

Faculty Development Initiatives in Africa on Asian Studies—Key to Integration

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Abstract

India has a long history of development cooperation with Africa as part of government efforts towards capacity development in the region. This commitment from the government has impelled many institutions to build partnerships in Africa to advance studies in diverse areas such as agriculture, mining, information technology, management, etc. Simultaneously, both Indian and African institutions are aiming at greater internationalization through increase in the portfolio of the courses being offered to students. Hence, African studies in India are being offered in a number of Indian universities. On the same lines, African institutions are also introducing Asian/Indian studies to increase awareness and promote student and faculty movement and thereby improve the quality of teaching and research. Increased faculty support from India can accelerate the faculty development initiatives for Africa.

Keywords: *India–Africa institutional cooperation, specific departments of studies, faculty development in teaching and research*

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INTRODUCTION

India's Development Cooperation with Africa

India's goal of capacity-building in Africa has so far focused on conducting training programmes in different fields and building appropriate institutions in different countries of Africa. India's development cooperation with Africa has expanded gradually over time and today covers many crucial areas such as science and technology, education, health and pharmaceuticals, agriculture, food processing, irrigation and mining. India is now a member of major trade cooperation pacts in Africa such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), South African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) [1]. Relations with Francophone Africa are also growing gradually. The Pan African E-Network project announced at the first India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) in 2008 was a result of the vision of the then President of India Dr. Abdul Kalam. The successful implementation of the project under the Framework of Enhanced Cooperation with Africa has firmly established India's stride in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) field for the betterment of

human lives. The Ghana–India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT has served to stimulate the growth of ICT, especially in ECOWAS. India also offers a number of scholarships and fellowships of approximately USD 12 million annually to the students from Africa under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. The Government of India has invested heavily by way of both short-term and long-term training programmes in the field of agriculture, management, mining and those specific to small and medium enterprise needs. Several institutions have been earmarked for capacity building in Africa. Besides, the Ministry of Finance extends concessional loans and lines of credit (LOCs) liberally to African countries. About half the operational LOCs extended by EXIM Bank of India have a direct infrastructure focus. With the help of these LOCs, Indian companies have invested in infrastructure projects and provided water, power, roads, and plants for assembly of agricultural equipment, housing, rural electrification, IT parks and hydroelectric projects. The Indian railways has also shared its low cost model and supplied locomotives to Mozambique, Tanzania, Mali and Senegal and coaches to Angola [2–4].

Other than development assistance flowing to Africa in this manner, India has used the investment route as well for building institutions of excellence in Africa. The most notable ones are India–Africa Institute of Information Technology in Ghana, India–Africa Institute of Foreign Trade in Uganda, India–Africa Institute of Education Planning and Administration in Burundi, India–Africa Diamond Institute in Botswana, India–Africa Civil Aviation Academy in Chad, India–Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development in Malawi, India–Africa University for Life and Earth Sciences in Nigeria and India–Africa Institute for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in Mauritius. Besides these institutes, India has also committed to vocational training in Africa through centres in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Libya, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. In addition, unique Human Settlement Institutes are being set up in Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mauritania, Togo and Zambia and coal-based cooperation, chiefly dealing with mining technology, is being developed with Mozambique. India–Africa Food Processing Cluster and India–Africa Textile Cluster are also examples of India’s initiatives in establishing and strengthening common infrastructure and facilities for pan-African development [2–4].

Now that a good base has been established, the next step may be to liaise with African higher learning institutes and universities to set up dedicated centres that will serve to develop faculty and widen and deepen mutual cooperation through joint research on different sectors of the economies of African nations. This will help in the internationalization of both Indian and African universities. However, such a move requires setting up of well-planned strategies. India can certainly take into account the experiences of other countries that have actively pursued the internationalization of universities/institutes of higher learning.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS GLOBALLY

Internationalization of academic institutions globally has primarily focussed on integrating

an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution [5, 6]. But the efforts towards internationalization have to be of a higher order with attempts to integrate the institutions into the emerging global knowledge and learning networks. Internationalization means that the process has to be outward-looking rather than inward-looking emphasizing the institution’s capacity and ability to become an integral part of the world’s knowledge and learning ecosystem through creation of new knowledge and bringing about a change in existing structures, operating modes and mindsets [7]. It has to be remembered that the flow of costs and benefits accrue at an asynchronous rate: the immediate benefits of the announcement far exceed the cost of the initiative. Besides, marginal costs rise much faster than marginal benefits of any new internationalization measure. That is why, there needs to be clarity on the unit of internationalization—is it a specific programme within a school, a particular school within a university campus or an entire university? Internationalization that represents a small percentage of the activities of a national school or university will clearly not turn that institution into an international one. Unless the whole ecosystem such as the curriculum, student body, faculty, research activities and the board of trustees is internationalized, the institution will not be said to be internationalized [8]. The five popular models of extending international reach, described by Hawawini [9] are the:

1. Import model (attracting foreign students and/or faculty);
2. Export model (sending students and/or faculty under exchange programmes);
3. Academic joint venture model (joint training and/or research programmes);
4. Partnership model (free movement of students in each other’s courses and programmes); and
5. Foreign campus model

These models are neither mutually exclusive nor sequential. Usually, institutions begin with attracting foreign students or creating a joint degree programme with another institution. Efforts towards creating maximum impact on the home campus, though, will have to be

extended towards internationalization of the course curriculum. The intention, therefore, has to be to learn from the world rather than teach the world. This is a major benefit in the case of geographically dispersed researchers who interact with other researchers and gain new ways of thinking and approaching problems.

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAMME

Internationalization efforts are now visible in South Asia as well. The newly established South Asian University in New Delhi in 2010, for example, has a vision of promoting regional understanding, providing liberal and humane education and building capacity in the fields of science, technology, information technology, biotechnology, management sciences, etc. [10]. The university reserves seats for participants from all the South Asian nations in its course offerings and, thereby, provides a platform for healthy debate, discussions etc. for participants from this region. The university has to now strengthen research networks and collaborations with institutions and scholars in Europe, North America and Australia where South Asian studies began in the early 19th century to help the missionaries and colonial administrators understand the South Asian cultures, religions and languages. Today, universities such as Oxford, London, Manchester, Cambridge and Edinburgh offer a wide variety of courses in South Asian studies at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level, including the M.Phil. degree for a deeper understanding of South Asian diaspora that lives there [11]. In universities where there are no separate Centres of South Asian studies, optional courses on South Asia are taught as part of other courses such as Economics, Political Science, Media Studies, Anthropology, History, Geography, Education, Literature and Cultural Studies [12]. These centres are also supported by language teaching and research facilities in diverse languages such as Persian, Urdu, Nepali, Tibetan, Bengali, Sanskrit, Tamil, Malayalam, etc.

The South Asian Studies programmes in these universities attract students from a variety of national and international backgrounds,

including those familiar with South Asia, while others have a desire to know the region. For instance, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at London University, a student has the option of taking either a B.A. single subject degree in South Asian Studies or a two-subject degree in combination with Development Studies, Economics, Geography, History, History of Art/Archaeology, Law, Linguistics, Management, Music, Politics, and Social Anthropology. Language training is a compulsory part of all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Oriental Studies, South Asian Studies or specific courses such as Tibetan and Himalayan Studies or Classical Indian Religions. Another example of the interdisciplinary approach in these area studies centres is that the course on Modern History taught at Oxford includes Indian History as part of its syllabus and the options in the M.Phil. in Development Studies include South Asian History and Politics and Indian Political Economy. The universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, Manchester, North London, Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Sussex and East Anglia offer similar interdisciplinary courses incorporating South Asian studies as integral to these courses [13–15].

AFRICAN STUDIES PROGRAMMES

Similar is the case with African Studies in the UK where universities have been the pioneers in the field as they set up area or regional studies centres as early as late 1950s chiefly to facilitate specialist regional cooperation. A number of Africa-oriented interdisciplinary programmes are offered at these centres both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. There are also a number of UK universities which teach Africa-focussed courses which are located in programmes such as development studies, anthropology, politics, history, religious studies, or postcolonial studies (including literature). School of Asia, Africa and the Middle East Studies is the only higher education institution in the UK specializing in the study of Africa (and Asia). It has the largest concentration of Africanist specialists of any university in the world and is a leading international centre in both research and teaching. The school's departments group into two categories: (1) language and culture departments (e.g., African Languages and

Cultures); and (2) disciplinary departments (e.g. anthropology) which offer degrees and courses with an African studies component [16].

The Department of African Languages and Cultures (DALC), since 1950s, has been offering courses on five major African languages along with general courses such as language planning, lingua franca, minority language death, African culture/perspectives, African philosophy, religion, oral/written literature (including Caribbean literature and literature in African languages), art, music, film and performance arts. In partial recognition of the department's contributions, SOAS received special minority subjects funding from HEFCE—Higher Education Funding Council for England in the year 2000. The disciplinary departments at SOAS (e.g., anthropology, art and archaeology, economics, history, politics, law) also offer undergraduate courses focussing on Africa.

African language and culture and African studies are currently being offered by DALC both as independent undergraduate programmes and as part of other specializations such as anthropology, development studies, political studies, religious studies, economics, geography, etc. Students opting for Hausa or Swahili as part of their undergraduate degree are permitted to complete the final year of their course at a university in Tanzania or northern Nigeria. Some students, under the SOCRATES student mobility programme also migrate to other European universities. Under this programme, each university has its own partner universities specific to particular departments or subject areas. Financial support to cover additional cost of study is provided by the British government and the European Commission. The centre aims to integrate these studies into transnational subjects such as diaspora studies, refugee and migration studies, globalization, etc. [17].

African studies are being increasingly taught in Indian universities too. The Centre for African Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi [18] runs both M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs in African studies.

This centre aims at promoting African studies as an academic discipline for advancing knowledge and understanding of African affairs through an interdisciplinary perspective. It brings together scholars having an active interest in Africa from all over the country and abroad. It also hosts the permanent secretariat of African Studies Association of India (www.africanstudies.in) which brings together scholars from all Indian universities working on different issues relating to Africa. This also facilitates in the conduct of academic outreach programmes and seminars/conferences by the centre in different parts of the country.

The Department of African Studies in the University of Delhi [19] also offers M.Phil. and Ph.D. in African studies besides offering certificate and diploma courses in Swahili language. The University of Mumbai similarly offers a certificate course in International Trade (Africa) and brings out a bi-annual journal by the name of 'African Currents' [20]. The current research focus of the centre includes India's Africa policy, emerging powers and Africa, Indian diaspora in Africa and India's energy security issues and Africa, issues of governance and democracy in Africa and the Indian Ocean region. The centre's Documentation Unit has a rich collection of books, pamphlets and periodicals on African history, economics, politics, etc. facilitating research on trends and changes in trends relating to these parameters. Through interlibrary collaboration with other African Studies institutions both within and outside the country, it is also able to collect data on the list of articles on Africa appearing in different journals and also creates a contents list of the content pages of these articles.

Institutions such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which have consciously pursued the path of promotion of internationalization have instituted UNESCO chair in different universities. The aim has been to promote an integrated system of research, education, training, capacity building, information and documentation in the field of African peace and conflict studies. The continent of Africa needs capacity-

building in the prevention, management and resolution of armed conflicts to usher in good governance practices. The UNESCO chair is a big step forward towards this direction as it is entrusted on developing course content and teaching and research material on peace, security and development issues in partnership with other universities in Africa. These teaching and research resources come to aid both when introducing new courses on conflict prevention and resolution and also when new modules on these topics are added into the existing courses. Another benefit is that the UNESCO chair creates collaboration opportunities for African universities with universities in Europe, North America and other places. The chair has been instrumental in the establishment of the first ever African Peace University at Uvira in the Democratic Republic of Congo; thereby, facilitating the development of policy-relevant framework to mainstream and institutionalise peace and conflict studies at tertiary institutions [21].

International collaboration allows African researchers to work together with other researchers and gain exposure to new research techniques and access to the resources, facilities and expertise of better equipped institutions. All this serves to enable research to proceed at levels which would not be otherwise possible given the current state of many countries' higher education infrastructure. Although the value of North–South collaboration has been widely acknowledged in several reports, the issues, though, have remained focussed on thematic or methodological priorities. Often, the less well documented practical constraints remain glossed over with no specific and feasible suggestions of how these may be overcome. Sustaining collaborations requires dedication and commitment of the researchers as each phase including funding and monitoring of the project and managing team members is fraught with difficulties. In African research and higher education, science and technology receives the maximum funding due to its linkages with healthcare and development of commercial products. Despite the high relevance of research in science and technology, social sciences research also needs to be given due importance as it is essential to

understanding the social and cultural context in which development takes place. But it is also important that there is support for African research which falls outside of the general development agenda, but which nevertheless may also offer important lessons; questions about history, identity and cultural expression all need to be explored. While responses were therefore encouraged from all fields, since many of the challenges of research will be common to all, a particular effort was made to gather the thoughts of researchers in the humanities and social sciences. The survey resulted in some crucial findings with respect to setting up a framework for research [22]:

1. Detailed analysis of the type and quantum of resources including access to the internet and scholarly publications of the institute/university;
2. Develop a central and comprehensive portal to identify research areas dealing with India/Asia together with possible funding opportunities;
3. List down events that may be acceptable for additional contingency funding;
4. Create research opportunities through existing institutional structures or frameworks;
5. Increase coordination between fund providers including corporates, associations, state governments and central government for drawing up common funding criteria;
6. Increase partnerships between fund providers to develop a common approach towards identifying needs and strategies for African institutions;
7. Build culture of mentoring to enhance collaboration between junior and senior academics both of African and Indian institutions;
8. Help African institutions evolve structures of academic careers within the likely constraints of their environments and design scholarships/fellowships to achieve the same;
9. Encourage and assist international events to be held in African institutions;
10. Involve associations such as Association of African Universities (AAU), Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and at regional level, the Organization for Social

Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) so that programmes are developed in line with African priorities;

11. Ensure academic mobility of researchers by ease of procedures relating to visa;
12. Create facilities which enable academics and research teams to identify corresponding interests between themselves and other institutions;
13. Fully involve African colleagues at all stages of project design including monitoring and evaluation;
14. Initiate steps to both raise the profile, quality and circulation of local African journals and support African academics to publish in renowned Indian/Asian journals.

The measures enumerated above are a good guide to India's efforts towards setting up research centres in African universities keen to internationalize and learn more about the Indian/Asian culture for consolidating/expanding trade ties. Developing local faculty to take up research assignments will require the experience of Indian researchers mentoring the setting up of such centres in the USA and Europe. It is important to note that universities are both cultural and formal organizations and decentralization in decision making will be crucial to the success of the centres, particularly in their internationalization efforts. Universities are expected to be innovative and responsive and for that a decentralized structure will be needed. Therefore, constant communication with the universities in which these centres are sought to be established will be primarily needed. The Global Forum for Health Research report (Global Forum for Health Research) has also emphasized the importance of scientific research, stating that 'Strengthening research capacity in developing countries is one of the most effective and sustainable ways of advancing health and development in these countries and of helping correct the 10/90 Gap in health research.' The 10/90 Gap refers to the fact that only 5–10% of all global health research funding is directed to research on health problems that affect 90% of the world's population, and only a small proportion of this funding actually goes to researchers in developing countries [23].

Instances of dedicated research centres on Indian/Asian studies abound in the USA, Europe and now Asia. But at each place, a catalytic role has been played by a group of Indian researchers in those places who saw the research potential and seized the opportunity. The USA is the forerunner of such centres as Indian researchers there have formed a strong association creating higher levels of visibility. Africa, however, is unlikely to have many Indian researchers based in African universities; hence, the need for governmental action on this front. In fact, Asian governments may also collaborate to set up Centres for Asian Studies in Africa. China can then be an important partner contributing towards a widening of the research base in a significant way as also collaboration between Indian and Chinese researchers in different fields of study. Such collaboration will then have its off-shoots by way of collaboration on other fronts as well.

A truly cooperative research partnership, which should be monitored by funding agencies, rests on four broad principles:

- Mutual trust and shared decision making;
- National ownership;
- Emphasis on getting research findings into policy and practice;
- Development of national research capacity.

According to Costello and Zumla [24], much foreign-led research in developing countries remains semicolonial in nature and may have negative effects on partner countries. Hence, the following principles have been enumerated by them:

- Nationals should form partnerships and lead research projects with at best technical support from expatriates. "Annexed site" research led by expatriates needs to be phased out.
- Research funding through national academics and institutions should be encouraged as it improves the chances of findings being incorporated into national policy and practice. Besides, they focus on applied studies to improve the implementation of proven interventions unlike foreign-led research that favours testing the efficacy of new interventions.

- Continuous monitoring by funding agencies is needed to sustain research partnerships.
- Although research quality, often measured by publications, is an important criterion for investment, it cannot be the sole criterion of funding a research study.

Amongst the myriad institutions in Africa, a strategy to support the transformation of higher education through enhancing the recruitment, academic development and retention alongside a focus on promoting transformative institutional cultures, for instance, has been developed by Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) [25]. CCNY rewards institutions in Africa not just for excellence and innovation in teaching and research and strong financial management but also demonstrated commitment towards creating opportunities for minorities including women and blacks. In the programme announced in 2012/2013, three universities, viz the University of Cape Town, the University of Kwazulu-Natal and the University of Witwatersrand were selected based on criteria that included ability to change the institutional climate.

STRATEGY FOR INDIA'S MOVE TOWARDS INTERNATIONALIZATION ON AFRICA

India has already opened a centre for Indian Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg in 2007 with an attempt to study the emerging political and economic alignments in the contemporary world [26]. From being the first and only centre for Indian Studies on the African continent, it has now also become one of the few institutions anywhere in the world with a focus on the emerging powerhouses of the Global South. The centre focuses on capital investment and business activity (direct investment by Indian companies in Africa and the Middle East; entrepreneurial activity by mercantile groups and individual [immigrant] business people; and the economic activities of local Indian communities that have settled in Africa in the modern historical period); labour migration (developing quantitative and qualitative database relating to migration [from where, for

what reasons, rates of return, etc.]); conditions of work; regimes of law and contract and conduits of labour supply and global responsibility (the responsibilities entailed in the emerging world order where the new powers of the Global South have become significant players and the prospects for cooperation rather than conflict to create security in and around the Indian Ocean).

Nonetheless, if this initiative has to be expanded, India will also have to lay down a well-planned strategy to pursue the faculty development initiative in Africa through setting up of dedicated centres in different institutes/universities. For an optimum functioning of these centres, new structures, networks and partnerships will have to be formed to carry out interdisciplinary joint research programmes which draw on the wide range of expertise of network members. This enhances the capability to create new knowledge that will help in the internationalization of both Indian and African institutions. Similar efforts will have to be made to make research available to broader community and to facilitate international policy-relevant exchanges between researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders.

The well-developed criteria already in practice can be adopted suitably by India in the selection of African institutions with which collaborations will be entered into for setting up centres for Indian/Asian studies. In addition, different milestones such as number of Ph.Ds awarded, the student enrolment for such studies year-wise, the number of joint research projects produced; etc. will have to be carefully set. Besides, a common understanding with all stakeholders on the definition of success and the critical success factors will ensure smooth implementation of the project yielding benefits to both India and Africa.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The academic integration between Asia and Africa promises to act as a powerful leverage for rapid economic integration between the two continents. The academic cooperation is already taking place at some universities but now has to move to the next higher level of

Departments of Asian studies being opened in academic institutions in Africa. These departments will propel wider research and understanding about Asia. While several notable institutions in India have separate departments on African studies, a wider thrust in all management institutions with a larger number of electives on African issues will certainly be beneficial for strengthening both economic and political ties. Admittedly, though, the former is more difficult and more crucial as the benefits to both continents from such steps are likely to have much larger ripple effects. Hence, beyond facilitating setting up institutions in Africa, the Government of India may have to facilitate the stationing of teaching and research faculty in African institutions for specific periods of time to achieve the defined goals of enhancing research interest and capability in Indian and Asian studies in Africa.

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