

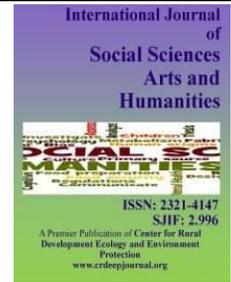
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## Review Paper

# India's relations with South Africa in the post Apartheid era: Emerging Areas of Co-operation

N. Surjitkumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & Human Rights, & Head, Department of Tribal Studies, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Regional Campus, Manipur, (A Central University), Imphal, India.

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Corresponding Author:  
N. Surjitkumar

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### ABSTRACT

South Africa's foreign policy towards India has been a positive approach since the end of the apartheid period. The two countries have been maintaining a bonhomie relation in different areas of cooperation. One of the most important areas of cooperation is the IBSA initiative. The Indian Diasporas have also been an important factor in the relations between two countries. It has been found that in the post apartheid era, there has been a tremendous scope for Indian settlers to rise up with the structural changes in South African society, polity and economy. The paper will examine India-South Africa relations in the post cold war period particularly the emerging areas of co-operation between the two countries.

## Introduction

India's relation with South Africa has changed in the post cold war period since early 1990s. The relation between the two countries was restored after a gap of over four decades, with the opening of a Cultural Centre in Johannesburg in May 1993. Subsequently, Nelson Mandela visited India in January 1995 as the Chief Guest of India's Republic day celebration; again in March 1997 the Red Fort Declaration on Strategic Partnership between India and South Africa was signed. "Focus Africa Plan" of the government of India in the year 2001-2002, has focused initiative to strengthen Indo-African Cooperation.

A new and exciting dimension was added to the India-South Africa relationship when the foreign ministers of India, South Africa and Brazil met in Brasilia for the launch of India Brazil South Africa dialogue forum (IBSA) on June 6, 2003. Some of the important areas of co-operation between India and South Africa are in the field of economic and defence co-operations, political relations and the exchange of visits, co-operation in Indian Ocean, co-operation in UN reforms and Peace Keeping Operations and South-South Co-operation. India and South Africa have developed in various fields in the recent years.

The paper will examine India-South Africa relations in the post cold war period particularly the emerging areas of co-operation between the two countries.

## India-South Africa relations: a Background

India's relation with the Republic of South Africa has grown from strength to strength over the years. This is due to historical links, mutual support of their struggle against colonialism and racism, the presence of Indian diaspora in South Africa and common perceptions of major global issues.<sup>1</sup>

India had been in the forefront of the international community in supporting the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa ever since Mahatma Gandhi started his Satyagraha movement in South Africa a century ago. India was the first country to sever trade relations with the apartheid Government in 1946, and imposed a complete - diplomatic, commercial, cultural and sports- embargo on South Africa. India worked consistently to put the issue of apartheid on the agenda of the UN, NAM and other multilateral organizations and for the imposition of comprehensive international sanctions against South Africa. The ANC maintained a representative office in New Delhi from 1960s

<sup>1</sup> Aparajita Biswas, *Post Apartheid South Africa, Its Relations with the Neighbouring Countries*, (New Delhi, 2007), p. 146.

onwards.<sup>2</sup> Following the commencement of talks between the South African Government and the ANC, India's relations with South Africa were restored after a gap of over four decades, with the opening of a Cultural Centre in Johannesburg in May 1993. Formal diplomatic and consular relations with South Africa were restored in November 1993 during the visit to India of the then South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha.<sup>3</sup> In the light of the above background, India's relations with South Africa in the post-apartheid period have improved considerably. Subsequently, Nelson Mandela visited India in January 1995 as the Chief Guest of India's Republic day celebration; again in March 1997 the Red Fort Declaration on Strategic Partnership between South Africa and India was signed.

It was during President Nelson Mandela's visit to India in March 1997, that a declaration was made at the historic Red Fort in New Delhi. This basically involves enhancing bilateral co operations between South Africa and India. "Focus Africa Plan" of the government of India in the year 2001-2002, has focused initiatives to strengthen Indo-African Cooperation in the area of trade, technology transfer, investment opportunities, information technology, health care etc. South Africa and India relationship has acquired confidence after President Thabo Mbeki came to India on a five day official visit in October, 2003.

### **Emerging Areas of Cooperation between India and South Africa**

The emerging areas of cooperation between South Africa and India are as follows:

(i) Economic Cooperation, (ii) Defense Cooperation, (iii) Political Relations and Exchange of Visits, (iv) UN reforms and Peace-keeping Operations, (v) Cooperation in Indian Ocean, (vi) Culture, Tourism and Multilateral Co operations.

#### **i] Economic Cooperation**

India's economic and commercial relationship with South Africa, in many ways can be described as unique. An active trading relationship existed even before India's independence in 1947 and India was a major supplier of commodities like jute and tea to South Africa. However, India was among the first countries to impose sanctions against South Africa following the introduction of apartheid in 1948. This led to a virtually complete secession of bilateral economic relations until the establishment of democratic government in 1994. Since then, economic relations have been growing rapidly and momentum has specially picked up over the last five years.

South Africa, in particular, Johannesburg is the preferred location for a number of Indian companies that have based their Africa head quarters. Another important element of the growing bilateral economic relations is the relative complementarity

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<sup>2</sup> High Commission of India in South Africa "India-South Africa Relations", Pretoria, available at <http://www.indiainsouthafrica.com>

<sup>3</sup> A Consulate General was thereafter established in Johannesburg. The Indian High Commission in Pretoria was opened in May 1994, followed by the opening of the Consulate General in Durban in the same month. Since Parliament in South Africa meets in Cape Town, a permanent office of the High Commission was opened there in 1996.

between the two economies. The third aspect is the active exchange of business delegations, and the expanding institutional framework that underpins such exchanges.<sup>4</sup> In the economic sphere the total trade between India and South Africa has risen by leaps and bounds in the last five years. From US \$ 575.6 million in 1995-96 to about US\$ 2.5 billion in 2000 and it is expected to reach the 3 billion mark by next year. Starting from a relatively small base, bilateral trade has grown rapidly over the last few years rising from US \$ 1.8 billion in 2001-02 to US \$ 4.7 billion during 2006-07.<sup>5</sup> South Africa has shown interest in exchange of expertise in developing small scale and cottage industries.

The main items exported from India are textiles, leather hides, skins, chemicals, machinery and equipment, and vegetable products. Major imports from South Africa are – base metal and products, chemicals, wood pulp and paper and mineral products. Another important development has been the establishment of India-South Africa Commercial Alliance (ISCA). The terms of reference for the establishment of this alliance were signed during the visit of the then Prime Minister I.K. Gujaral to South Africa in October 1997.<sup>6</sup>

The first meeting of the alliance was held in Pretoria on December 3, 1998.<sup>7</sup> ISCA agreed on the need for a more structured approach to engagement, on the need for sectoral MoUs to be initiated to identify projects for cooperation and the need to conduct studies to identify complementarities and synergies for the formation of joint ventures. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is working as a secretariat for the alliance on the Indian side and has held discussions with the members of the industry to give concrete shape to the business opportunities between the two countries.

The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has also signed MoU for future cooperation with the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) in 1994. A number of Indian companies, viz. NSIC, EEPC, TEXPROCIL, CII, TATA, UB Group, DCM, SRF, Liberty Shoes, Ranbaxy, Torrent Pharmaceuticals, Thapar Group, Shriram Industrial Enterprises and a host of other small companies have already opened their offices in South Africa. While the Exim Bank and the State Bank of India have opened their offices in Johannesburg, Bank of Baroda has done so in Durban.<sup>8</sup> India is the eleventh largest investor in South Africa. "Made in India Show" organised by the High Commission of India and CII was held in Johannesburg in 1998. The show brought together about 100 Indian companies for an impressive

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<sup>4</sup> Consulate General of India, "India South Africa Economic Relations", Johannesburg, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> South Africa is India's largest market in Africa and our exports to South Africa have grown from just US \$ 352 million in 2001-02 to over US \$ 2.25 billion in 2006-07.

<sup>6</sup> Beri, n.9, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> The discussions were held on seven sectors of cooperation: Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, Engineering and equipment, Information technology, Mining, Housing and Infrastructure, Food Processing and Transportation.

<sup>8</sup> Beri, n.9, p. 5.

display of India's engineering, scientific and technical capacity. Poor air connectivity between India and South Africa, delays in processing of business visas and work permits required by Indian companies and creeping protectionism in sectors such as pharmaceuticals are some of key constraints that are being addressed at an institutional level.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1.** Bilateral trade figures between India and SA from 2001 to 2005

Fig. in M. Rands	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
India's Exports	2113.50	2943.26	3126.14	4547.26	7029.8
India's Imports	3300.03	4037.28	3350.32	3713.04	7393.8
Total Trade	<b>5413.53</b>	<b>6980.54</b>	<b>6476.46</b>	<b>8260.30</b>	<b>144423.6</b>

Source: South African customs, \* Excludes imports of Gold routed through international gold bourse.

**ii] Defence Cooperation**

Defence sector is one the oldest areas of co-operation between South Africa and India in the post 1994 period. There is significant potential for defence trade and joint ventures between South Africa and India. South Africa is the only major arms manufacturer and exporter on the continent. In 1994 the exports by the Armament Corporation of South Africa (Armscor)<sup>10</sup> amounted to R 1,097 million but by 1996-97 Armscor reported exports of only R302 million. In these changed circumstances there appears to be significant scope for cooperation between South Africa and India in defence research and production.<sup>11</sup>

In defence cooperation a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of defence equipment was signed between the two countries during South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's visit to India in December 1996.<sup>12</sup> At the time of Prime Minister, I. K. Gujral's visit in October 1997, the South African Defence Minister Joe Modise announced that the two nations would "enhance and intensify defence cooperation", with South Africa offering a whole range of military hardware to India.<sup>13</sup> In 1998, Gen. V. P. Malik, India's Chief of Staff announced that India had bought 90 Casspir mine protected armoured personnel carriers from South Africa's Reumehc OMC. South Africa supplied 155-mm gun ammunition worth \$47million at very short notice during the Kargil conflict in 1999.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Consulate General of India, n.11, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Armscor (or ARMSCOR), the Armaments Corporation of South Africa is a South African government supported weapon-producing conglomerate that was officially established in 1968 primarily as response to the international sanctions by the United Nations against South Africa that began in 1963 and were formalised in 1967.

<sup>11</sup> Beri, n.9, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Business Day*, Johannesburg, 12 December, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Specifically, the agreement was to supply ammunition for the 155 mm Bofors guns as well as avionics and night vision equipment.

<sup>14</sup> *Business Day*, Johannesburg, 4 May, 1998.

The Indo-South African Joint Committee on Defence cooperation was held in Pretoria in August 1998. During this meeting it was agreed that progress in the defence sector was a concrete manifestation of the desires of India and South Africa to build a strategic partnership between the two countries. Views were exchanged on the security environment in their respective regions and on issues and developments that affect regional security and stability.<sup>15</sup>

There has been keen interest shown by both sides towards maritime cooperation. An exchange of visits of naval ships between the two countries has taken place since 1994. India was a key participant in Exercise Blue Crane with South Africa and other SADC countries. This exercise took place at the SA Army Battle School Training Area in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa from April 7 to 30 1999.<sup>16</sup> Exercise Blue Crane was one of the largest peace support operations ever undertaken. It was of particular significance to Southern African countries wishing to evaluate their combined peace support capability. India provided the IL-76 aircraft to transport troops from Tanzania, Namibia, and Zambia and the Naval Ship INS Sujata formed the main communication platform for the naval exercise off the Durban coast.<sup>17</sup>

There has been exchange of visits at the level of Service Chiefs for promoting goodwill between the armed forces of South Africa and India. During 1998-99, the Indian Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited South Africa while the South African Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) made a visit to India. The South African Chief of Staff visited India in March 2000. A Defence Cooperation Agreement was signed by the two countries in September 2000. It has provided the framework for further strengthening cooperation in this sector. A large IAF contingent participated in a joint exercise 'Golden Eagle' in September-October, 2004.

India's participation in the last Aerospace and Defence Exhibition in Cape Town in September 2006 attracted considerable interest. Four Indian ships paid a goodwill visit to South Africa in June 2005 and INS Mumbai<sup>18</sup> visited Cape Town and Durban in September-October 2006. Training has emerged as an important new dimension of defence co-operation.<sup>19</sup> It is seen that defence is a key area of cooperation between South Africa and India in the post apartheid period.

**iii] Political Relations and Exchange of Visits**

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report*, Government of India, 1998-99, p.108.

<sup>16</sup> It consisted of six stages involving approximately 4000 members from the SADC countries of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

<sup>17</sup> Beri, n.9, p.6.

<sup>18</sup> The INS Mumbai (D62) is the third of the Delhi-class guided-missile destroyers in active-service with the Indian Navy.

<sup>19</sup> On request of the South African Navy, their submarine personnel are being trained in India. This cooperation is likely to continue; a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed in this regard by the two countries.

Against the background of India's consistent support to the anti-apartheid struggle, there has been a steady consolidation of India's close and friendly ties with South Africa, both bilaterally and through the trilateral IBSA Dialogue Forum. A number of bilateral agreements have been concluded between South Africa and India since the assumption of diplomatic relations in 1993 in diverse areas ranging from defence, culture, health, human settlements, public administration, science and technology and economic cooperation. The visit of Thabo Mbeki to India on December 1996 was equally significant. There were two prolonged objectives of his visit. Firstly, the political aspect of his visit was to consolidate the existing close relations with both the government and the people of India. The second thrust of the visit was to have purposeful interaction in the field of trade, investment, culture, science and technology.<sup>20</sup>

President Thabo Mbeki, accompanied by the First Lady and 11 Cabinet Ministers, visited India in October 2003. This was his second visit, but first as President of South Africa. Five important documents were signed on the occasion.<sup>21</sup> A Joint Declaration reaffirming the commitment of the two countries 'towards a strategic partnership, based on their shared values: democracy, economic development with social justice, and a just and equitable global order' was issued during the visit.

In April/ May 2004, the Vice President of India, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat visited South Africa. He attended the inauguration of the President of South Africa and celebration of 10 years of democracy. He also inaugurated the launch of the Centenary Celebrations of the Phoenix Settlement in Durban. His visit imparted further impetus to the already warm bilateral relations. The relation between the two countries received new boost when India committed US \$ 200 million assistance to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to be utilised through the credit lines for the project that can fulfill the NEPAD objectives.<sup>22</sup>

President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam visited South Africa in September 2004, the first visit by an Indian President. He was accompanied by the Minister for Social Empowerment and Justice Mrs. Meira Kumar. He held wide-ranging discussions with President Thabo Mbeki.<sup>23</sup> Speaking at the Pan African Parliament during the visit, President Kalam reaffirmed India's engagement with Africa. He announced Government of India's offer of creating a \$50 million-worth integrated satellite and fibre-optic wireless network for improved communication connectivity among the 53

African countries, which could be used for tele-education, tele-medicine and e-services.<sup>24</sup>

In March 2005, the then External Affairs Minister Shri Natwar Singh visited South Africa for the 2nd IBSA Ministerial meeting. Later in the month, Rao Inderjit Singh, MOS for External Affairs paid a bilateral visit. The India-South Africa Joint Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers was set up in 1994 to identify areas of mutually beneficial cooperation. Its 6th highly successful session took place in New Delhi on December 5-6, 2005. As PM was holding the portfolio of External Affairs, the meeting was chaired by Minister of State Rao Inderjit Singh and Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa Mr. Aziz Pahad.<sup>25</sup>

The Ministers reviewed the whole gamut of relations between the two countries, encompassing political, commercial and economic and defence matters as well as fields like science and technology, culture, education, health, different aspects of energy, information and communications technology and human resource development.<sup>26</sup> Other important matters discussed included the prospects of economic development, stability and security on the African continent.

#### iv] UN Reforms and Peacekeeping Operations

The UN reform is another important area where South Africa and India could co-operate to each other. An issue to which both South Africa and India attach the greatest importance is the reform and expansion of the UN Security Council. India believes that the reform and expansion of the UN Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories is central to the process to UN reform. India also believes that South Africa can play an important role in the overall process, within AU and in co-ordinated efforts of the AU and G-4.<sup>27</sup>

The idea of participating in UN peacekeeping operations was a hotly debated issue in South Africa. It was only in October 1998 that the South African Cabinet approved the white paper on peacekeeping where the rules of South African participation in international peace missions were established. India has been involved in a number of peacekeeping operations during the 50 years of its independence mainly in Africa. These include ONUC, MONUC (Congo), UNTAG (Namibia), ONUMOZ (Mozambique), UNITAF, UNOSOM II (Somalia), UNAMIR (Rwanda), UNOMIL (Liberia), UNAVEM, MONUA (Angola), and the most recent UN Mission in Sierra Leone.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Speech by the President, APJ Abdul Kalam at the Pan-African Parliament, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> High Commission of India in South Africa, "India-South Africa Relations", Pretoria, available at <http://www.indiainsouthafrica.com>

<sup>26</sup> The two sides also discussed a wide range of global issues including international economic relations, the forthcoming Hong Kong WTO Ministerial meeting and South-South Cooperation including the New Afro-Asian Strategic Partnership.

<sup>27</sup> Pranab Mukherjee, "India South Africa Joint Ministerial Commission", Remarks at Presidential Guest House, Pretoria, on 21 February, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Beri, n.9, p.8.

<sup>20</sup> Biswas, n.3, p.150.

<sup>21</sup> These included: an Extradition Treaty; an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Cultural Exchange Programme for 2004-2006 and Agreements on cooperation in the field of power and in the field of hydrocarbons.

<sup>22</sup> The South African High Commission, "India-South Africa: A Decade for Partnership", New Delhi, 2003, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> A bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on Information and Communications Technologies was signed during the visit. The Presidents agreed that the two countries could share their expertise and strengths for growth of both countries.

In the post-Cold War era the burden of UN peacekeeping has fallen on the developing countries. Indian contributions in terms of numbers rank first in the world today and are spread in three continents. Both South Africa and India look forward to continue the cooperation in the UN reforms and different peace keeping operations.

#### v] Cooperation in the Indian Ocean

The major aim of establishing the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR – ARC)<sup>29</sup> was to promote greater economic interaction and human resource development across the region, what is paradoxically both the world's poorest and richest country's region. The formation of an Indian Ocean Rim Association was a manifestation of a combination of events that had transpired at the time with respect to regionalism among the countries of the Indian Ocean.<sup>30</sup>

The Mbeki government has renewed its interest in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC). India and South Africa, along with Australia, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore and Kenya are founder members of the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative. The IOR-ARC was formally launched in Mauritius in March 1997. Both India and South Africa have played a leading role in the formation of the organisation.

In fact the concept of an IOR-ARC was first seriously mooted in November 1993 by Pik Botha, the then South African Foreign Minister, during his visit to New Delhi.<sup>31</sup> He identified the IOR as an area of great mutual importance to both South Africa and India. In January 1995 during a visit to New Delhi, President Nelson Mandela put forward the proposal to form the Indian Ocean trading alliance which was enthusiastically received. During President Mandela's government the two countries had held extensive bilateral discussions on the proposed charter and objectives of the organisation. Both India and South Africa were in general agreement that security issues should be kept out of the scope of the IOR- ARC.<sup>32</sup>

South Africa's initial post- apartheid excitement at helping to create an organisation that would expand its international links was supplanted by a growing sense of pessimism. Further it was argued that due to the lack of direction in foreign policy in the Mandela era, South Africa was unable to put forward its agenda. In the process it was felt that South Africa was reduced to "following the initiatives of the others rather than shaping developments".<sup>33</sup> Mr. Mbeki's interest in South-South

cooperation has led to the revival of South African interest in the IOR-ARC. From the geostrategic point of view, South Africa forms part of the coastal region of South Atlantic and South Indian Oceans. Its geostrategic importance arises from its location, its strategic minerals, and industrial base and extensive communications. It lies at the gateway between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

#### vi] Tourism, Culture and Multilateral Co-operations

Tourism from South Africa to India to has shown an upward trend but is still below potential. Recent figures are tabulated below:

Inbound/outbound	2002	2003	2004	2005
India to South Africa	34,062	41,018	36,172	36,045
South Africa to India	18,238	23,873	32,148	39,234

With over a million people of Indian origin in South Africa, one of the largest Indian diasporas abroad, cultural exchanges and cultural diplomacy assume great importance, not just in terms of interaction with this community, but with South Africans across the whole spectrum of population. With the help of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an intensive programme of cultural exchanges is being promoted throughout South Africa. Under the Cultural Exchange Programme, the first major exhibition of Indian contemporary art "Visual Trajectories" traveled to South Africa from April –September 2006 and was a great success.<sup>34</sup>

ICCR sponsored artists such as Odissi dancer Reela Hota, Bharatnatyam dancer Urmila Satyanarayanan and a Qawwali troupe led by Mohd. Idris performed throughout South Africa. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan came especially to Durban to perform at the Satyagraha celebrations in Kingsmead Stadium on October 1, 2006. An Indian Film Festival was organised in Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town from October 20- November 14, 2006.

The cultural relations between South Africa and India can be best examined as described by Pranab Mukherjee, "given the fact that the closest bond between two countries is the bond between the people, it is important that both sides make extra effort to show case their cultural offerings and to take them to areas outside the metros".<sup>35</sup> South Africa and India have a common approach on many global issues, including the future of multilateralism, South-South Cooperation and multilateral trade negotiations. This has led to fruitful cooperation in the UN, NAM, Commonwealth, IOR-ARC, WTO, G-77, G-20 and the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP).

The other areas of co-operation where South Africa and India could enhanced are - WTO negotiations, climate change, science and technology, higher education, fight against international terrorism etc.

<sup>29</sup> The Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), initially known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative, is an international organisation with 18 member states. It was first established in Mauritius on March 1995 and formally launched on 6-7 March 1997.

<sup>30</sup> Biswas, n.3, p.154.

<sup>31</sup> Beri, n.9, p.9.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.9.

<sup>33</sup> Mfundo C Nkuhlu, "South Africa and North / South" in Chris Landsberg and Garth le Pere and Anthoni van Nieuwkerk, *Mission Imperfect: Redirecting South Africa's Foreign Policy*, Johannesburg: FGD, Centre for Policy Studies, 1995.

<sup>34</sup> High Commission of India in South Africa, "India-South Africa Relations", Pretoria, available at <http://www.indiainsouthafrica.com>

<sup>35</sup> Mukherjee, n.34, p. 5.

### **IBSA Initiative as an Emerging area**

IBSA<sup>36</sup> is a trilateral, developmental initiative between India, Brazil and South Africa to promote South-South cooperation and exchange. In the aftermath of discussions between the Heads of State and/or Government of the IBSA countries at the G-8 meeting that took place in Evian in 2003, and following ongoing trilateral consultations, the Foreign Ministers of the respective countries met in Brasilia on June 6, 2003.

The main objectives of the IBSA Dialogue Forum could be summarized as follows: To promote South-South dialogue, cooperation and common positions on issues of international importance; to promote trade and investment opportunities between the three regions of which they are part; to promote international poverty alleviation and social development; to promote the trilateral exchange of information, international best practices, technologies and skills, as well as to compliment each others competitive strengths into collective synergies and to promote cooperation in a broad range of areas, namely agriculture, climate change, culture, defense, education, energy, health, information society, science and technology, social development, trade and investment, tourism and transport.

The IBSA Dialogue Forum plays an increasingly important role in the foreign policies of India, Brazil and South Africa. The three main issues which brought India, Brazil and South Africa into a dialogue forum are – WTO negotiations, the UN reforms and democracies.<sup>37</sup> The three countries agreed on the urgent need for reforms in the United Nations, especially the Security Council. The declaration was of the view that the United Nations Security Council should reflect the current world scenario. The Ministers highlighted their priorities on promotion of social equity and inclusive growth by reiterating the need for tackling hunger and poverty by means of effective implementation of government schemes. The ministers also stressed the importance of elimination of racial discrimination and gender bias while framing public policies.

IBSA, even though established recently, it has a number of areas of co-operation among the member countries. Among the areas of co-operation, defence, economic, energy, education, transport and science and technology can be mentioned.

### **Indian Diaspora in South Africa as an Emerging area**

Indian Diaspora is a generic term referring to the people who migrated from territories that are within the borders of Republic of India. Indian migrations to different parts of the world are not a new phenomenon. Indian migration stated more than five thousand years ago. It continued with the migration of Indian

traders who travelled throughout the world for trade and business. A large number of Indians migrated as indentured labourers to countries like Mauritius, South Africa, Fiji, Trinidad and Guyana to work on sugar plantations. Indian Diaspora is currently estimated to number 20 million composed of NRIs (Non- Resident Indians) and PIOs (People of Indian Origins).<sup>38</sup>

The political, diplomatic and economic moves of India towards African countries emanated from India's own formulations of Afro-Asian Solidarity, Non-Alignment, South-South Cooperation and issues of Racial Discrimination. The former British colonies in Africa got a priority in the framework of Indian policies. For India, the issue of Indian Diaspora in Africa was largely guided by India's search for its place in the international arena and Nehru's firm belief that, for nascent states in Africa and the third world countries, a proactive diaspora policy will be seen as external interference and would be counterproductive for people of Indian Origin in African countries.<sup>39</sup>

The nature of Indian Diaspora comparatively, is emerging in the changing international socio-economic environment having the elements of pre-independent and post independent India. The changing nature of Indian Diaspora in general and South Africa in particular, needs to be analysed on the three fronts like: the socio-economic dimension which leads to the identity of Indian community, the political awakening and the struggle of its identity and the tradition of Indian culture emerged from the debate.<sup>40</sup>

The community participates actively in the celebration of National Day by the Indian missions in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Diwali is celebrated as a big public function in Durban as well as in Lenasia, Laudium and other areas where Indian communities reside. There are a large number of community organisations, which are working to propagate their cultural and linguistic traditions.

The Indian origin community in South Africa is one of the largest such communities in the world, and one of the oldest, and had an honorable and acknowledged role in the liberation struggle with strong emotional and cultural bonds with the country of their origin, and while they may have concerns about their future, like all minorities, are proud of being South Africans.<sup>41</sup>

### **Areas of Discord between South Africa and India**

Even though South Africa and India have different areas of co-operation, the two countries also have areas of conflict. In the post-apartheid era, the joint initiatives taken by respective

<sup>36</sup> IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) represents three important poles for galvanising South-South cooperation and greater understanding between three important continents of the developing world namely, Africa, Asia and South America. The forum provides the three countries with a platform to engage in discussions for cooperation in the field of agriculture, trade, culture, and defence among others.

<sup>37</sup> Vikas Swarup, Personal Interview, N. Surjitkumar, Pretoria, 29 February, 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Vidhan Pathak, "Indian Diaspora in South Africa", *Africa Quarterly*, Vol. 43 (1), New Delhi, ICCR, 2003, p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> Ajay Dubey, "India and Indian Diaspora in Francophone Africa: A window for Indo- French Cooperation", Seminar paper, ICWA, New Delhi, 20<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Kumar, S, "Evolution and Changing nature of Indian Diaspora in South Africa", Seminar Paper, JNU, New Delhi, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

<sup>41</sup> The Indian Origin community in South Africa, available at: [www.indiainsouthafrica.com](http://www.indiainsouthafrica.com)

governments have set the bilateral relations on a sound footing. Nevertheless, all relationships cannot be perfect and existence of differences is but natural. One of the persistent problems in the relationship is on the nuclear issue.<sup>42</sup> South Africa is the world's first state to have voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons. It is also party to a host of nuclear arms control regimes including the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). They would like India to be a party to these treaties too. India is not ready to sign the treaties in their current format as it finds them discriminatory. India's position in this regard is well documented. There was a rising concern in India that South Africa has moved closer to the West on this issue. This closeness appeared to have a deep impact on the South African mindsets and this was visible also during the Durban summit of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM).

On the nuclear issue too, South Africa's formulation—first enunciated in the draft resolution circulated to the coordinating bureau in New York well before the summit—was changed, but only after a protracted effort by India and others. Expressing deep concern at the re-emergence of the nuclear arms race in South Asia, the draft called upon "all states, with the capacity to produce nuclear weapons, to refrain from weaponisation of the capability and to desist from placing them on delivery systems". The final document however incorporated the traditional NAM position with a clear thrust on disarmament and a sharp criticism of the old nuclear haves for seeking to perpetuate discrimination and justifying their monopoly over weapons.

Nuclear Issues: South Africa's nuclear policy in the post-apartheid era has emerged as a constant irritant in the relations between the two countries. India had hoped that the inauguration of President Mandela's government in South Africa would give a fillip to its effort towards achieving universal nuclear disarmament. The African National Congress (ANC) in the past had been quite vocal in its support to nuclear disarmament. It "shared the commitment of the United Nations to general and complete disarmament under effective international control as resolved by the General Assembly at the special session on disarmament in 1978".<sup>43</sup>

In recent years however, there has been a dilution in the stance of South Africa and it has drifted more towards the Western approach towards nuclear arms control. This was quite visible during the negotiations of the 1995 NPT Review Conference and the CTBT. While the decision of the previous government to accede to the NPT may have been motivated by the desire not to bequeath a nuclear capability to a government dominated by the ANC, there are few doubts on the decision in Pretoria. The South African position on nuclear issues could also be explained through their desire to avoid being isolated in the world community. After years of being dubbed a pariah, from the South African perspective it had very little to lose and a lot to gain in terms of "diplomatic dividends" from the negotiations on nuclear disarmament. At the same time South Africa did not want to alienate its neighbours in the region. After facing years of

destabilisation the establishment of the ANC government had brought forth an era of peace and stability in southern Africa, the continuance of the nuclear weapons programme and not signing the NPT and the CTBT could have given the wrong signals.

South Africa's official response to India's nuclear tests at Pokhran in May 1998 was mild in comparison to that of the United States, Japan and other Western countries. The statement issued by the foreign office immediately after the tests expressed 'deep concern at the nuclear testing' and pointed out that the South African government "opposed all nuclear tests, since they do not promote world peace and security." However, there were reports which suggested that Mr. Mandela was indeed quite upset on the issue. Subsequently, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, principal secretary to the Prime Minister was dispatched as a special envoy of the Prime Minister to diffuse the tension between the two countries over it. While the government in Pretoria appreciates India's security compulsions that necessitated the decision to go nuclear, however they would like India to sign the NPT and the CTBT. India on its part considers them discriminatory and is unwilling to sign them.<sup>44</sup>

The good news is that against the back-drop of Indian nuclear tests, South Africa has enhanced the efforts towards global nuclear disarmament. In the last two years it has been part of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), which originally consisted of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden. The NAC had responded to nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998 by calling for a new approach to non-proliferation and disarmament. In their joint declaration in (June 1998) the members of the NAC put forward a new agenda in an effort to rejuvenate the deadlocked talks at CD. South Africa is also part of the Middle Powered Initiative (MPI). This coalition calls for rapid elimination of nuclear weapons<sup>45</sup>.

India and the other members of the G-21 have in the past called for the establishment in the Conference of Disarmament (CD), of an adhoc committee on nuclear disarmament to start negotiations on a phased programme with the eventual aim of eliminating nuclear weapons within a time bound framework.<sup>46</sup> South Africa while appreciating India's position does not agree with its time bound programme of nuclear disarmament. They appear to favour a step-by-step approach (incremental) without a firm time frame being defined. However, after the Pokhran nuclear tests in May 1998 India has moved away from its time bound position as propounded in former Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi's Plan for Nuclear Disarmament, tabled at the UN in 1986.

Although India still favours the phased process of disarmament, it has dropped the emphasis of it being bound to a certain time frame. Thus it appears that India and South Africa have an almost similar position on this issue and apparently are on the same side at the CD. From the above points of discord areas between South Africa and India, it can sum up by mentioning the personal interview with Vikas Swarup, the Deputy High

<sup>42</sup> Ruchita Beri, "Indo-South Africa Relations After Mandela", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXIV, No. 12, (2001), p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> ANC, *Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa*, December, 1994.

<sup>44</sup> Beri, n.79, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> Morphet, S, "NAM and their 11<sup>th</sup> Summit", *The Round Table*, No.340, October, 1996, p. 455.

Commissioner of India in Pretoria. As he pointed out, “We have common position in terms of WTO negotiations, UN reforms, NAM etc. But South Africa and India have conflict area in terms of nuclear issue”.<sup>47</sup>

#### **India’s relations with South Africa: Recent Developments**

One of the important recent developments between India and South Africa can be the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Initiative. South Africa has been admitted as a member of BRICS grouping and attended the BRICS meetings in April 2011 at Sanya and in March 2012 in New Delhi. South Africa hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit meeting of BRICS at Durban in March 2013. BRICS is one of the multilateral groupings where the two countries can develop in various areas like economic development, education, science and technology, defence etc. Most important area of BRICS is the trade transactions among all the members in own currencies.

In the field of economic relations, the total trade between India and South Africa has increased from U.S. \$. 2.5 billion in 2003-2004 to U.S.\$ 13.18 billion in 2012-13. There has been regular exchange of visits at Ministerial level in recent years. The then Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textiles, Shri Anand Sharma visited South Africa in January 2013 and discussed various areas including trade and commerce, agriculture and allied sectors. This was followed by visit of Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and addressed the Indian Diaspora at Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban in April 2013.

Narendra Modi took charge as Prime Minister of India in May 2014 and he started to put his imprint on India’s foreign policy<sup>48</sup> by looking South as one his major area. It can be witnessed by his representation at multilateral forums like BRICS summit in Brazil in July 2014. At the sideline of the BRICS summit, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Jacob Zuma discussed various issues to improve the ties between the two countries. Narendra Modi’s visit to South Africa in July 2016 aimed at enhancing ties with the African continent particularly in economic sphere. During his visit, Modi met South African President Jacob Zuma and discussed various areas like maritime security, trade and investment, agriculture etc.

From the above discussion, it is found that South Africa’s foreign policy towards India has been a positive approach since the end of the apartheid period. The two countries have been maintaining a bonhomie relation in different areas of cooperation. One of the most important areas of cooperation is the IBSA initiative. The Indian Diasporas have also been an important factor in the relations between two countries. It has been found that in the post apartheid era, there has been a tremendous scope for Indian settlers to rise up with the structural changes in South African society, polity and economy.

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<sup>47</sup> Vikas Swarup, *Personal Interview*, N. Surjitkumar, Pretoria, 29 February, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> C. Raja Mohan, *Modi’s World Expanding India’s Sphere of Influence*, Harper Collins Publishers, U.P., 2015, p. 2  
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