

India and Germany: Global Partnership in 21st century

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Abstract: Nehru and Adenauer established diplomatic relations in 1951. After an auspicious beginning in the early period, relationship between India and Germany were caught in the stagnations of benign neglect from 1960s to 1980s. Following the India's economic reforms and subsequent economic growth attracted the interest of Germany. India is Germany's most important scientific and technological cooperation partner in South Asia and both countries have entered a strategic partnership in education, science and research which offers the basis for diverse forms of cooperation. How will these two central powers in the world interact with each other in 21st century? The paper focuses on to promote an extensive understanding of the Indo-German perspectives for mutual relations as well as the foreign policy outlooks in a changing international milieu. The main issues will be to widen the existing edifice to cover traditional and non-traditional security issues. Also, it is essential and time for both India and Germany to move the relations beyond the purchase of BMW and Mercedes car.

Key words: relationship, economic, politics, strategic, partnership, security, economic.

Introduction

India is an increasingly becoming significant international player and regional power. It has considerably strengthened relationship with the US, China and ASEAN. Its huge size, robust economic and military strength makes it the major power in South Asia. India's economic growth has also been impressive and the economy has benefited greatly from market-oriented and open policies.

Indo-German relationship is deeply rooted to long standing history and cultural connections marked by friendship and cooperation. India is first nation to end to the state of war with Germany after the World War II. India continued diplomatic relations with both West Germany and East Germany but supported their reunifications of 1990 (Mishra 1986: 74). India accorded full diplomatic recognition to the German Democratic Republic on 8th October 1972. Even though, diplomatic relations was busy up as early as 1951, but ideological difference barred the two countries from deepening and lengthening their relations and cooperation beyond trade, cultural exchange and development during cold war period. India and Germany have very old relations and have

intriguing political, economic and social narratives. Nehru and Adenauer struggled similar political and social mess, nearly after two centuries of colonial prominent ruled; Nehru wanted to establish a new position for India in international community. Nehru wanted to industrialise India and opted for a planned economy. Similarly, Adenauer faced the arduous task of building the foundations of a new Germany after a devastating war, which had not only demolished the country but also ruin its standing among the nations. The fact remains that the interpretation and understanding the history throw light between the two countries relations. The Indo-German relations following the establishment of the diplomatic relations developed rapidly. The relations went on growing as expected and many agreements were signed between the two governments which touched upon various aspects of the bilateral relationship. The first formal handshake between Nehru and Adenauer signified a great deal about the strategic relations between the two nations. New Delhi and Berlin should recall such meeting in this phase.

In short, India and Germany has much to offer to the world. Certainly, Germany having command over economic and financial policies, one of the most

important bases for having influence in international politics. However, for Germany it is important to realise that 25 year after the collapsed of Berlin Wall and downfall of communist Bloc as a global political actor, the political pressure in Europe and world have shifted. Fundamentally both the countries should not forget that the geo-political power and financial power depend upon each other. Traditionally, both have very cordial and close relations. In fact, India and Germany have experienced of nationalism and the world of modern political confrontation. Germany has endeavoured for new horizons in economically and politically determined future by rebuilding a war-destroyed and dismantled industries and society. While India has stretched out some beginnings after independence, similarly, both made a fresh start in political and economic compasses after World War II. However, in this century security of the nations is no longer restricted to managing force and removing violence. Thus, finding solution to identify conflicts, regulating a market-based global economy and sustaining the ecological health of the planet are three other areas of concern of every nation. In this background, India and Germany are among significant nations in the world, Germany is located in centre of Europe and India in the heart of South Asia and both believe in open society, pluralism, democracy and respect human rights.

Cultural Relations

Cultural exchanges contributed substantially to mutual understanding between India and Germany for long period. Historically, cultural relations have been century's old between the two nations, and it becomes a firm part of the two country's foreign policy. The development of cultural and scientific connections helped considerably to deepening of relations between India and Germany (Mishra 1986: 62). The cultural relations have also developed rapidly since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Both sides are cooperating closely in the field of education, science, technology, drama, theatres, music and the medicine. The cultural agreement signed on 15th January 1973, which had laid the basic framework for cooperation in the field. Indo-German cultural exchange is based on a cultural agreement that come into force in September 1969.

Yet, School and youth exchanges between the two nations are not fully develop. The success of the some existing school exchanges shows great interest in the

partnership.¹ Certainly, various German Foundations like Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (EFS), etc. operating in India along with their educational programmes provide excellent instrument for fostering Indo-German relations. The impressive economic growth and political stability of Germany in the post-World War II period have greatly influence on the thinking of Indian economist, leaders, academics, experts and Indian population in general. However, media coverage of the cultural and political counterpart still need to augment and get on well. To impart deeper knowledge and first-hand information for better understanding of both countries will be extremely useful and productive for long term relations.

At the same time, both the countries differ fundamentally and in so many respects, Germany geographically and racially somewhat a homogenous nation. On the other hand, India has heterogeneous nation because of history, cultures and races. Can these two different types of nations find perspective anywhere some common ground in 21st century, which could make the way which was established in the past century more productive? Exactly so, this is the question which I would like to put into perspective, by not only drawing the affinities which exist but also exposing the wide differences which separates the two nations. It will not benefit to India and Germany if both countries do not have the courage to recognise how much they differ. It is by such open discussions both can establish a base from which to operate and give more constructive meaning in the partnership, in the realms of education, economic, cultural, security and political as well as people to people interactions. Certainly, German involvement in India is considerable and German investments are large enough to make one believe that modern Germany has developed a stake in India which they will not be able to shake off lightly. But, human relationships between the two countries have not yet taken an encouraging turn and may not even last the stresses and strains of the future. India and Germany need to step up to know more each other through work. Barrier of language is a great handicap in this regard, thus require unsmiling consideration from both the nations.

Scientific and technological cooperation is merely one area of connections established between the two nations. The scope and diversity of these activities reflect the importance which both countries should attribute to regenerative sources of energy in view of

the world energy crunch. Thus, there is significant potential for future cooperation to resolve some of differences especially if it can establish free flow of scientific and technical information and knowledge, further interaction of students, scholars, academics, experts and improve access information of both the nations. To mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations, the “Year of Germany” in India was commemorated from May, 2011 to January, 2013 with the theme “Urban Spaces.” The Days of India in Germany was started with themes, ‘Connecting cultures,’ ‘Connecting Ideas,’ ‘Connecting Capabilities’ and ‘Connecting minds,’ and concluded on 11th April 2013 in Berlin. All these efforts, however, need to re-enforce by clear and close political commitment. This is a novel idea but fundamental and importance for Indo-German relations. If both the countries achieve a real meeting of minds, then nothing could prevent a true and meaningful political partnership in the century. In truth, a political commitment between the countries will not only enhance their prestige in the world but it will also give a wide-ranging bargaining power or position in international politics.

Germany has engaged in a number of steps making German language and their thought more known to the Indians by establishing several institutions in India to teach German language and to spread their culture. Nonetheless, all these efforts though creditable may not succeed in the absence of political commitment by both the countries. In the meantime, cultural activities however, can never be taking place in a vacuum and be pursued unless the ground has been prepared for their reception. In spite of all these educational problems the need for larger number of Indians well acquainted with German is increasing because of developing contacts in the fields of education, trade and technology and essential to strengthen the efforts from both sides.

Though, a fragile base for better Indo-German relations, the question which is posed and which ought to be pursue is how to direct these relationship into a fruitful channel. On the other hand, unless economic and political relations are upgraded, strategic ties cannot be strengthen.

Trade and economic relations

Historically, economic and trade links between India and German date back to the early 16th century when German trading companies from Augsburg and Nuremburg, enlarged new sea route around Africa, as they travelled in search of precious stones and spices. From then on, the story of the economic relations of India and Federal Republic of Germany is a story of long journey as well as achievements. Which has started with the establishment of the Office of Trade Representation of the GDR in the year 1954 and which were further strengthened with the shifting of the Trade Representation Office from Bombay to New Delhi grew very rapidly.² Strong and congenial political relations were reflected in the sphere of economic and industrial partnership in the past. Perhaps, the first German trade representation India were established in 1844. Then, the trade agreement between the two countries was signed on October 16, 1954.³ Further, some economists pointed out that it was the German interest to advance business with India. Today, Germany is one of the leading industrialised nations in the century. Germany is an India’s significant partners in EU and Germany development cooperation with India is a major component of its foreign policy relations. The close and harmonious economic relations between the two countries can be best seen from numerous big business agreements especially technology and energy sphere. Cooperation between India and Germany in trade and technology is one of the most dynamic facets of the bilateral partnership for long period.

Table 1

Indo-German trade values in US \$ millions

Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Indian Exports	6,388.54	5,412.89	6,751.218	7,942.79	7,246.20
% Growth	—	-15.27	24.72	17.65	-8.77
Indian Imports	12,006.2	10,318.18	11,891.37	15,601.13	14,325.79

% Growth	_____	-14.06	15.25	31.20	-8.17
Total Trade	18,394.56	15,731.07	18,642.55	23,542.93	21,571.99
% Growth	_____	-14.48	18.51	26.29	-8.38

Sources: Ministry of Commerce, Government of India

Table.1 shows the import, export and total trade between India and Germany for 2008-2009 to 2012-2013. Bilateral trade displayed a healthy increase to 23,543.93 in the year 2011-2012. But, there was a slowdown in bilateral trade during first half of 2012 which clearly displays from the above data \$ 21,571.99 of 2012 - 2013. However, during the last few years the number of Indo-German trade and joint ventures in India and their expansion of capacity did not increase in way as it was expected and economically viable. The reason behind this under-growth may attribute to bureaucratic bottleneck, licensing and corruption in India. In fact, the Indo-German economic affair of state to state relations and in private business covers a wide range and number of other important projects. Germany, as a contributor, trading partner and source of technology, has surface as a significant influenced in India's economic development for quite long and making an important contribution to the development cooperation programmes. These cooperation seems likely to intensify to quite large extend after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi state visit to Germany, May 2015.

Exchange of business delegation between the nations is logically useful and necessary paving the way for widening and deepening of economic relationship. What are the prospects for Indo-German economic relations today? In fact, India's economic growth and political development holds much scope for fertile Indo-German cooperation. At this stage Germany is providing financial aid and technical assistance for areas of priority such as energy, power, agriculture, education and fertilisers. It should therefore, be an important element of future economic relations between India and Germany to increase interactions between members of business communities, education and research collaboration. India has enormous domestic market, adeptness of English and large pool of potential human resource. At same time, India is pursuing a rapid industrialisation strategy and tries to avoid dependence on other countries, in this context; cooperation with politically stable and economically

robust Germany appeared a perfect solution. Then, why China is automatically the first choice for German companies and Government? This question demand serious thought for India and interrogate to play out in international politics. Historically, Bonn's tilt towards Islamabad under the late Adenauer and Erhard administrations get more visible, which inevitably had repercussions on India's Germany's foreign policy.⁴ Indo-German partnership from 1972 onwards were characterised by what West German ambassador Dirk Oncken in 1978 called 'benign neglect.'⁵

Political Relations

The political relation between India and Germany goes back to the late nineteenth century. Nehru meeting with West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer on October 10, 1960, also India was the first nation to end the state of war with Germany in 1951 and grant the Federal Republic of Germany diplomatic recognition. A strategic partner since 2000, there has been significant progress in all areas of bilateral cooperation through regular high-level talks and meetings at the head of the Government. Interestingly, Germany expressed her viewed to disapprove "Operation Shakti" (Pokhran-II) nuclear test,⁶ yet, supported India's waiver from the Nuclear Supply Group (NSG) to trade nuclear materials and energy.⁷ Today, both countries can be strong partners to tackle the challenges of international concern including order and UN Security Council and other multilateral institutions reforms that reflect the realities of 21st century and power equations, climate change, international terrorism, establishment of stable and sustainable global economic. Thus, how Germany's view India and how India's view Germany in 21st century? To be sure, the situation today is very different from Adenauer's and Nehru's eras. Still the relationship between New Delhi and Berlin needs a sense of purpose and momentum, if not it will flounder in the near future.

Germany has had the nature of comprehensive consultation with India which is one among only third

non-European nations. Understanding of Germany's security interests and its desire to have a role that commensurate with its economic potential, size and political importance and scientific capabilities are changing and are set to make it as a major Europe's political and economic actor. At this stage, however, Germany plays a vital economic role but a modest political and strategic role in Europe. Berlin is emerging as a new, autonomous power centre with euro power. The geopolitical situation of Germany in Europe is similar to that of India in Asia. Today, progressively shrinking world, greater understanding and collaboration between Germany and India can be vital factor for peace and solidarity, but not only for the nations. The world is in transition. The power of states is changing, certainly, it is necessary that major powers like India and Germany cooperate to build new economic and political architecture that take into account the emerging realities of this century. These are challenging tasks and that India and Germany must grapple with today. In globalised society, different types of security risks and challenges are at the background against which Indo-German policies have to design and work with. Now the interesting question is how India and Germany going to manage political and economic cooperation and what can be done to secure the best possible framework for development and resolution of the problems stated. These questions are of important for Indo-German in coming years.

Rethinking is even more demanding on international and Indo-German level. As globalisation begs for more reforms within the two nations, is also puts into question the principles of international political order. So it constitute difficult political and economic challenges to the leadership of both countries to accept interdependence and to communicate it to the population and to response adequately. The combination of warm political relationship with Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and mere trade relations with German Democratic Republic (GDR) characterised India's foreign policy toward Germany for long period. There may be conflicting interests between Berlin and New Delhi, but hardly witnessed any other strong political interaction take placed. Even the economic relations has losing its momentum and intensity, with Berlin is struggling to find solution for eurozone debt crisis and New Delhi is struggling with domestic political and social problems and corruption issues. Notwithstanding irritations and distrust might play some detrimental roles, yet, both sides need to step up a political cooperation. The role played by

Germany in furthering the cause of Indian freedom by giving asylum and help to Indian nationalists like Subhash Chandra Bose created an emotional link between India and Germany which has since been further strengthened by the economic and political connections. However, it is the moment for both the countries to move further and strengthen the existing partnership at new level of relationship.

Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh held first inter-governmental consultation on defence, science and technology, energy and capacity building and signed bilateral agreement in May 2011. With 21st century on, a window of opportunity seems to open for Berlin and New Delhi to work together for better future. For India, Germany continues to be India's largest trading partner in Europe. On February 6, 2014, during the Federal President official visit to India which was accompanied by large business delegation signified the important of trade and economic ties of the two countries, Thus, Pranab Mukherjee the president of India said, "India attaches high priority to Indo-German strategic partnership based on common and shared values,"⁸ Therefore, to what extent Indo-German interactions permeated even the political sphere is proven by the fact that India experts studied the Basic Law of the Federal Republic to replicate and find models. The political important of Indo-German relations demonstrated when for the first time Chancellor Dr. Kiesinger visited India in November 1967, putting the political stamp on traditional friendship. Both the countries have strength and vigour to strive for kind of cooperation that might serve as a model in international political order. No doubt, Berlin is importance for New Delhi to expand and strengthen political and economic cooperation with the EU in the century. Likewise, Berlin needs to realise the growing importance of India in South Asia, for India is playing significant role in the region. Clearly, the international and domestic challenges confronting Berlin and New Delhi provide an opportunity to converge the ideas and interest to deepen the relationships. However, it is essentially important to ensure that these challenges do not compel India and Germany to act in ways that might impinge on both interests. Significantly, German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen strongly pitched for deepening cooperation, particularly in the fields of cyberspace and Maritimes security, during her recent visit to New Delhi, May 28, 2015.

Conclusion

Today, when we are witnessing the unfolding of new landscapes of cooperation between India and Germany on political, economic, cultural, education and technology, at the time when disruptive forces are functioning, trying to prevent the spread of the democratic principle, values and norms. When disintegrationist forces are devising to cash in on the grave economic crisis in the world, Indo-German partnership offers a secure foundation for safeguarding peace, democracy and human rights. Together New Delhi and Berlin can march ahead and can play vital role in bringing peace and understanding in the world. Thereby, strengthen the relations by engaging more in political and economic, cultural, education sphere and coordinate closely by working together on global issues such as security, development, trade, climate change, energy and international terrorism.

The bilateral development offers great scope of further progress and confidence that the leaders of two countries would build upon the existing fund of understanding and mutual cooperation to take further. However, still the potential of the relationship has yet to be fully realised. The introduction of a new government in New Delhi and Berlin under the leadership of Narendra Modi and Angela Merkel is natural opportunity to broaden and deepen the relationship. In fact, the recent Modi state visit to Germany brought out new vigour and hope for both countries to move further in the century. The subsequent visit of German Defence Minister explains the reciprocal gesture from Berlin and explain significant of partnership. However, both the leaders must understand and fund mutually rewarding ways to expand the collaboration in trade, investment and technologies that harmonise with India's ambitious development agenda of Modi government, while sustaining the Germany as the global leader of growth, like renewable energy. India's strategy after Modi, the government is increasingly becoming outward oriented and engaging more with economically developed countries. Thus, it is a natural opportunity for Berlin to grapple and engage more to deepen and widen the economic partnership in the century.

There is a need to rejuvenate the bilateral economic relationship and raise it to new trajectory by opening markets, simplifying procedures and overcoming administrative barriers. More importantly, India needs to develop a more mature and set of scales relationship with Germany. India needs to seriously look into the administrative procedures, governance, red-tapism,

transparency and corruption and strong commitment rather than giving rhetoric statement. India and China are now in new world order, with two big players in Asia, thus, Germany should take decisive steps to make clear and strong political commitments, even if the relations with China seem to be far more significance. India and Germany need to make strong commitment for much heralded shared values, norms of democracy into reality and start to take active role in political relations from which common policies, ideas and better future for partnership can emanate. Will the two countries are able to calibrate their ties in a time of change.

This is extremely significant since two important regional powers aspiring to play active global role must understand and respect one another's concerns and interest. Will Modi and Merkel take the leap and impress new level of relationship in next four years? Is New Delhi gearing up to roll-out the red carpet for Angela Merkel? All these are essential to ensure that our economic ties with Germany go beyond the purchase of Mercedes and BMW car. Both the two major regional power of Europe and Asia can be model and significance players in world politics. Commenting on India's 'make in India' and 'digital India' campaign, German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen said, "You don't want only to buy, you want a close cooperation by manufacturing and producing parts in India too, which I think is a very smart approach for both sides as close cooperation between strategist partners should never be a one way cooperation or collaboration," in New Delhi, 2015. Her statement bear politically and economically significant for both the nations, when India is in need of technology and investments from developed countries.

End Notes

¹ Part for the Future initiatives (PASCH), the Goethe institute and the Central for Schools Abroad (ZfA) has succeeded in getting 42 Indian partners schools to introduce German as a foreign language. There are an estimated 13,000 students learning German at these schools. The branch office of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Delhi supports bilateral university and research cooperation programmes and deals with scholarship programmes. http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Nodes/Indien_node.html

² Trade relations between the two countries got a further impetus with the signing of another agreement on November 3, 1958.

³ With the establishment of diplomatic relations between two countries on October 8, 1972, there was a visible spurt in Indo-German economic and trade relations. Since then, the Germany has providing India with know-how in the past years in the various fields.

⁴ Gupta, Das, Amit, 'Divided Nations: India and Germany,' In Andreas Hilger, Corina R.Unger (eds.), 'India in the World since 1947: National and Transnational Perspective.' P-311

⁵ Gupta Das Amit, "Divide Nations: India and Germany," In Andreas Hilger/Corina R. Unger (eds.), 'India in the World Since 1947: National and transnational perspectives,' P-322. From the report of ambassador Oncken from September 27, 1978, In: Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik, 1978, Vol. II Doc. 284.

⁶ On May 1998, 'operation Shakti' (Pokhran-II) test explosions conducted by India. It was the second nuclear test since the first test, codenamed 'smiling Bhuddha', had been conducted in May 1974

⁷ Nuclear Supply Group is a multinational body concerned with reducing nuclear proliferation by controlling the export and re-transfer of materials that may be applicable to nuclear weapon development and improving safeguard on existing materials

⁸ Indo-German strategic partnership based on shared values: President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, http://www.irma.ir/en/News/81031444/Politic/Indo-German_strategic_partnership_based_on_shared_values_P_resident

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