cooperation in capacity building in Ethiopia. The pan African e-Network project, one of India's most successful flagship projects in Africa, was launched in Ethiopia in July 2007 and includes the Tele-Education Centre at Addis Ababa University and the Tele-Medicine Centre at the Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa. Our ITEC programme launched in 1969 with just 5 slots has increased to 220 slots in 2013-14. India also offers Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) 50 scholarships to Ethiopian students for University

studies in India. Around 1500 Indian academics are teaching in various colleges and universities throughout Ethiopia.

### **Lines of Credit (LOC) to Ethiopia**

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).

### **Cultural Cooperation:**

A Cultural Agreement was signed in 1983 between India and Ethiopia. The Indian Council of Cultural Relations sponsors visits of cultural troupes to various cities of Ethiopia. The recent visit include: Punjabi music and dance troupe ( 2010), Siddi Goma” troupe (2011), Fusion Band ‘Shwaas’(2012). Indian film festivals are also organized from time to time. An Indian film festival was organized again at the Italian Cultural Centre in 2010 and at the National Theater in May 2011.

### **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, even in the most remote parts. The numbers of the Indian community fell very significantly during the Derg regime. Presently, the Indians in Ethiopia are over 10,000 – the majority being the new investors and their employees, and professors in local Universities.

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