

Aleksandra Sharapova

*University of Turku, Faculty of Social Sciences
(Centre of East Asian Studies)*

INDIA: FOCUS AFRICA. A BRIEF REVIEW OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA

Africa has always caught an attention of developed and developing countries; there is a number of reasons for this. The most obvious is that the continent possesses abundant resources and has connections to commercial maritime routes, especially those in the Persian Gulf, where the key routes for oil shipments lie. Besides the resource point Africa provides necessary inputs for manufacturing. Last, but not least, Africa is a huge export market for goods and services, which is crucial for growing economies. There is no wonder that India is interested in Africa.

Today India spares no efforts not only to become a trusted trade and political partner for African states, but to win their heartfelt sympathies. For example, Indian leaders never tire of reminding that India – just like Africa – fought against colonialism, thereby opposing itself to the former colonial empires and emphasizing its common historical and cultural background with Africa.

Recent changes in the world (the U.S. presidential election, the COVID-19) have led to a renewed interest in the foreign policy towards Africa. In the last few years African nations have acquired greater leverage in powerful international bodies such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. As a result, the sympathies of African countries are becoming a more and more valuable asset.

Meanwhile by common consent China is considered a key actor on the continent and many countries remain wary of the wide-spreading Chinese influence. Accordingly, new alliances are forming and it seems that India would be a counter-balance for China. In this regard Indian foreign policy appears to be a complex subject, that encompasses economy, soft power, diaspora influence and military presence aspects.

Reference information:

India: Focus Africa. A brief review of Indian foreign policy towards Africa. A. Sharapova. Ex oriente lux: the 5th International Student Conference on Asian and African Studies. St. Petersburg, November 12-13, 2021: Proceedings/ Ed. by A. V. Chelnokova. St. Petersburg: «Skifia-print» 2021. — p.191