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INDIAN EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION WITH AFRICA: SWOT ANALYSIS OF SOFT POWER APPROACH

Abstract

The introduction of this paper presents a historical overview of India's relations with African countries. Joseph Nye's theory of soft power is presented as a theoretical background, its role in the theory of international relations as well as the possibility of education becoming an instrument of soft power. In the provided overview of India-Africa educational cooperation, it can be seen that India is implementing a very concrete, well-organized, and smart strategy in the field of educational cooperation on the African continent, especially its ITEC and SCAAP programs. To analyze the Indian soft power approach we use SWOT analysis. As for strengths, the paper emphasizes India's approach to African countries in the field of education which is based on mutual respect, a common attitude towards decolonization, historical and trade ties. More importantly, the cooperation is free of any conditioning. The greatest hidden asset of India are ITC technologies, if used adequately, it can give India an advantage over the competition in other sectors as well, not just education. The African education market has great potential for cooperation. The main opportunity for further development of this cooperation are favorable conditions for Indian students when compared to Western destinations or China. Online education also has great

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potential. Weaknesses and threats are related to racial discrimination and competition from other actors.

Keywords: India, Africa, education, soft power, ITEC, SCAAP

INTRODUCTION

The first valid proof of migration between the inhabitants of India and Africa was recorded in the document Periplus of the Erythraean Sea in the middle of the first century AD. (Dubey and Biswas 2016, 1). Contacts between India and sub-Saharan Africa were also noted by Vasco de Gama on his historical trip. In 1497, he met Indian traders in the territories of today's Mozambique and Kenya. The Indian metric system was used in this area, which testifies to the fact that the Indians had a significant influence in the vicinity (Dubey and Biswas 2016, 12 – 13).

At the time when India gained its independence, only three countries in sub-Saharan Africa were independent: Liberia, Ethiopia, and the Republic of South Africa (under white minority rule). The beginning of modern relations between India and Africa is linked to the Mahatma Gandhi; just after returning from the Republic of South Africa, Gandhi began his struggle for Indian independence. Gandhi laid a strong foundation for India-Africa relations. These relations were based on solidarity, cooperation, and mutual assistance. India's solidarity with Africa's problems was obvious given that India had imposed sanctions on the apartheid regime in South Africa even before the formal declaration of independence (Beri 2014, 1 – 2). Kwame Nkrumah was a great admirer of Gandhi and his liberation struggle. Spontaneously, African leaders began cooperating with the Indian National Congress by sharing their values of equality and the right to political participation. (Dubey and Biswas 2016, 17).

In the relations among India and African countries during the Cold War, we can define five key points: 1) fight against racism, 2) support and promotion of independence of African countries, 3) cooperation within the Non-Aligned Movement, 4) cooperation through the Indian diaspora, 5) economic diplomacy and security cooperation. Ideologically, the Indian authorities believed that Africans should follow a peaceful path to their freedom, as India did. However, it should be noted that many Africans were much more attracted to Chinese support in the form of weapons and equipment (Dubey and Biswas 2016, 20 – 21).

After the end of the Cold War and the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s, Indian foreign policy shifted from ideological

to more pragmatic instruments such as investment and trade. During globalization, security became a keyword, so India wanted to ensure energy security, the security of waterways, and security for its citizens in Africa. (Cheru and Obi 2010, 67 – 68). India is increasing its level of cooperation with Africa by launching several ambitious initiatives, among others: the 1992 Preferential Trade Agreement, enhanced lending activity (since 1996), the 1997 Memorandum of Understanding with the SADC Regional Economic Community, the 2002 Focus Africa program, and the 2003 Team 9 initiative. Simultaneously, India has supported the NEPAD initiative since its establishment. As a result of proactive measures, the trade exchange between India and Africa has been constantly growing and reached the level of 100 billion dollars in 2015, while in 2005 it amounted to only 60 billion. At the end of 2011, India became the fourth most important trading partner of Sub-Saharan Africa (Dubey and Biswas 2016, 31). Finally, it should be mentioned that at the macro level, the backbone of contemporary Indo-African relations is the format of the India-Africa Forum.

In this paper, we use SWOT analysis to effectively present the results of Indian policy in Africa. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to business strategy or project planning. It originates from marketing and strategic management but it can be used in various other fields such as oil and gas business, mining and metallurgy business, manufacturing, transport, agriculture, etc. (Namugenyi et al. 2019). We strongly believe that it can be used in international relations as well, especially when considering strategies or policies of an external actor in a certain region of the world.

SOFT POWER AND FOREIGN POLICY

Hard power can rest on inducements (“carrots”) or threats (“sticks”). But sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats or payoffs. Soft power collectively refers to the tools of the nation-state that do not punish, reward, or threaten other actors into preferred behavior. Soft power means getting others to want the outcomes that you want; it co-opts people rather than coercing them. Simply put, soft power rests on the ability to (re)shape the preferences of others (Nye 2004, 5 – 7).

Soft power includes cultural exchanges and public diplomacy initiatives to help shape behavior, while hard power promises trade incentives, threaten economic sanctions or military action. One must

not be under any illusion that soft power could somehow exist on its own. In reality, soft power is, and always will be, an extension of hard power. Hard and soft powers are related because they are both aspects of the ability to affect the behavior of others. The distinction between them is in the nature of the behavior and the tangibility of the resources. The types of behavior between command and co-optation range along a spectrum, from coercion to economic inducement to agenda-setting to pure attraction. Soft-power resources tend to be associated with the co-optive end of the spectrum of behavior, whereas hard-power resources are usually associated with command behavior. But soft power does not depend on hard power. The Vatican has soft power despite Stalin's mocking question about the number of Pope's divisions (Nye 2004, 7, 9).

The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (if it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).

Culture is the set of values and practices that create meaning for society. It has many manifestations. It is common to distinguish between high culture such as literature, art, and education, which appeals to elites, and popular culture. One should not make the mistake of equating soft power behavior with the cultural resources that sometimes help produce it. Popular culture is often a resource that produces soft power, but, the effectiveness of any power resource depends on the context. For example, love towards McDonald's did not facilitate cooperation between the Serbs and the USA in the nineties. Perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide wore T-shirts with American logos while committing atrocities. American films that made the United States attractive in China or Latin America had the opposite effect and actually reduced American soft power in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan (Nye 2004, 11). In fact, commerce is only one of the ways in which culture is transmitted. It also occurs through personal contacts, visits, and exchanges.

According to Nye liberal democratic politics, free-market economics, and fundamental values such as human rights—in essence, liberalism is the key pillar of the US soft power. However, the list of values that can serve as a source of soft power varies from country to country and from the region to which that soft power is projected. For instance, in the case of Russia and its power projection on Orthodox, especially Slavic countries, the point of attraction could be conservative values and Orthodox spirituality. Regardless of the variables, soft power is based on legitimacy. Respecting the human rights and holding transparent elections are necessary conditions for achieving legitimacy.

Foreign policy and soft power are interrelated. A great amount of soft power will help the state to pursue its foreign policy more easily. But there is also feedback; foreign policy decisions affect the level of soft power. For example, the wars in Vietnam and Iraq undermined America's soft power.

Soft power is hard to quantify, and therefore it is hard to measure its success. On the other hand, hard power is focused more on measurable resources (money, soldiers, and bullets). Soft power aims to change attitudes, which is a hard "thing" to quantify. Still, the effects of soft power are tangible and can be measured. The successes of the Cold War cultural and academic exchanges serve as one example with the Fulbright scholarship program to be its star example (Seymour 2020).

What is the reach of Indian soft power? Winston Churchill in his well-known hostility towards India has constantly pointed out that India is only a geographical term that is as much a state as the equator. Churchill was certainly right in one thing, there are only a few countries in the world that have such a diversity of climate, language, culture, religion and contain different levels of economic development (Tharoor 2008, 32). Despite Churchill's prejudices, India is a unified country capable of projecting its soft power.

In order for India to project its Soft Power to its full potential, it must resolve complex issues within the Indian culture and it must complete the process of remembering¹ what does Indian civilization mean. Given that Indian culture consists of Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim culture and tradition, the question is which culture India would project as its soft power. Sashi Tharoor illustrates this phenomenon in the following way: when an Indian wears the national dress for a formal occasion he wears a variant of the sherwani which did not exist before the Muslim invasion of India. Furthermore, when Buddhist Indians voted in a country binding competition to select the new seven wonders of the modern world they voted for the Taj Mahal, which was constructed by a Mughal King, not for Angkor Wat which is the most magnificent architectural product of their religion (Tharoor 2008, 38 – 39).

A pillar of Indian power both hard and soft is the TATA Company that has achieved remarkable success with its Nano model. An important instrument of Indian soft power is the Bollywood film industry which has even reached Syria and Senegal. In fact, when the Taliban government fell in 2001 the Indian foreign minister flew to Kabul to welcome the new interim government in a plane not packed with arms or food but

¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o sees the process of remembering as peeling off the layers of colonial and neocolonial history and returning it to the original pre-colonial culture.

crammed with tapes of Bollywood movies and music, which were quickly distributed across the city (Nye 2004, 10). Indian clothing items, dancing, Punjabi rap, and Indian cuisine are becoming increasingly popular around the world. As a special strength of Indian culture, Tharoor emphasizes the ability of Indians to resist the soft power of other countries. Despite its presence, McDonald's did not suppress local specialties and MTV did not suppress the aforementioned Punjabi rap and other kinds of indigenous Indian pop scene (Nye 2004, 39 – 40).

Tharoor also states that the Indian government needs to invest more resources and devise a comprehensive strategy for the proliferation of Indian soft power. Specifically, he believes that Nehru centers must exist in all countries in Asia, in South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, Canada, in general wherever there is a large Indian diaspora. These centers must proudly maintain the multi-religious multi-cultural identity of the Indian people as well as its linguistic diversity.

EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION AS A SOFT POWER TOOL

First of all, it must be emphasized that the education system has always been the main engine of the prosperity of a particular state (Nye 2005, 4). Only a developed education system that meets the requirements of an innovative economy, and is integrated into the international educational and scientific space, can become the major competitive advantage of the modern state and attract the most talented foreign students (Cowan, and Arsenault 2008, 10). Moreover, the educational system today is closely intertwined with the concept of politics and/or geopolitics (Nye 2005, 4).

The provision of educational opportunities for foreign students is one of the most important instruments of soft power in any country (Cowan, & Arsenault 2008, 10). Wojciuk, Michalek, and Stormowska also believe that education is the key area for building the future potential of any country. Education is inherently oriented towards future generations and itself is a means for the empowerment of individuals and nations (Wojciuk, Michalek, and Stormowska 2015, 4). Likewise, Ringmar (2007, 168) believes that education provides institutions that support individuals, and that societies, where those institutions are strong, are more creative, dynamic and its inhabitants are more likely to fully develop their full potential.

Education can be used directly as a tool in foreign policy by providing educational services and guidance through development aid. Internationalization is a necessary precondition for higher education to

be a soft power tool. Internationalization builds soft power not only through personal contacts between exchange students and academics but also by making the system better, especially if the exchange is with institutions from which sending countries can import knowledge. A vital part of strengthening a state's soft power involves students and scholars. International exchanges are the most commonly used tool. Under certain circumstances, especially hosting foreign students can contribute to a policy change in the students' country of origin. At the same time, having a large number of foreign students is one of the most visible effects of educational soft power. Mobility is the main driver of the internationalization of the higher education system (Wojciuk, Michalek, and Stormowska 2015, 9, 10, 12).

Foreign students, alongside learning, will gradually become acquainted with the achievements of science and culture of the host country. These students can gain valuable social capital after having being studied abroad. Consequently, after their return with acquired knowledge and personal relations, they are expected to become effective transmitters of the language and culture of the host country. As a result, Nye argues, the effectiveness of exposure of foreigners to the outside world and the national education system of the host country (as an instrument of soft power) is much higher than military force (Nye 2005, 12).

Furthermore, graduates that studied in foreign countries can become not only highly qualified personnel in their countries, but they also may become a so-called "Trojan horse" (Tremblay 2010, 117). That is the main strength of soft power. Ruling elites in many post-colonial countries were actually agents of the interest of the former colonial powers. Another example is the legislation, curriculum, and textbook writing. For example, neoliberalism is the dominant economic theory precisely because of the soft power of the USA. Therefore, the more foreign students a country can educate in its own universities, the more likely its "hegemonic ideology" will be disseminated throughout the world (Hopf 2013, 330).

There is no doubt that international higher education has changed dramatically in the last couple of decades. It is not just students and scholars who are moving across borders, academics, programs, providers, projects, and policies are doing the same. The most commonly referred to examples of soft power in higher education include the Fulbright Programme, the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Confucius institutes, Erasmus Mundus, and Development Cooperation projects (Knight 2014).

INDO-AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Although educational cooperation between India and Africa dates back to the mid-20th century, it gained its significant formalization in 1964 with the launch of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme with the aim of providing technical assistance to other developing countries through human resource development. In this context, it is important to point out that African countries have been the greatest beneficiaries of the ITEC programme as many African officials have trained under this programme (Chakrabarty 2020).

In addition to ITEC, there are other cooperation programmes such as the Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa Program (SCAAP) which focuses on African countries in the Commonwealth, then the 1951 Colombo Plan Technical Cooperation Scheme (TCS), as well as the overseas student scholarship programme conducted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). As Kragelund (2010, 3) explains: “The mentioned programmes mainly use the so-called slots system to allocate aid. Slots may then be exchanged into five different aid modalities, as follows: (1) training of personnel in India; (2) project aid; (3) technical assistance; (4) study trips; and (5) humanitarian assistance. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) allocates slots to India’s cooperating partners reflecting the economic and/or political importance India gives each country”. In this context, it is relevant to point out that since 2000, the African continent has become increasingly important, and particularly since 2008, i.e., after the first India-Africa Forum Summit was held. As experts from United Nations Development Programme explain: “ITEC has expanded rapidly in recent years, from 1,959 participants in 1999–2000 to 5,000 in 2009–2010. In 2013–14, over 10,000 scholarship slots were offered under the ITEC/SCAAP programme. With Africa having a special place in India’s development assistance programme, nearly half of the ITEC slots, some 4,300 annually, are allotted to this continent” (UNDP 2016, 29). In addition, it is important to mention that “since the launch of the ITEC programme in 1964, India has provided nearly \$2.5 billion worth of technical assistance to developing countries from which \$1 billion was directed to ITEC-related activities involving African countries” (UNDP 2016, 30).

These data suggest that a very important aspect of strengthening educational cooperation between India and African countries is student mobility. As Trines (2019) points out, India invites African youths to obtain vocational training in India and seeks to boost international

student mobility from Africa to its universities. This is confirmed by the findings of Chaturvedi (2015, 36), who notes that a significant allocation of funds was made within the SCAAP program “from \$2.56 million in 2009-10 to \$5.43 million in 2015–16” and that “the Indian Council for Cultural Research alone offers nearly 3,365 scholarships annually under 24 scholarship schemes, 900 of which are for African countries.” According to Trines (2019), these scholarships have helped bring a substantial number of African students to India. The author points out that despite being small by international comparison, the number of international students in the country has quadrupled over the past decade with students from sub-Saharan Africa making up 19 percent of the total international student body in 2014. According to available data, about 225 students from Sudan alone go to study in India every year on the basis of scholarships, while 1,500 of them attend self-financing programmes offered by Indian universities every year. In addition, it is also noticeable that the highest percentage among those who come to India for doctoral studies from abroad are students from Ethiopia. Trines (2019) points out that many African students view India as a coveted destination in computer science and information technology, with remark that Indian universities, in turn, vigorously seek to recruit more African students, notably in East Africa. That such an assessment is not unfounded is confirmed by the fact that India’s scholarship programmes continue to grow rapidly. In other words, after the Third India-Africa Forum Summit, held in October 2015 in New Delhi, India pledged to provide 50,000 scholarships to African students in the next five years and set up institutions in Africa (Chakrabarty 2020), as well as to allocate \$1 billion in the period 2015–2020 for training and capacity development of 25,000 people in Africa in the fields of Agriculture; Food Processing, Packaging and Quality Control; Energy, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development; Rural Development and Poverty Eradication; ICT and e-Governance; Power and Hydrocarbons; International Business; Postal Services and Mail Management; Health; and Law Enforcement and Cyber Crimes (Dixit, Gill and Kumar 2018, 5). In addition, in 2018, the Ministry of Human Resource and Development also launched the “Study in India” initiative to attract students from the neighborhood and Africa to promote India as an education hub (Chakrabarty 2020).

The growing importance of the African continent in terms of India’s foreign policy agenda and the development of South-to-South cooperation in the last decade and a half is confirmed by the establishment of numerous pan-African institutions in the field of education with the support of India, such as: India-Africa International Trade Institute,

the India-Africa Institute for Agriculture and Rural Development and Administration and the India-Africa Institute for Information Technology (Udensi 2020). Furthermore, it is confirmed by the expansion of the network of Indian educational institutions on the soil of the African continent. Namely, as Trines (2019) explains, “in addition to recruiting Africans for study programs in India, several Indian universities have branched out to Africa to offer education directly on the continent, if often through distance education mode. For instance, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the world’s largest university, now offers its distance education programmes through study centers in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar and Namibia. Amity Institute of Higher Education has established a branch campus in Mauritius, while the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology Delhi is offering master’s programmes in collaboration with Addis Ababa University.” However, probably the most important indicator of the Indo-African partnership, and at the same time one of the most ambitious cooperative information technology projects in Africa to date, is Pan-African e-Network (PAeN) established in early 2009. PAeN represents the largest ICT network in Africa and its aim is to connect 53 African nations with India. By using this platform, New Delhi aspires to use Indian expertise in information technology to provide better healthcare and education for all African countries (Chakrabarty 2020). Specifically, “PaeN for tele-education and tele-medicine serves to connect Indian universities such as the Amity Institute of Higher Education, the Indira Gandhi National Open University, the University of Delhi and others with dozens of educational centers across Africa via a satellite hub station in Senegal in order to deliver distance education programmes to thousands of African students. In addition, PAeN connects African medical facilities with medical specialty hospitals in India, enabling Indian doctors to review digitised medical records in Africa and provide live tele-consultations” (Trines 2019). As explained by Mullen and Arora (2016, 2 – 3), although initially the project had a slightly more modest budget – US\$125 million, seeing the achieved success after the Third India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015, the Indians decided to invest an additional US\$600 million in its further development. In view of the fact that in 2010 the same project was also awarded the Hermes Prize for Innovation by the European Institute of Creative Strategies and Innovation (Mullen i Arora 2016, 3), it should come as no surprise that some authors describe PAeN as “shining example of South-South cooperation” (Duclos 2012, 209). But there is more to it. On the occasion of opening the India-Africa Higher Education and Skills Development Summit held in New Delhi in August 2019,

Secretary for Economic Relations in India's Ministry of External Affairs TS Tirumurti said that "Africa was a priority in India's foreign policy" (Sawahel, 2019). According to Sawahel (2019), "building on the 50-year-old Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme which has already provided African students with technical expertise, Tirumurti said the government was now launching new programmes such as e-ITEC and e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) which would see 15,000 scholarships being made available to African students over the next five years to pursue online short-term courses, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from top Indian universities". Explaining what the e-VBAB Network Project exactly means, Tirumurti pointed out that it "involves two separate platforms which will link various educational institutions and hospitals in India and participating African countries." More precisely, "the project is a technological upgrade and extension of the Pan-African e-Network Project (Phase One) which was implemented in 48 partner countries across Africa from 2009 to 2017" (Sawahel, 2019). In addition and elaborating on Tirumurti, R. Subrahmanyam, higher education secretary in India's Ministry of Human Resource Development, explained that "the 'Study in India' programme, launched in 2018 and involving thousands of universities and colleges, was being expanded to 30 African countries" (Sawahel 2019).

All of the above leads to the conclusion that India is implementing a very concrete, well-organised and smart strategy in the field of educational cooperation on the African continent, which has a beneficial effect on South-to-South connections. However, although authors such as Udensi (2020) point out that all these projects have helped to improve the role of India as a "voice for developing countries", some theorists emphasise that cooperation between India and African countries in the field of education is not spared certain strains (Trines 2019; Sawahel 2019; Lavakare and Powar 2013; Mittal 2020). Overcoming these challenges will be a key test for further improvement of relations in the field of education between India and African countries.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Indo-African educational cooperation is determined by several important components that shape its character.

First of all, India's current approach to African countries in the domain of building ties in the field of education is based on mutual respect, which rests on a common attitude towards decolonisation, historical and trade ties, as well as political cooperation in the Alliance.

More importantly, it lies at the bottom of cooperation free of any conditioning (Chaudhury 2019).

As Trines (2019) explains, even China, which is one of the most important, flexible and generous partner of many African countries and which also wants to develop strong ties in the education sector with Africa, often does not separate these connections from the implementation of various infrastructural and other projects on African soil. As an example, the author cites the case where more than 45,000 local staff received professional skills training during the construction of the Mombasa-Nairobi railway, Kenya's largest infrastructure project since independence. Moreover, it is known that Chinese firms like industry giant Huawei are setting up information technology classes at Kenyan universities to upskill the local workforce. The author notes that this kind of involvement helps transfer knowledge to African societies but also serves Chinese business interests. On the other hand, he points out that India's soft power in Africa rests more on people-to-people and private business contacts than government stewardship and unlike the Chinese concept it does not seek special benefits (Trines 2019).

In addition to the above, Indo-African cooperation in the field of education has another also very significant feature. It implies emphasising the maximum use of information and communication technologies. The so-called PAeN platform and accompanying programmes (e-ITEC, e-VidyaBharati and e-VBAB) shape the backbone of India's innovative concept of education sector development in Africa distinguishing it from all other programmes implemented by its competition. As Mittal (2020) explains, while China and other competitors predominantly use offline medium to pursue development cooperation in education, India's initiatives focusing on the online medium are more future-driven. The same author believes that with its gargantuan resources, China currently has an advantage over India but India can turn the balance in its favour by using the online medium effectively. The fact that since the launch of PaeN until March 2017, as many as 22,000 African students have used the platform for their education is sufficient evidence of the potential that the network has. Moreover, except that PAeN is aimed at creating significant linkages for tele-education and tele-medicine, the Internet, video conferencing, and VoIP services by linking them to premier educational institutions and super-specialty hospitals in India, the project also supports e-governance, e-commerce, infotainment, resource mapping and meteorological services (Mishra 2018; Mullen and Arora 2016, 3) which, if used adequately, can give India an advantage over the competition in other sectors as well, not just education.

When it comes to opportunities to further enhance educational cooperation between India and African countries, attention should be drawn to several important factors.

First of all, these are very favourable study conditions for African students at Indian universities. To be more precise, as noted by Trines (2019) India offers them a better education than they could access at home – in English and at lower costs than in Western destinations or China. This is also confirmed by the data published in 2018 by the internet portal Study International. As stated on that website, international students can expect to pay as little as INR194,400 (US\$3,000) to INR388,800 (US\$6,000) for a year of tuition in India, whereas studying in the UK will set students back at least GB£10,000 (US\$14,130), and US fees can total up to US\$60,000 (Study International 2018).

In addition, India's aspiration to improve online education in Africa through its PAeN platform is also one of the potentials that can be further developed. As Mittal (2020) explains, "the online learning platforms are advantageous for African nations as they reduce the costs of obtaining an international degree and offer a larger number of students a chance to enroll for these courses and degrees". Furthermore, "the online medium also provides greater security to African students against racial attacks, a factor which might have prevented a considerable number of Africans from pursuing an Indian degree". The same author states that currently about "39.3% of the African population having access to the internet, so India's online education platforms have a good opportunity to expand", adding that "the current coronavirus pandemic and the associated social distancing and travel restrictions could also contribute to increasing the acceptability of online education". Mittal (2020) concludes that online medium also provides India an opportunity to do more with the limited resources "because unlike China, India does not have the massive financial resources to ramp up scholarships or set up educational institutions across Africa." Trines (2019) has a similar attitude, reminding that almost 60% of young people between the ages of 15 and 17 in the Sub-Saharan region do not participate in any form of education, and that Africa's total youth population will double by 2050, reaching 830 million. The author believes that strengthening South-to-South cooperation in the education sector would be a positive trend in terms of youth inclusion in the education network, and that assistance provided by countries that have more direct experience with developmental challenges, such as India, could be a blessing. This is, among other things, largely indicated by the statement of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) given on the eve of the India-

Africa Higher Education and Skill Development Summit 2019 in India, which reads: “While Africa requires more resources – both human and financial – to meet the targets of individual countries in education, the Indian higher education system has both, which when twinned can create a win-win for both side. In many ways the problems in Africa, as far as education is concerned, are similar to those in India though there is a difference in scale and magnitude. That is why India is in a position to understand and provide solutions to some of the problems that exist in Africa in the field of higher education. At the same time, it can benefit from joint research with top African institutions and create partnerships which are beneficial for both sides” (Kokutse 2019).

However, although Indo-African cooperation in the field of education is developing in a positive direction, it should be noted that it faces some significant challenges. In this sense, one of its weaknesses is certainly the discrimination of certain African countries by Indian institutions in terms of slot allocation under the SCAAP and ITEC programmes. In other words, not all African Commonwealth countries are targeted with the same degree of eagerness and offered the same conditions. As Kragelund (2010, 3 – 4) explains, slots and scholarships are most often awarded in relation to how important a country is to India. For example, “countries like Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda (with large Indian diasporas and/or economic importance) receive a relatively large number of slots, while countries with hardly any Indian diaspora, no natural resources and no economic influence receive only a tiny amount of slots.” It is similar with the scholarships that are awarded within the programme for which the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is in charge. Like the ITEC and the SCAAP, Indians here also take into account the geopolitical dimension, so for example, countries like Mauritius (40), South Africa (25) and Kenya(20) are allocated far more scholarships than, say, Cameroon (1), Guinea (1) and Togo (1) (Kragelund 2010, 3 – 4).

In addition, another weakness of Indo-African educational cooperation is the untapped potential. As King claims (2019, 9 – 10), referring to a report from 2012, out of 251 tuition fees that India intended for students from Africa at that time, only 77 were actually used. A year later (2013), when the Indian authorities decided to quadruple the number of slots to 900, Africans used only 420. By 2017, the situation had improved to some extent, when 540 of the 900 slots were used, but this is far from the total available capacity.

It should be noted that discrimination in the distribution of slots, i.e., favouring some African countries without regard for others and not

using available slots and scholarships, are not the only challenges that burden Indo-African educational ties. On the contrary, in addition to the mentioned, there are two very clear threats to that cooperation, and one of them is certainly the growing competition, that is, the presence of other stakeholders interested in becoming more actively involved in the education market on the African continent.

In this respect, China is certainly the greatest contestant. There is more evidence for this claim, but we will mention only some of them here. Among other things, in 2003, India had more African students than China. However, by 2015, the situation had changed drastically. According to Mittal (2020), the number of African students in China grew by more than 20% annually between 2003 and 2015, leading to 49,792 students studying in China in 2015, while in India there were only 5,881. Perhaps this should come as no surprise given the fact that China has gradually become the largest trading partner, foreign job creator and source of foreign direct investment in Africa (Trines 2019). In addition, its approach to educational cooperation with Africa is very specific. It is based on the close connection of education with the economy, i.e., investments of Chinese companies and infrastructure projects, which resulted in employment opportunities that these projects create leading to an increased demand for Chinese education in Africa. Moreover, with the aim of taking advantage of these opportunities, some African countries such as Kenya and South Africa have introduced the Chinese language as an elective subject, while some such as Uganda have even made Mandarin a compulsory subject in its high school curriculum (Mittal 2020). But that is logical in a way, having in mind the overall trade exchange between China and Africa. According to Moghalu (2015), China's trade with Africa hit US\$210 billion in 2013, with 2,500 Chinese companies operating in the continent. By comparison, although it increased eightfold between 2001 and 2017, trade between Africa and India was significantly lower – from US\$7.2 billion in 2001 to US\$59.9 billion in 2017, making India only the fourth largest African trading partner (The Africa Export-Import Bank 2018, 6). If we take into account the fact that China provides large scholarships to African students, gradually expands educational and other infrastructure and invests heavily in various projects across the African continent (Trines 2019), all suggest that it is one of the main challenges for further development of Indo-African educational, but also overall cooperation.

However, in addition to the above, there is another, very serious threat to Indo-African educational ties. Namely, despite the initiatives of the Indian government to attract African students, their response has

been below expectations and one of the reasons is related to the negative experiences of African students in India. It is common knowledge that African students are often subject to discrimination, attacks, and assaults in India (Mittal 2020). Moreover, according to information provided by Mittal (2020), as many as 90% of African students have regretted coming to India for higher studies, which has tarnished the country’s reputation as a study destination. Although certain initiatives, such as the founding of Symbiosis University back in the early 1970s, were launched with the aim of alleviating the continuing challenge of social tensions between local and African students, no significant changes have taken place (King 2019). As King (2019, 16) explains, “incidents that have involved attacks on African students have continued over the years and the Group of African Ambassadors in India have even set up an Education Committee, largely because of these.” Having all of the above in mind, it should come as no surprise that even Africans do not look favourably on the expansion of Indian universities on African soil. The case of Ghana can be named as an example. In the present case, when several lesser-known Indian universities set up shop in that state, the University of Ghana removed a statue of Mahatma Gandhi over charges that Gandhi was a racist – a move that reportedly caused Indian authorities to cancel scholarships for 2,000 Ghanaians (Trines 2019). In view of the fact that this was not the only such case (a similar incident occurred in Malawi), it is clear that the issue of racial intolerance causes various negative effects that do not affect the mutually beneficial development of Indo-African educational and overall cooperation. A way to relax such trends and minimise their effects will require the united efforts of African and Indian political elites and more creative approaches in resolving the issue if the desire to further improve relations tends to remain a priority.

Graph 1: SWOT analysis of Indo-African educational cooperation

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common anti-colonial heritage - Cooperation without conditioning - Paen and accompanying programmes 	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Favourable conditions for students - Online education potential - The potential of the education market in Africa
<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination in the allocation of slots and scholarships (favouring strategically relevant countries) - Untapped potentials 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Severe competition (China) - Issue of racism

Source: Authors

CONCLUSION

India's cross-border educational cooperation began modestly in 1949 with the publication of 70 scholarships for students from developing countries with a desire to develop stronger South-South ties (Chakrabarty 2020). Nowadays, it includes thousands of scholarships a year, a significant number of which are intended for African countries, as well as a mega information and communication network platform that covers almost the entire African continent and provides multiple opportunities to enhance cooperation.

As Mullen and Arora (2016, 3) explain, "the e-network project, which is Africa's biggest ever in the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector, has been instrumental in assisting Africa to overcome the digital divide. It has also been successful in creating demand for India's tertiary health and education services provided at a fraction of their cost in upper income countries." But there is more to it than that. It is noticeable that the authorities in New Delhi are firmly determined to further deepen and improve the existing ties with Africa, which, in addition to scholarship programmes and built ICT and other infrastructure, is evidenced by the current engagement of India's leading political officials. In fact, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pursued Indian interests in Africa with remarkable intensity. In the last 5 years, Modi has visited Africa twice (2016 and 2018), announced the opening of as many as 18 Indian embassies on the continent by 2021 and organised the Third India-Africa Forum Summit, with over 1,000 delegates, which was "the largest Indian diplomatic outreach to Africa in recent history" (Trines 2019). As Mullen and Arora point out (2016, 4), "forty-one heads of state and hundreds of senior officials from fifty-four of the fifty-five African countries attended the summit, making it the grandest of all India-Africa Forum Summits". All these activities represent a strong basis for further progress. According to Trines (2019), there is huge potential for further increases in student inflows from Africa in the years ahead. The author believes that population growth and increased demand for education will push the growing numbers of African students abroad, which India, if it continues to act in accordance with the current manner, can use in many ways. That such claims are not groundless is shown, among other things, by the fact that as of 2013, for example, Sudanese students in India formed the single largest foreign group in the country after the Afghans. Moreover, totalling 4,759, they pulled past the Americans who had topped the list in 2011 (Edoofa 2017).

Of course, in order to harness the full potential of Indo-African cooperation, political officials on both sides of the Indian Ocean will have to find a solution to the issue of racism, which is its biggest challenge. As explained by Sawahel (2019), quoting Abhishek Mishra, research assistant in the Strategic Studies Program of the Observer Research Foundation, India: “Despite commendable initiatives like ‘Study in India’ under India’s Ministry of External Affairs the current reality is that the number of African students coming to study in India is declining, despite our geographical proximity and historical antecedents. Racism is the principle issue at hand. In spite of increased engagement, incidents of racism and intolerance against African students who come to study in India are hindering India-Africa relations”. Whether the Indians will be able to find a creative way to deal with this problem will largely determine the further development of their educational cooperation with Africa. If they succeed and reverse the negative trends, cooperation could flourish. On the other hand, if the incidents continue, it will remain a stumbling block in terms of further deepening the ties between them. Initiatives such as the establishment of Symbiosis University are certainly good, but they need to be further developed and improved.

Responding to competition, primarily to China, will also be one of the big challenges. However, if it takes advantage of the existing comparative advantages, which primarily concern the ICT infrastructure and continues with active political engagement, India could, following its specific approach to the African market, represent an important factor in the education sector. In addition, a stronger commitment to enhancing South-to-South cooperation could also be the basis for a more creative strategy. Namely, as Trines (2019) explains, “the emergence of greater South-to-South cooperation in education is generally a positive trend. In the end, having more donors means more options for African countries, and it’s encouraging that the assistance provided by China and India is now increasingly focused on education, rather than just transportation or telecommunications technology”. Bearing this in mind, as well as the fact that India and China, together with the Republic of South Africa, are members of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), the possibility to create conditions for a more complementary approach of Asian forces in the domain development of the education sector in Africa, should not be ruled out as an option. Of course, in order to create the conditions for that, it is essential that there should be the political will of all stakeholders and greater cohesion on the South-South line. Until that happens, every country interested in the education sector on African soil, including India and China, will pursue its national strategic

interests and strive to increase its influence through the development of an educational network on that continent, because, as one Indian theorist points out, “higher education institutions are an important source of, and help to augment, a nation’s soft power” (Sawahel 2019).

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ИНДИЈСКА ОБРАЗОВНА САРАДЊА СА АФРИКОМ: SWOT ANALIZA ПРИСТУПА МЕКЕ МОЋИ

Резиме

У уводу овог рада представљен је историјски осврт на односе Индије са афричким земљама. Затим је представљена теорија меке моћи Џозефа Наја, њена улога у теорији међународних односа као и могућност да образовање постане инструмент меке моћи. У датом прегледу индијско-афричке образовне сарадње види се да Индија спроводи веома конкретну, добро организовану и паметну стратегију у области образовне сарадње на афричком континенту, посебно своје програме *ИТЕС* и *SCAAP*. Ови програми су окосница студентске размене Индије са светом. Ипак, једна од слабости ових програма је свакако дискриминација појединих афричких земаља од стране индијских институција у погледу доделе броја места у оквиру програма *SCAAP* и *ИТЕС*. Другим речима, нису све земље афричког континента подједнако заступљене и немају исте услове. За анализу индијског приступа меке моћи користимо *SWOT* анализу. Што се тиче предности, у раду се истиче приступ Индије афричким земљама у области образовања који се заснива на међусобном поштовању, заједничком односу према деколонизацији, историјским и трговинским везама. Што је још важније, сарадња је без икаквих условљавања. Највећа скривена предност Индије су ИКТ технологије, ако се користе на адекватан начин, ове технологије могу Индији дати предност у односу на конкуренцију и у другим секторима, не само у образовању. Афричко тржиште образовања има велики потенцијал за сарадњу. Главна прилика за даљи развој ове сарадње су повољни услови за индијске студенте у поређењу са западним дестинацијама или Кином. Индија мора да учини више са

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ограниченим ресурсима јер за разлику од Кине, Индија нема огромна финансијска средства за повећање стипендија или успостављање образовних институција широм Африке. Интернет образовање такође има велики потенцијал. Слабости и претње се односе на расну дискриминацију и конкуренцију других актера.

Кључне речи: Индија, Африка, образовање, мека моћ, *ITEC*, *SCAAP*.*

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