

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q17

Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pro and cons. Critically Examine.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · GS II · 12 marks · India and its Neighbourhood

India and its neighborhood - relations.

Core demand of the question

- Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pro and cons. Critically Examine

Revision summary

India's African interest has grown for energy, markets, UN votes, diaspora and Indian Ocean security.

Pros include lines of credit, generics, training, peacekeeping and a South-South political language.

Cons include stalled projects, China competition, resource politics and thin diplomatic capacity.

Africa is many States, not one vote bank.

Delivery and local agency decide whether the turn is partnership or over-promise.

Introduction

Africa is fifty-four countries, not one market. India's interest has grown through energy, minerals, lines of credit, peacekeeping, the diaspora, and a search for partners in a China-shaped Indian Ocean and UN. The third India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in 2015 made that interest public and large. The relationship has real gains for both sides. It also has credit risk, China competition, domestic African politics, and the charge that Delhi talks South-South equality while chasing the same resources as other powers. A critical examination must hold both ledgers.

Body

Why interest has increased

- **Energy and commodities:** West and East African oil, gas and minerals matter as India diversifies away from a narrow set of Gulf and Iranian barrels.
- **Markets and food:** a young population and unmet infrastructure demand can take Indian generics, two-wheelers, ICT, agriculture extension and cheap engineering goods.
- **Diplomacy:** African votes matter in the UN General Assembly, IAEA and climate talks, and for India's claim to a reformed Security Council.
- **Security:** piracy off the Horn, extremism in the Sahel and the western Indian Ocean, and China's port and base footprint (including Djibouti) pull the Indian Navy and diplomacy south-west.

- **Diaspora and history:** Indian communities in eastern and southern Africa, and the older NAM and anti-apartheid record, give India a political language China does not have.

Pros

- Development partnership through concessional lines of credit, training (ITEC), **Pan-African e-Network**, and cheap generic medicines fits India's brand as a partner rather than a classical coloniser.
- Indian firms in telecom, energy and pharma create jobs and skills in host countries when they hire locally and stay through political cycles.
- Maritime cooperation, hydrography and **UN peacekeeping** (India has long been a large troop contributor on African missions) build security public goods.
- A more equal voice for the Global South on trade, climate finance and UN reform is easier if India is present in Addis, Abuja and Pretoria, not only in Washington and Brussels.
- African students and professionals in India, and Indian projects in agriculture, can be genuine human-capital ties.

Cons and costs

- Lines of credit can become stalled projects, unpaid loans, and local anger if contractors, transparency and maintenance are weak. Then India looks like any other creditor.
- China offers scale, speed and bundled railways that India cannot match dollar for dollar. Competing only on cheque size is a losing and debt-heavy game.
- Resource-seeking can clash with local environmental and labour politics. Indian companies have faced protests and regulatory fights in some jurisdictions.
- Africa is not a vote bank. States split on UN reform, on ICC, and on relations with Pakistan and China. Over-counting "Africa" as one bloc is a diplomatic error.
- **Domestic capacity:** Exim Bank, missions, language skills and project-management teams are thin relative to the 2015 summit promises. Announcement-to-delivery gaps hurt credibility.
- **Security entanglement:** training and equipment can drag India into others' civil wars if due diligence is light.
- **Opportunity cost:** every rupee of concessional finance is a choice against a domestic infrastructure or African-language mission post that was not opened.

Critical balance

- Interest is justified. Neglect would cede the western Indian Ocean and UN numbers to others.
- The healthy path is demand-driven projects, local content, timely completion, and issue-based coalitions, not a replica of anyone else's chequebook diplomacy.

Flow diagram

Indian interest in Africa -> Energy markets UN votes ITEC medicines
 Indian interest in Africa -> Credit risk China scale delivery gap
 Energy markets UN votes ITEC medicines -> South-South partnership
 Credit risk China scale delivery gap -> Credibility loss
 Demand-driven local content -> South-South partnership

Conclusion

• **Increasing Indian interest in Africa has clear pros:** energy and markets, UN and climate partners, diaspora bridges, medicines, training and maritime security. The cons are credit and project risk, China-scale competition, fragmented African politics, thin delivery capacity, and the temptation of resource-first diplomacy. Critically, the relationship works when India is a reliable, modest-scale partner that finishes what it announces. It fails when summits outrun missions, audits and African agency.

Facts & figures

India-Africa Forum Summit III, 2015

Held in New Delhi; all African States were invited; India announced a large package of concessional credit and grants.

ITEC

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme trains foreign officials and students, including a large African cohort.

Pan-African e-Network

An Indian-supported tele-education and tele-medicine project linking African countries, often cited as a flagship of digital partnership.

UN peacekeeping

India has been among the largest troop contributors to UN missions in several African theatres.

China in Africa

Larger trade, infrastructure finance and a military base at Djibouti; the main competitive backdrop to India's 2010s African push.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2015/increasing-interest-of-india-in-africa-has-its-pro-and-cons-critically-examine/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com