

AFRICA JOINING BRICS: PROSPECTS FOR BETTER COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND THE CONTINENT

Saleel CHEMBAYIL,

*Dep't of Political Science and International Relations, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja
saleel.chembayil@nileuniversity.edu.ng*

Abstract

Africa has been functioning as a strategic partner of BRICS since 2013, when the South African Republic was allowed to be admitted to the group. Both the African countries and the members of BRICS are placing significant importance on the meaning of this initiative. Officially, the existing members of BRICS share the view that cooperation that has begun in the past has improved the economic and social performance of their countries. Nevertheless, it is still debatable how exactly the countries that are members of the BRICS can profit if their cooperation with Africa or with potential BRICS members from the continent is raised to a higher level. One of the foremost questions is whether economic growth and trade can be updated provincially in the course of strengthening these relations. A fairly developed relationship in terms of trade exists, given the fact that operational trade flows are continuing and that funds previously fully dependent on reliance on one-sided assistance are now relying on their national net income and local partnerships. In such a scenario, continentally, Africa and India's united powers against the Western and European global forums and decision-makers help consolidate financial and environmental interests in these countries. To critically represent the status that both India and Africa are seen as a sole body, the value of integrating the continent of Africa with Afro-Asian articulation and the test of time until representative of Indian craftsmanship as a special caste are examined. The study concludes that the prospects of Africa becoming a partner in BRICS to work closely with India, thus making easier the process for enhanced relations between India and African economies.

Keywords: *India-Africa Relations, BRICS' Expansion, Trade Opportunities,
Economic Cooperation, Geopolitical Influence, Sustainable Development.*

DOI: 10.31039/jgss.v5i20.317

1. INTRODUCTION

Global interdependence in the 21st century has brought to the forefront the importance of understanding international alliances in the paradigm of a multipolar world with the transnational evolution of business and politics. In light of this spectacle, closer cooperation with 54 nations and most of the world's developing economies, with a basket of goods of strategic diplomacy, economy, and regionalism, would indeed be a beneficial process. This vein of thought, though, is easier said than done due to the incongruent and, at times, divergent location of national objectives and the presence of delicate issues that the contemporary African-Indian relationship surrounds (Halog & Anieke, 2021).

No process of regional cooperation, alliance, or partnership is bereft of the economics around which modernity thrives. For India and Africa, too, economic synergy is an essential aspect of future international relations. Shared challenges within India and Africa represent not only a manifestation of the undercurrent of discrimination inherent to the system of globalization but also the very possibility of a future. Africa has become an attractive scene for Indian capital. India has thus courted African leaders both politically and economically. It has claimed a new Indian activism in its foreign and trade policy at the national and sub-regional levels. Africa is open to India in several avenues, extending from culture to investment opportunities in the energy and natural resources arena. What could India and Africa share in the future? A common cultural base could provide abundant symbiotic harmony. Modern trade and investment interface, energy and strategic cooperation, and dispelling suspicions could render Indo-Africa relations into an evergreen period with a true compatibility of values. Thus, the inherent features of the Indian-African relationship briefly outline the various missions—economic, strategic, and cultural—that India, together with select elite African nations, is expected to fulfill in the new millennium (Nouck, 2021).

While it is not our intention to focus on the BRICS in general, the African continent's orientation of interest to members of this group gives an important academic and theoretical rationale, as well as policy importance. This is underscored by the calls on BRICS to engage with Africa more systematically and strategically, as represented on the African side by the current interest in formal membership of the BRICS or dialogue partners. Against this theoretical and policy backdrop, it is important to highlight the following for membership of this group. BRICS, as it exists today, is recognized as important in its focus on enhancing intra-group collaboration, despite continuing questions about the existence of a grand strategy for

this in the eyes of some external observers. However, the issue of historical ties among the BRICS, South Africa, and Africa must also be stated (Antony, 2023).

It was important, therefore, that as per the growing centrality of Africa and the Global South in the global political economy, BRICS should engage with the continent, particularly in the context of historical relations with the continent at the height of the freedom struggles and interests of the Global South. The discussion on BRICS-Africa, and for our purposes, particularly India-Africa, currently takes place against several global shifts. These global shifts have sparked renewed interest in relations between emerging economies, but these shifts are of particular significance to Africa and India and their longstanding solidarity ties that play an ongoing role in this changing global context. This is particularly the case given the long-term strategic interests of both global powers that have seen to it that politics will always shape economic exchanges (Santos & Cazzamatta, 2024).

The primary aim of this study is to analyze how Africa's joining BRICS can impact or alter relations between India and the African continent. The objective pertains to whether there may be various potential benefits for the continent of Africa, both in terms of economic advantages and in terms of offering African countries a platform to further assert themselves and align politically or culturally with a friendly group of nations that are considered geographically and geopolitically advantageous. The paper is categorized into three sections. The first section is devoted to the introduction, and the overview of the historical context of BRICS formation. The second section looks at Africa's relationship with BRICS, and the third section looks into India's engagement with Africa.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BRICS

By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, it became clear that the unipolar world, which lasted for about 15 years, was going down. Indeed, the new millennium was marked by the economic and political revival of two civilizations of ours, namely China and India, and the establishment of new totemic international clubs, namely BRICS and IBSA, which pursued diverse goals. Historically, the BRICS nations are said to have had common difficulties in the post-World War II era. Despite being victorious and entering the UN Security Council as permanent members, the West—the US, the new hegemon of the world, and the former colonial master, the UK—discriminated against them by asking them to play the role of minor partners in a world shaped by the newly developed countries of the OECD, G8, and G20; namely the

US, Canada, and Australia (in the Pacific Rim) and Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, the UK, and Italy (in Europe). Both India and China have had a common presence in the Group of Seven developed countries led by the US in pushing their dispute to the rear side. India, which was then more socialist, was always looked down upon by the capitalist West (Southworth, 2023).

The BRIC story started at a meeting in 2001 between BRIC national leaders. Held at that time on the sidelines of a G-8 meeting, the meeting of the heads of state of Brazil, Russia, India, and China was initially centered on global economic issues, chiefly as an alternative platform to the “North”-driven G-7 discussions. When first proposed, it was a response to two crises that were hurting the global economy: a high-technology collapse that left the developed world equity markets and telecommunications sectors in distress and a bank-finance-fueled emerging market asset bubble and meltdown. Emerging markets such as those of the BRIC are viewed as the principal driving force of the world’s economy. At the very outset, it was not viewed with suspicion or apprehension (Patnaik, 2022).

Rather, it was seen as an alternative to the US-led G8 system, and it went on to gain its new identity, which expanded into a geopolitical alliance over the issue of supporting Russia’s stance on the Georgia-Caucasus region with its former Soviet compatriot in August 2008. The foreign ministers of India, Brazil, and South Africa met right away and stated that the US was endorsing Russia’s position. After this meeting was held, the observers and experts started to discuss this new trajectory by bringing in the different implications of this increasing partnership. While the existing alliances were fraternities of substantial size on which to sustain global influence, India, China, Russia, and South Africa—or the IBSA—represent a different set of solutions (Patnaik, 2022).

2.1 Evolution of BRICS

The process of the BRICS alliance has been extremely dynamic, which the member countries and outside analysts have often labeled as multi-format. From the meeting of the four foreign ministers and from the major economies meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2006, the former finally agreed to organize a regular North-South dialogue during the foreign ministers' meeting in New York in 2006. The first formalization of such an agreement came with the IBSA meeting that was held on the margins of UNGA in New York, to be followed by two more IBSA summits (at Rio in 2006 and Pretoria in 2007). The first

BRIC summit took place in Yekaterinburg in 2009, and the alliance was formally institutionalized with a membership summit in addition to the Russia, Brazil, and China trilateral meeting (as had been the case in the absence of both India and South Africa in 2001). South Africa was designated as the fifth and newest member at the previous BRIC summit at Sanya, hosted by China in 2011 (Kirton & Larionova, 2022).

The group has often been seen as a reaction to the changing structure of the global economy and politics, with a strong rejection of contemporary discourse and attempts by the incumbents, which they view as very Western-like attempts and perpetuation of arrangements that are seen as increasingly out of sync with the needs of the 21st century, with over 80 percent of the world's population living in the south. Many political commentators have declared it to be an alliance made under the compulsions of escaping the financial crisis of 2008 and revolting against the tyranny of existing economic governance. There is also a view that it is a grouping against terrorism and extremism in the Islamic world and also as a pivot to counter the Washington Consensus, the latter in a scholarly extent is contested by the group, which has always projected its sulky image. Brasilia has often been caught candidly replying when such an 'accusation' against the group is launched by journalists (Schwab, 2021).

3. AFRICA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH BRICS

In recent years, a connection has been established between Africa and BRICS. The connection is not novel and has its roots in history. These historical connectors are explicitly articulated in Key Facets of Africa's Relationship with BRICS. First, the Bandung Conference of 1955 laid the foundations of collaboration between developing Asian and African countries and with the USSR and other socialist countries, leading to the establishment of the Afro-Asian countries' forum in 1958 in Cairo. However, due to increasing complexities and influence division, this forum meets every decade, and the last meeting was held in Jakarta in 1994 (Indrayana, 2024).

Second, African countries established formal diplomatic relationships with Russia in 1941 when the Soviet Union established embassies in many colonial outposts such as Addis Ababa, Cairo, Conakry, Dakar, Lagos, Maputo, Rabat, Tunis, and Tripoli around 1966 in Somalia and 1961 in Guinea. This is a sign of the normal trade and partnership cooperation between African countries and BRICS. Africa cooperates with different international institutions and meetings with BRICS. Examples of existing partnerships and initiatives include the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2007 between China and South Africa, the China-Africa cooperation

forum, the Brazil-Africa cooperation strategy, the India-Brazil-South Africa forum, and the India-Africa summit, the Organization of African Unity partnership between Africa and Iran, and the QUAD meetings between India, South Africa, Brazil, and Venezuela. These and other movements are opportunities to further Africa's continent-to-continent relations with BRICS; as earlier said, the collaboration would give Africa a bigger voice in global fora. Africa is part of BRICS's partnerships with Africa and other developing countries' socioeconomic cooperation, not earmarked for military cooperation. However, the cooperation between African countries and BRICS takes place in several sectors at several levels and takes the form of policy dialogues on investment, trade, and sustainable development. In the Africa- India framework for cooperation in agriculture, we represent 24% of the African- Indian relationship, and rural development accounts for over 10% (Kirton & Larionova, 2022).

3.1. Current Status of Africa-BRICS Cooperation

Official relations between 2010 and 2014 included 139 agreements between African representatives and BRICS countries. As highlighted, agreements were more likely about political relations between countries and 9 about economic agreements between African officials representing countries and BRICS countries. Union officials include trade, economic, financial, and the development of cultural and artistic ties between countries and managing organizations' representatives. Additionally, the researchers argue that Sino-African relations rest on three pillars: the promotion of political contacts, trade, and investment. Also, the scholars argue for a need to create uniform quality standards and to exchange protection of investment agreements with regular African standards, where these standards are recurrent and the same among African and Indian countries involved in India- Africa relations (Muresan, 2023).

3.2 Potential Benefits of Africa Joining BRICS

It is a widely shared belief that if Africa accedes to BRICS, it stands to secure considerable economic benefits. For any country, economic growth, industrialization, and infrastructure development create a win-win situation, as all other problems can be solved through these processes. From an African perspective, the consequences of BRICS membership might be assessed in the context of developmental imperatives and strategies, as many African states have prioritized or are in the process of redirecting their brief toward industrialization and infrastructure development (Nach & Ncwadi, 2024).

More than a decade after acceding to BRICS, South Africa as an African member has experienced relative benefits, for example: - Improved market access to attract foreign direct investment commitment on a global scale; - Access to loans, infrastructure development funding, and other financial resources; - Creation of new markets; - Expansion of opportunities in trade, industry, and technology among and between Africa's five BRICS partners; - Development and decolonization of Africa; - Opportunities for stronger South-South partnerships in this post-colonial era; and - Fulfillment of the requirements of the AU's Pan African Agenda and that of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. BRICS membership benefits lie in technological cooperation centered on linking research institutions, science and technology, knowledge and skills, and growth in manufacturing and industrialization in a range of fields. Any cooperation among Africa, India, and the BRICS should employ these synergies to further deal with infrastructure development for the benefit of all involved (Arapova & Lissovlik, 2021).

(Trade relations among BRICS nations, growth and development in Trade between India and South Africa, Cases of other African countries joining BRICS, current status of Trade relations of those countries with India, potential areas of cooperation, countering China's overwhelming influence in the continent, Better trade relations and more economic resources for infrastructural development without getting into debt trap as it has been a case with China)

3.3 Economic Growth and Development

Africa's membership in BRICS will provide enormous opportunities to expand trade and investment flows among the countries from the continent and the five big economies of the South. Institutionalizing economic relations through existing regional economic communities has already shown tremendous positive results. While concerns have often been raised about the impacts of South-South trade on industrialization as well as African countries' collective bargaining powers in the global marketplace, it is irrefutable that African economies, differently endowed with primary products and industrial goods, fit nicely into the production and trade patterns already existing within BRICS, thus offering new windows for the expansion of such trade (Aakas, 2022).

The second advantage of Africa's membership in BRICS is, therefore, that African countries will now be able to access know-how, experiences, technologies, and management skills from BRICS that are essential for periodic changes in Africa's economies consistent with

improvements in building resilience. This becomes ever more relevant at this juncture when all the African regions are either at the start of carrying out their respective economic partnership agreements with the European Union or are planning or contemplating to do so while at the same time also aglow with various supra-regional economic plans. Similarly, industrial countries, with available resources, have been in the process of using such agreements as instruments for securing unrestrained access to natural resources, including energy markets (Tsegaye, 2021).

Within the realm of energy, for example, there is an experience of practical cooperation that has been in existence between member countries of one region in the Western Indian Ocean and China. Phase one of the Trans-Oceanic Optic Fibre project between the latter and member countries was implemented very comfortably with funding. In contrast, phase two of the project, which is currently at the planning stage, is being funded on a project finance basis by development bank instruments. When implemented, this second phase would connect the selected Horn of Africa and Southern African countries to the SEACOM project and, therefore, to the Next-Generation Internet through networks (Eben, 2024).

3.4 Enhanced Trade Opportunities

The formation of the BRICS is a significant event in the world with potential gains for member countries. This economic bloc has more than a third of the world's population and a combined GDP equal to about 16% of global GDP. Intra-BRICS trade grew at a compound annual growth rate over 2000-2008 and over 2003-2009. Such power of the countries that are part of the alliance suggests potential for breakthroughs in the economies of the partner states. Even at present, BRICS play an important role in the world economy. The forum has great political weight in global affairs, so all decisions are strongly followed by the international community. Furthermore, the member countries are encouraged to open their markets to enhance trade and provide some export incentives for products under the policy 'Trade within BRICS.' Thus, becoming part of BRICS is another logical stepping stone for India's current foreign policies to establish and expand its ties with Asian and African countries (Lal, 2023).

Worldwide markets have witnessed growing cooperation with countries from the African continent. Trade between Asia, especially member countries, and African countries has increased over the recent past. The growth experienced by these countries can further increase to a higher level by integrating these two regions into a single market. Additionally, these

countries are trusted by the partner markets to provide investors with significant profits in the current fast-growing economies. Thus, changing this partnership to membership in BRICS can yield outcomes that will open markets for trade. In this direction, the importance of market access for services and agricultural products can also be seen as areas of export promotion from the African side. Here, I will evaluate the potential for enhanced trade opportunities brought by a prospective membership of African countries from this three-fold angle (Melo & Twum, 2021).

3.5 Infrastructure Development

Africa's key to possible success in BRICS, from the African viewpoint, lies in developing sustainable infrastructure, as well as in integrating BRICS with this objective. Infrastructure development in Africa has always been and still is a major challenge. Inadequate infrastructural development has had negative implications not only in the most fundamental sectors, such as living standards and health, but also on trade, investment, economic growth, and overall development on the continent. The continent needs to invest up to US\$ 100 billion a year over the next two decades to double access to electricity, provide modern cooking energy to a majority of the population, and achieve universal access to clean water and sanitation. Energy and infrastructure development are highly interconnected. By investing in one, several positive externalities will be achieved in the other sector (Nchake & Shuaibu, 2022).

One argument for African BRICS lies in what certain countries can contribute to infrastructure development in Africa, given its underdevelopment in this area. Considerable investments have been made in African infrastructure development, particularly in telecommunications, power generation, and roads. There is technical expertise available to improve railway services in the mining sector. Additionally, there is expertise in the railway sector. A public-private partnership has been established in the African infrastructure sector. Of major significance is the need to develop a governance infrastructure that links an increasing number of respective national entities with a wide range of similar standalone infrastructure, especially those entities capable of refracting the range of intersecting governance needs across key development geographies, including the entire continent. There could be assistance in developing semi-compatible systems for effective implementation (Malah Kuete & Asongu, 2023).

3.6. The Role of BRICS in Enhancing India – Africa Relations

One of the prospects for better economic and commercial cooperation between India and Africa could come from BRICS itself. As a platform for improved diplomatic relations and enhanced economic cooperation, BRICS can serve as a policy platform for economic cooperation between India and Africa. A natural point of interest for the use of BRICS as an economic policy platform for India and Africa is the nature of their trade relations. It is indicative of the economic and investment linkages owing to the legacy of their colonial past and other joint international policies. Africa's economic linkages with India are less than its largest linkages. Trade relations with India are significant for Africa, however. Despite this, the imbalances in growth in their trade and size and their implications for their trade have not been sufficiently analyzed. Alliances between states of the South in other parts of the world suggest how serious balancing and realignment may be discounted as an option. However, India sees BRICS as a platform to hold consultations with key developing countries. It reflects an accommodation of North-South, South-South, and intra-BRICS dynamics (Yarygina, Zhiglyayeva, Vershinina, & Kuvshinova, 2021).

Given the limited size of most developed economies in Africa, BRICS can offer new perspectives on market growth and provide a greater degree of investment security for Indian firms. A balance of approaches could increase India's strategic positioning for major projects, and despite competition for resources, India is reasonably well aligned to compete in such Third World markets. The combining exponential growth offered by BRICS may encourage a positive approach to India- Africa cooperation on the part of resource-rich African countries (Iqbal, 2022).

Competition within India for Africa also ensures that both efforts and results are spread evenly across the continent. BRICS offers equitable sustainable development, a mix of state-owned and private enterprises, cultural exchanges, and ministerial meetings. This ensures they interact at the commercial and governmental levels. Moreover, several BRICS initiatives can provide a basis for cooperation between emerging powers. The BRICS Business Forum and the Forum for State Policy Think Tanks hold meetings of representatives of affected countries. The agreement appears positive for India and Africa engagement, especially because of the role Brazil and Africa play in BRICS. However, for India and Africa to reap the best of cooperation through BRICS, there is a need to synergize their resource interests and ensure their launch forth of each sector is aligned. Becoming members of BRICS and IBSA makes Africa the scout

of India's policy. It has more reason in Sino-Indian terms; unfortunately, IBSA fits in the era of multi-alignment (Iqbal, 2022).

4. INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

India's engagement with Africa has evolved significantly over the years, marked by a growing emphasis on trade, investment, and cultural exchange that fosters mutual growth and development. This transformation is evident in various sectors, including technology, agriculture, and education. As both regions recognize the potential for collaboration, initiatives such as the India-Africa Forum Summit have laid the groundwork for strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing economic ties and cultural understanding. Furthermore, such forums have not only facilitated dialogue but have also provided a platform for showcasing India's commitment to supporting Africa's development through technology transfer, investment in infrastructure, and capacity building. This collaborative spirit is evident in initiatives such as the India-Africa Forum Summit, where both parties can explore opportunities for joint ventures and partnerships that align with the Sustainable Development Goals. Such platforms serve as a vital conduit for enhancing trade relations, facilitating capacity building, and promoting cultural exchanges between India and African nations. This collaborative framework enhances India's ability to tap into the vast resources and markets that Africa offers while also addressing mutual challenges, such as climate change and sustainable development (Munjal, Varma, & Bhatnagar, 2022).

4.1. Historical Ties

The historical ties between Africa and India can be traced back centuries, characterized by cultural exchanges, trade relations, and shared struggles against colonialism. These ties have evolved through various interactions, including the historical maritime connections between Indian and African traders, which facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural practices. Furthermore, both regions have experienced similar challenges in their fight for independence, fostering a sense of solidarity that has continued to influence their diplomatic relations in the contemporary era. This shared history has not only shaped their mutual understanding but also laid the groundwork for future collaborations in various sectors, including trade, technology, and cultural exchange. As both nations navigate the complexities of the global economy, their historical ties can serve as a robust framework for fostering enhanced partnerships. This alignment not only opens avenues for increased investment but

also encourages shared initiatives in sustainable development that benefit both regions (Marks, 2024).

The inclusion of African nations in the BRICS alliance represents a significant opportunity for enhanced collaboration between India and the continent, fostering economic growth, political stability, and cultural exchange. This partnership has the potential to leverage India's technological advancements and Africa's abundant natural resources, leading to mutually beneficial outcomes. Moreover, as BRICS expands its focus beyond traditional economic metrics, it can facilitate a platform for African nations to voice their concerns and aspirations on the global stage. This inclusivity not only enhances the legitimacy of BRICS as a geopolitical entity but also aligns with India's vision of fostering deeper ties with African countries, thereby promoting mutual growth and sustainable development. This engagement could lead to enhanced trade partnerships, increased investment flows, and collaborative initiatives in sectors such as technology, agriculture, and renewable energy (Arapova & Lissovolik, 2021).

4.2. Current Economic and Political Relations

The current economic and political relations between Africa and India are characterized by a growing partnership that seeks to enhance trade, investment, and diplomatic ties, reflecting the broader objectives of BRICS as a platform for South-South cooperation. This partnership is underscored by several bilateral agreements aimed at fostering economic development and mutual benefit, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing common challenges such as poverty alleviation and infrastructure development. These agreements not only focus on trade and investment but also emphasize the need for technological cooperation and capacity building. By working together, India and African nations can create sustainable development pathways that benefit both parties (Basrur & Kutty, 2021).

The recent decision of several African nations to join BRICS signifies a pivotal moment in international relations, presenting unique opportunities for enhanced cooperation between India and the African continent. This shift not only reflects the growing geopolitical influence of Africa but also opens avenues for India to strengthen its economic ties and cultural exchanges with the region. As a member of BRICS, Africa stands to benefit from increased investment opportunities, technology transfer, and collaborative initiatives that could drive sustainable development across various sectors. This membership is expected to facilitate

stronger trade relations with India, which can lead to enhanced economic growth and poverty alleviation initiatives. Furthermore, the collaboration may also foster cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between the people of Africa and India (Kirton & Larionova, 2022).

4.3 Strategies for Strengthening India-Africa-BRICS Cooperation

Some of the most crucial strategies for stronger India-Africa-BRICS cooperation are to develop a strategy for Africa, bringing the mix of African projects at BRICS platforms towards the formations. Furthermore, individual states and officers must seek to maximize their intersections of BRICS, India, and Africa interests, seeking both a zero categorization and a 100 categorization regarding interests within the three formations. Developing common diplomatic discourse is necessary to enhance institution building. A collective posture of the three must be chiseled for each of the global issues under consideration. India, Africa, and each of the BRICS must define their principles or supreme goals; but each must also seek to maximize its positions within the limitations of the interests of its partners (Martel & Glas, 2023).

Cooperation with think tanks and universities in organizing Track II forums is necessary. Also, capacity building needs to be addressed, as, at present, there are no African institutions where people with knowledge of Russia are trained for Central and Southern Africa. Officers in the formations must undergo cohort training not only within the formations but must also be trained together so that their willingness to use these emerging finance policies is strengthened over time. The need for more people-to-people and cultural interaction is crucial in the framework of the strategies of all three: India, Africa, and BRICS (Nefedova, 2021). In such processes, institutional reform and the fiscal sociology of these international organizations must be activated. There is a strong need for building experiences and establishing systems for the African nation-states to share such experiences of managing positions in the BRICS. Are we up to the strategy with stacks? As academics, we only seek. But are we the world? As academics - no! Therefore, the world and the nations of Africa fighting for their existence and development are looking for a strategizing firm from leaders who ensure that Africa's growth and stability is also their growth and stability. The power of self-interest and zero-sum thinking leads five countries to have four permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council while there are 822 million people in Africa. Strategy with stacks recognizes the world as a zero and thinks in zeros (Nefedova, 2021).

4.3.1. Capacity Building Initiatives

Efforts to improve cooperative functionality in the triad of India, Africa, and BRICS can be delved into from the angle of capacity-building initiatives in Africa. Capacity-building is imperative for effective cooperation. The program on capacity building aims to transfer the already extensive Indian experience in the public sector to African countries to improve the efficient functioning of institutions. These institutions help private investors set up industries and services in rural and urban areas. The Indian program involves four key components necessary for capacity building, including institutional arrangements, physico-financial support, training, and inputs for the implementation of capacity building in the form of South-South cooperation and partnership dimensions. The importance of these components and approaches is as follows (Malah Kuete & Asongu, 2023).

Nowadays, the importance of training is not merely skills and knowledge; rather, it is oriented towards behavioral change. The promotion of a center of excellence in the form of the India-Africa Integrated Capacity Building Program for Government Officials and Policy Planners will be very effective for quality and ability. Inter-agency training and systematic exchanges of visits from both sides are important for mutual understanding to formulate the working mechanism. India set up the India-Africa Fund for Science and Technology to empower and strengthen sustainable scientific and technological research and innovation in Africa. This initiative will go a long way in shaping the role of technology transfer, local adaptation, and scientific research concerning Africa-India relations. The Indian approach to technology transfer is systematic in the sense that India's roadmap provides valuable insights and learning for collaboration between Africa, India, and BRICS (Nouck, 2021).

The transfer of management and marketing techniques and the entry of low and small-scale industries from India in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and other fields have increased the possibility of radical improvement in livelihoods in rural areas. Several Indian success stories have been studied by BRICS and African countries with a success rate in improving local people's livelihoods. For example, Indian Integrated Dry Land Technology has been introduced in Namibia, cited as a classical case. India's initiatives in agro-based goods and capacity development started in 1956 and continue to the present date, aiding in evolving appropriate technologies that are best suited for specific local African environments. Countries investing in technology development have better chances of enhancing food production and security. The transmission of technology and education could help poor people improve their livelihoods.

The capital-importing firm selects the appropriate technologies from outside and engages in labor skills and job mix. Improved labor organization and labor skills are important components of technological improvements. Hence, education and training for acquiring improved skills have positive utility for job seekers. In India, it is also found that the objective of capacity building is to obtain the required learning skills and knowledge to facilitate the transfer of technology to the user (Martel & Glas, 2023).

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is understandable that Africa's inclusion in BRICS is generally seen as mutually beneficial. Similarly, India has had historical relationships with some of the African countries, though largely shaped by colonial economics. However, of late, the relations have been dramatically changing towards cooperation, where Africa is no longer seen as a passive recipient of aid and charity. The focus is to develop a mutually beneficial collaboration. Potential areas such as economic synergy and political alignment are emerging as strategic areas for cooperation and coordination, both politically and commercially. Thus, it is in this rapidly changing global environment that the prospects of Africa becoming a partner in BRICS to work closely with India, thus making easier the process for enhanced relations between Indian and African economies and regions, need to be understood.

It is also a fact that despite the emerging economic tendencies, there are areas of mutual concern for both India and Africa, and enough literature to point towards the implications of such a relationship, particularly when both parties are not on equal footing in various scenarios. Thus, there is a need to intervene strategically and work towards a relationship of mutual respect and benefit. The global environment of the 21st century is not simplistic; it is extremely complex and ranges from a position of strength to weakness. This weakness, too, needs to be understood in a speculative sense, where a weak economy or party today may emerge as a strong nation tomorrow. Thus, India, China, the United States, and European countries are all ready to strengthen Africa and help in nation-building. Out of these complexities, what is required is that various stakeholders need to be brought together on a common agenda that benefits all, in the short as well as the long term, especially in the arrangements where the world order is wrangled between civility, coercion, and rationality. It is in this context that we need to understand the processes of Africa joining BRICS.

REFERENCES

- Aakas, R. (2022). BRIC Investments in Africa: The Role of Government and Politics.
- Antony, S. (2023). Diversification of BRICS: Emerging Economic and Geopolitical Shift. Strategic Analysis.
- Arapova, E. Y. & Lissovlik, Y. D. (2021). The BRICS Plus Cooperation in International Organizations: Prospects for Reshaping the Global Agenda. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*.
- Basrur, R. & Kutty, S. N. (2021). Modi's India and Japan: Nested strategic partnerships. *International Politics (The Hague)*.
- Eben, O. (2024). The Role of BRICS in Redefining Global Trade Policies and Economic Alliances.
- Halog, A. & Anieke, S. (2021). A review of circular economy studies in developed countries and its potential adoption in developing countries. *Circular Economy and Sustainability*.
- Indrayana, R. Z. (2024). Reviewing the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Indonesia Through President Jokowi's Visit to South Africa in 2023. *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional*.
- Iqbal, B. A. (2022). BRICS as a driver of global economic growth and development. *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies*.
- Kirton, J. & Larionova, M. (2022). The first fifteen years of the BRICS. *International Organisations Research Journal*.
- Lal, B. (2023). The BRICS Countries: Trends of Demographic and Economic Development. *International Journal of Science and Research*.
- Malah Kuete, Y. F. & Asongu, S. A. (2023). Infrastructure development as a prerequisite for structural change in Africa. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*.
- Marks, R. B. (2024). The origins of the modern world: A global and environmental narrative from the fifteenth to the twenty-first century.

- Martel, S., & Glas, A. (2023). The contested meaning-making of diplomatic norms: competence in practice in Southeast Asian multilateralism. *European Journal of International Relations*, 29(1), 227-252.
- Melo, J. & Twum, A. (2021). Prospects and challenges for supply chain trade under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area. *Journal of African Trade*.
- Munjal, S., Varma, S., & Bhatnagar, A. (2022). A comparative analysis of Indian and Chinese FDI into Africa: The role of governance and alliances. *Journal of Business Research*.
- Muresan, A. (2023). BRICS immigration policies and visa regimes, strategic cooperation for a future BRICS African agenda. *Journal of BRICS Studies*.
- Nach, M. & Ncwadi, R. (2024). BRICS economic integration: Prospects and challenges. *South African Journal of International Affairs*.
- Nchake, M. A. & Shuaibu, M. (2022). Investment in ICT infrastructure and inclusive growth in Africa. *Scientific African*.
- Nefedova, A. (2021). Why do international students choose to study at Russia's leading universities? *Journal of Studies in International Education*.
- Nouck, L. (2021). India and China in Africa: Rivalry or catching up?. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 15(1), 28-40.
- Patnaik, A. K. (2022). Evolution of BRICS: History and Politics. Locating BRICS in the Global Order.
- Santos, A., & Cazzamatta, R. (2024). Who Shapes Mediated Conversations among Rising Global Powers? Examining News Geography, Authorship, and Media Sources within the BRICS Framework. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 19401612241269835.
- Schwab, K. (2021). Stakeholder capitalism: A global economy that works for progress, people and planet.
- Southworth, W. A. (2023). The coastal states of Champa. *Southeast Asia*.

Tsegaye, D. M. (2021). The BRICS and Africa: Political-Economic Opportunities and Challenges. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Africa*, 1(3), 1-10.

Yarygina, I. Z., Zhiglyayeva, A. V., Vershinina, V. O., & Kuvshinova, A. Y. (2021). Trade and Economic Cooperation of BRICS: Problems and Prospects. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 9(6), 89-104.