



Science Diplomacy to Enhance Higher Education Collaboration between Ethiopia and India



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Introduction

From ancient trade routes cooperation to higher education, Ethiopia and India have long-standing relations. Ethiopia, where the Indian teachers pragmatically had been playing a significant role in secondary schools the 1950s and 60s is endeavouring to intensify exchanges and collaboration with the government of India in different fields including Science and technology exchanges and collaborations.

Ethiopia-India relations have existed for almost two millennia although the two countries established their diplomatic relations formally at the level of legations in July 1948, after the independence of India. The relationship was raised to the ambassadorial level in 1952. India maintained an Embassy in Addis Ababa and Ethiopia in New Delhi. Since then both countries are enjoying their friendly relations (Thubauville, 2006).

India is among the few and its contribution to Ethiopia's education sector is an example of south-south cooperation. This cooperation and bilateral relations would have not been realized if the successive Ethiopian regimes had not been appreciative of the fact that India was never been hostile to Ethiopia's interests. However, the relations have passed through various phases largely in response to the change in regimes in Ethiopia.

Relations during Emperor Haile Selassie's regime (1941-74) were close. The emperor encouraged a large number of Indian teachers to come to Ethiopia and who worked in the remotest parts of Ethiopia which brought tremendous goodwill that both countries enjoyed. However the subsequent Communist Derg Regime (1974-91) favoured the Soviet bloc and many resident Indian businessmen and teachers left Ethiopia, India and Ethiopia never hesitate to enjoy back again

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their close and friendly relations with the current federal democratic republic of Ethiopia that came to power in 1991. Despite the change in regimes, Ethiopia had been consistent in her support for India in international issues (MEA, 2014)

Overview of Ethiopian Higher Education and its Challenges

Ethiopia is embarked on a higher education expansion reform program of impressive dimension. It has enriched the number of its universities from two to fifty in the past two decades. More than 90 private colleges universities and more than 30 teachers training program are under regional administration. This massive expansion of higher education has had a positive impact on increasing the intake capacity higher education institutions, and currently, more than one million students are pursuing their higher education. Despite the massive expansion of higher education, the higher education sector of the country has been facing the following challenges.

For the nation which has dramatically boosted its university expansion shortly, the insufficient number of lecturers cannot be explained not only by the very fast expansion of higher education but also the brain drain which is still challenging the higher education sector of the nation (Saint, 2004).

In addition to that gaps of well-skilled manpower in the fields of research, innovation, curriculum development, policymakers and administrating staff is hindering the higher education sector not step forward ahead.

Ethiopia-India Higher Education Cooperation

As the Indian Secondary school teachers rescue the expansion of Secondary schools in Ethiopia in the 19 40s and 50s. Indian lectures likewise are rescuing the Ethiopian higher education sector in various fields. Based on the bilateral agreement made by the two countries hundreds of Indian Lecturers are serving in Ethiopian higher educations. This has enabled the universities to get out of peer teaching, start new programmes as well as full fill a minimum requirement needed to include expatriate lecturers

in the respective universities (Alemayehu et al., 2017).

Hence the Migration of Indian lecturers is playing a significant role in filling the gaps of brain drain as well as encouraging the higher education Sector in the positive dimensions mentioned in the above.

Furthermore, the government of India is contributing a significant role in capacitating Ethiopian nationals' through its south-south cooperation programs called the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation which is supported by the government of India under the commonwealth African assistance program and TCS Colombo Plan programme.

In the past years, Ethiopia has benefited from the cooperation for its development programs. For example, more than one thousand Ethiopian nationals are pursuing their masters and doctoral programs through different cooperation schemes.

As part of the educational cooperation programme with Africa, the government of India is giving fifty-five scholarships annually through Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and hundreds of short term training through the Indian Technical Economic cooperation program (ITEC). In addition to that close one thousand students are pursuing their graduate and post-graduate educational programs in various fields of study under the Ethiopian government sponsorship program on the basis of the two countries bilateral relations.

In the meantime, the bilateral cooperation is believed to have created a platform for Indian academics to explorer the academic markets and increase the people to people relations of the two countries apart from their academic role.

The institutional linkage between their respective countries is also among the main forms of collaboration which the two friendly countries are endeavouring to achieve more successes in their cooperation areas.

To this end, the government of India via various respective Institutions has donated to Ethiopia a 64-Slice CT Scan Machine to Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa as part of our Grant Assistance. Tele-Education and Telemedicine services were being offered till recently at nodes set up in Black

Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa and in Addis Ababa University and were well-received. The Tele-Education project has been replicated by the Ethiopian side and linkages established between the Addis Ababa University and the Indian Institutes of Technology at Delhi and Kanpur. Their cooperation has extended in four areas suggested by the Ethiopian side viz. traditional knowledge, textiles and garments, leather and leather products, ICT and microelectronics.

The Cooperation envisages the establishment of a Joint Committee on Scientific & Technological Cooperation. A space cooperation program has since been initiated. Ethiopian side has requested for India's assistance in their flagship program of establishing 16 Centers of Excellence in Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU) and Addis Ababa Science & Technology University (AASTU).

The proposal was considered in the framework of India-Ethiopia S&T cooperation during the Joint committee meeting which was held in February 2017 in New Delhi, India. An MoU on enhancing cooperation in S&T Sector between the two countries was signed and a draft implementation plan based on the issues discussed during JCM meeting and mentioned in the MoU, particularly, on PhD programmes, visiting fellowships, faculty visits, GIS training, Joint R&D projects and, technology transfer is under consideration to move further. 28. During IAFS-III, PM had announced doubling of the scholarships/fellowships for Africa. It is proposed to offer 1000 C.V. Raman Scientific Fellowships over the period of 5 years. This is to be implemented by the Department of Science & Technology/Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). Since the beginning of this fellowship in 2010, 23 candidates from Ethiopia have been sent so far. Further, to replicate the success of Indian plant tissue culture in African countries, a total of 270 slots [over the period of 5 years] have been allocated to impart Plant Tissue Culture Training through Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology.

According to Katti, et al. (2009), India has been a provider of development assistance since its independence, but its role and contribution has gained momentum more recently as a result of its

growing economic and political influence in the global community. In contrast to OECD/DAC countries until today India does not have any publicly declared policy paper or standards. The guiding principles for its foreign policy and its development cooperation are founded in the Panchsheel/Bandung Principles. According to this approach, India's development cooperation is implemented by various ministries and institutions with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as the leading ministry. As India does not have a single agency for Indian Development Cooperation (IDC), estimates about the magnitude of India's development assistance have to be culled out of the budget outlays of the relevant Ministries/Departments and other sources. According to available data, India's aid focuses first on neighbouring countries, followed by African countries. In recent years India became an important factor in promoting regional integration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has proven that the bilateral and South-South cooperation of Ethiopia-India has shown progress in terms of Scholarship, lecturers and capacity building program exchanges in the past decade. Therefore, both the bilateral and south-south cooperation on between the government of Ethiopia and India is found useful to fill the gaps Ethiopia has faced due to the massive expansion of higher education as well as the continuing brain drain. Moreover, this paper has also proved that the bilateral cooperation of the two countries has also created a platform for Indian academics to share the market in the sector.

Recommendations and way forward

Currently, the bilateral cooperation of Ethiopia and India is mainly confined to Scholarship and training exchange programs. However, It is advised that the two countries should extend their collaboration in various exchanging programs in the fields of research and innovation to give solutions to their respective social problems.

So far, there is no joint technical team that leads and evaluates the successes and gaps to

be observed through the implementation of their bilateral collaboration. This helps to unveil synthesized regarding the implementation of their bilateral collaboration. It also helps to give clear and tangible information to the national decision and policymakers.

Finally, it is recommended that the collaboration should give priority to bring institutionalised knowledge from the respective countries. They should also ease the challenges faced in scholarship exchange programmes.

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