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INDIA'S STRATEGIC RESET IN RELATIONS WITH MOZAMBIQUE: BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between India and Mozambique has a long history of friendly ties that have been built upon traditional linkages dating back to several centuries. That has been further strengthened in recent decades, to foster the economic and social status of both the regions. Since 2004, bilateral trade between both the countries have seen an uptrend which has increased from US\$ 111 million in 2004 to US\$ 4.03 billion in 2023. The availability of abundant natural and mineral resources sets Mozambique to seek a significant growth in the economy using trade as an instrument. The bilateral trade between India and Mozambique had benefitted both the countries equally and its very obvious in the case of Mozambique which has recorded an average of 5 percent of growth in the GDP annually, having India as its leading trade partner. The benefits reaped by both the nations in sharing their resources has been proved from analysing the two decades of trade history between two regions.

Keywords: Bilateral Trade, GDP, Export, Imports, Lines of Credit.

JEL Classifications: F1, 05.

1. INTRODUCTION

India is playing a major part in shaping the global economy and being one of the fastest growing economies in the 21st century, it is considered as an important trade partner for Mozambique. Since the beginning of 21st century the trade relations between India and Mozambique have been increased significantly but the studies related to it are scanty. India has got cordial and amiable relationship with Mozambique and their relationship have a long history of friendly ties that have been built upon traditional linkages dating back to several centuries. These can be supported by the fact that during his sail to Mozambique, Vasco da Gama reached Malindi (located in South Eastern Africa bordered by the Indian Ocean), in 1497 AD and met some Indian merchants and businessmen (Dubey & Biswas, 2015). The bilateral relations between India and Mozambique over the years has been strengthened through the very common challenges they had in the past, in their rebel against colonialism, terrorism, and racism (Aradhana Talwar, 2023). India's interest in Mozambique is a blend of economic, strategic, and cultural factors, reflecting a deep and evolving partnership. These long-standing friendship between the two sides is a bridge to enhance trade relations between the two countries in this era. Trade and investment relations have shown robust growth in the recent past, reflecting advanced economic possibilities in both

Mozambique and India. The bilateral relationship between India and Mozambique has expanded to include sociopolitical and commercial issues, capacity building, cooperation on development, and financial and innovation initiatives. The aim of the paper is to show the scale and trends in trade and investment between India and Mozambique in the years from 2004 to 2023.

2. ECONOMY OF MOZAMBIQUE

It is located in southeast Africa with its eastern coast on the Indian Ocean and the capital city of Mozambique is Maputo. Malawi and Zambia lie on the northwest, Zimbabwe lies on west. It is bordered by Swaziland and South Africa to the southwest, and Tanzania to the north. Mozambique is the 35th most extensive country in the world with the total area of 786,380.0 sq.km. The port towns in the Northern part of Mozambique were often visited by the merchants from Somalia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and India during 1450 A.D. After 1500s Portuguese were able to gain control of Mozambique and set their own colonies (Britannica, 2024). Though, Mozambique got independence from Portugal in 1975, it is still suffering from the effects of a 16-year civil war that ended in 1992, and it continues to fight challenges in both socio and economic sides, such as vulnerability to price fluctuations on international markets, unemployment, poverty, unevenness in education outcomes and the absence of varied and moderate agriculture sector.

Mozambique is rich in natural resources, and the economy has been growing since 2011. Despite, a nation endowed with rich natural resources, including arable land in the northern and central areas, abundant water sources from great Zambezi River, energy and mineral resources, and recently discovered natural gas deposits off its coast, still it is one among the top poorest nations in the world. The availability of abundant natural and mineral resources sets Mozambique to seek a significant growth in the economy. Since the last two decades the economy of Mozambique has experienced vital growth rate averaging slightly more than 7 per cent between 2001-2010 and at 4.7 percent between 2011-2020. The decline in the GDP growth during the period 2011-2020 was due to the poor performance of sectors like mining and gas, electricity, agriculture, transport and trade. Still, an increase in the GDP by an approximated 5 percent in 2023 up from 4.2 percent in 2022, has been driven mainly by extractive industries as liquefied natural gas processing matured in the Coral South Field. The inflation which has been reduced from 10.3 percent in 2022 to an estimated 7.1 percent in 2023 has occurred due to the steps taken by Government in maintaining a strict monetary policy and lowering the cost of necessary goods. An upward movement in the real GDP is estimated to grow by an average of 5.2 percent between 2024 and 2025, driven by the extractives sector, particularly gas production. Even though listed among one of the rapidly growing economies in Africa, Mozambique still faces the challenges like unemployment, poverty and lack of human capital, which needs special attention.

3. INDIA - MOZAMBIQUE TRADE

India and Mozambique share intense economic and social relations dating back thousands of years when Indian traders were met by Vasco da Gama during his first visit to Portuguese ports at Mozambique in 1498. Further, the existence of Global South made the trade relation between India and Mozambique deeper and the bilateral trade between two regions had shown impressive growth with India mounting as first-largest export partner of Mozambique and sixth-largest partner of its imports. To strengthen the relationship number of measures have been taken by the government of India, such as, regular political contacts, Duty-Free Tariff Preference scheme, India-Africa Summits, concessional Lines of Credit (LOC) implemented through EXIM Bank of India, Double Tax Avoidance Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on promotion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the heavy investments by the Indian companies in the energy resources of Mozambique, regular visits of delegates from both the countries and the collaboration of both the countries on sorting maritime security issues. These initiatives lead to the incredible trade bond between both the regions, India and Mozambique. Both, India and Mozambique as development partners have taken initiatives to strengthen the bilateral relations, with passion and keenness.

4. CURRENT TRENDS IN INDIA-MOZAMBIQUE TRADE

Mozambique is one of the key trading partners of India and the bilateral trade volumes have increased from just US\$ 111 million in 2004 to US\$ 4.03 billion in 2023, with India-Mozambique trade accounting for 0.38 percent of India's total trade and 23.04 percent of Mozambique's total trade in 2023, against 0.06 percent and 3.13 percent, respectively, in 2004. The strong growth in bilateral trade between India and Mozambique has been driven by growth in exports and imports. India's export to Mozambique grew to US\$ 2.27 billion in 2023, up from US\$ 74 million in 2004. Exports to Mozambique now account for 0.5 percent of India's total exports, and 22.5 percent of Mozambique's total imports. Over

this period, India's imports from Mozambique grew to US\$ 1.75 billion in 2023, rise from US\$ 33 million in 2004, with Mozambique now accounting for 0.26 percent of India's global imports and India now accounting for 21.25 percent of Mozambique's global exports. During this period, India has enjoyed a trade surplus with Mozambique, at US\$ 1.6 billion in 2014 before narrowing to US\$ 0.5 billion in 2023, as a result of price fluctuations in the global market. These results can be seen from the table above.

Table - 1
India's Export to and Import from Mozambique

India's Export to and Import from Mozambique							
			Total	Trade	India's total	% of	
Year	Exports	Imports	Trade	Balance	trade	Share	
2004	73,939	37,000	1,10,939	36,939	17,48,85,329	0.06344	
2005	1,12,018	51,729	1,63,747	60,289	241214304	0.06788	
2006	1,74,935	32,871	2,07,806	1,42,064	299413046	0.0694	
2007	3,93,177	30,132	4,23,309	3,63,045	364543347	0.11612	
2008	4,23,227	57,085	4,80,312	3,66,142	497573004	0.09653	
2009	3,66,043	43,587	4,09,630	3,22,456	443166589	0.09243	
2010	4,95,450	86,736	5,82,186	4,08,714	570437883	0.10206	
2011	5,70,582	1,22,544	6,93,126	4,48,038	763886041	0.09074	
2012	8,88,370	2,67,569	11,55,939	6,20,801	778541147	0.14848	
2013	16,15,538	2,47,368	18,62,906	13,68,170	802656956	0.23209	
2014	19,57,866	328565	22,86,431	16,29,301	77,69,14,106	0.2943	
2015	14,76,378	362525	18,38,903	11,13,853	65,46,88,468	0.28088	
2016	8,73,974	408389	12,82,363	4,65,585	61,76,50,376	0.20762	
2017	10,52,960	981575	20,34,535	71,385	73,97,14,952	0.27504	
2018	8,11,484	1042260	18,53,744	-2,30,776	83,32,70,908	0.22247	
2019	21,35,314	856680	29,91,994	12,78,634	80,21,34,455	0.373	
2020	14,44,427	711595	21,56,022	7,32,832	64,34,69,108	0.33506	
2021	18,35,716	1436703	32,72,419	3,99,013	96,52,15,677	0.33904	
2022	23,00,851	2531322	48,32,173	-2,30,471	1,18,52,50,207	0.40769	
2023	22,72,886	1758720	40,31,606	5,14,166	1,10,34,15,834	0.36538	

Source: ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE statistics.

The total trade value between the two countries grew five-fold between 2009 and 2014, to reach a peak of US\$ 2.2 billion in 2014 from US\$ 0.4 billion in 2009. There was a great decline in the trade value between two countries in 2015 and 2016 where the total trade fell to US\$ 1.28 billion from the peak of US\$ 2.2 billion in 2014, slump in the global commodity market. The declined trade volume in 2016 had raised to its peak of US\$ 2.9 billion in 2019 from US\$ 1.28 billion had again followed a dip due to Covid-19 to US\$ 2.1 billion in 2020. After COVID-19, the trade value between the two nations had reached its peak again to US\$ 4.8 billion in 2022 and US\$ 4.03 billion in 2023. To the notice, the trade value between India and Mozambique were almost doubled in the two years between 2020 and 2023.

Table – 2 India's Exports to Mozambique

(% of share in India's export to Mozambique)

2004- 2009- 2014-

	2004-	2009-	2014-	2019-
Years	2008	2013	2018	2023
Mineral fuels, mineral oils	44%	56%	70%	71%
Pharmaceutical products	5.50%	6.03%	8.43%	7%
Cereals	5%	2.12%	0.68%	4%
Nuclear reactors, boilers,	4%	3.23%	2%	1.80%
Vehicles other than railway	5.75%	5.50%	3.12%	2.10%
Plastics and articles	2.16%	2.30%	2.50%	0.15%
Electrical machinery	1.70%	1%	1.06%	0.08%

Articles of iron or steel	2.35%	1.78%	0.57%	0.01%
Other made-up textile				
articles	0.42%	0.84%	0.67%	0.05%
Sugars and confectionary	0.46%	0.57%	0.42%	0.30%
Paper and articles of paper	0.91%	0.87%	0.52%	0.05%
Miscellaneous chemical	0.28%	0.47%	0.24%	0.08%
Railway or tramway				
locomotives,	0.84%	0.32%	0.06%	0.01%
Ceramic products	0.30%	0.31%	0.34%	0.05%
Inorganic chemicals;	0.17%	0.28%	0.25%	0.03%
Aluminium and articles	1.19%	0.88	0.32	0.06%
Cotton	4.50%	3.37%	2.24%	0.01%
Iron and steel	6.32%	2.62%	0.49%	0.01%
Rubber and articles	1.06%	0.76%	0.41%	0.04%
Glass and glassware	0.10%	0.03%	0.39%	0.04%

Source: ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE statistics.

Since 2004 until 2023 the major products which dominated the India's export basket to Mozambique were Mineral Fuels which includes Petroleum products, Pharmaceutical Products, Cereals which includes Rice, Grain Sorghum, Wheat and Meslin, Barley and Maize, Nuclear Reactors and Vehicles other than railway which includes Motor Bikes, Motor Cars and Bicycles. Between the years 2015-2023 those products together accounted for almost 75% of the India's exports to Mozambique. Other listed products in the above (table 2) consistently occupied their place throughout the entire period taken for analysis except for Cotton. Since 2004 to 2013 Cotton had a considerable quantity in the export list of India to Mozambique, then slowly declined completely in the years 2021 to 2023.

As there is no production of crude oil in Mozambique and with limited refining capacity, it depends on imports to meet its energy demands. Hence, India's major exports to Mozambique include petroleum, petroleum products and related materials, accounting for 71 percent of the total exports to Mozambique between the years 2019-2023, which rapidly increased from 44 percent of the exports during the years 2004-2008. While the share of pharmaceutical products has a considerable share in the exports to Mozambique after petroleum products, there was a slight decline from 8.3 percent in 2014-2018 to 7 percent in 2019-2023. The Cereals which include Rice, Grain Sorghum, Wheat and Meslin, Barley, Maize, etc., witnessed a notable increase from 0.68 percent between 2014-2018 to 4 percent during the years 2019-2023. The other major exports such as Nuclear Reactors, Boilers, Vehicles other than Railway, Plastic articles, Cotton, Iron, and Steel during the years 2004-2013, have shown a steep drop in the shares of exports in the years 2015 to 2023. India's export to Mozambique has increased more than 25-fold from US\$74 million in 2004 to US\$2.2 billion in 2023, making India fourth-largest exporter to Mozambique.

5. INDIA'S MAJOR IMPORTS FROM MOZAMBIQUE:

The following table shows India's major import products from Mozambique during the period 2004 to 2023 and India relying on Mozambique's natural resources. The share of Mineral Fuels which includes Coal, Coke and Briquettes, Petroleum Gas and other gaseous Hydrocarbon tops the import list of India from Mozambique. The changes in shares of these products in India's imports are notable since 2008. During the years 2004-2008 those mineral fuels contributed just 1.4 percent of India's total imports from Mozambique. Later, India's import of mineral fuels increased during the period 2009-2013 from 1.5 percent in 2008 to 44 percent of its share in the total imports from Mozambique. While there has been large increase in the share of Mineral fuels during 2014 to 2019 mounting to 72.03 percent had a slight dip between the years 2020-2023 where its share declined to 66 percent. Edible Vegetables and certain roots (Dried leguminous vegetables, shelled, whether or not skinned or split, Potatoes, Vegetables provisionally preserved, Cabbages, cauliflowers, kohlrabi, kale and, Onions, shallots, and garlic) was having a rise in their share of total imports of India from Mozambique, from 9.8 percent in 2004-2008 to 27 percent between the years 2009-2013.

Table - 3 India's Import from Mozambique

Years	2004-2008	2009-2013	2014-2018	2019-2023
Mineral fuels, mineral oils	1.42%	43.63%	72.03%	66%
Edible vegetables and certain	, ,	7 0		, 0
roots	9.80%	27%	15.10%	14.85%
Oil seeds and oleaginous				
fruits;	0.04%	0.03%	0.45%	2.75%
Iron and steel	20.21%	5.29%	1.49%	2.05%
Edible fruit and nuts;	60.00%	13.53%	5.29%	1.81%
Natural,cultured				
pearls,gemstones	0.22%	0.22%	1.40%	0.51%
Ores, slag and ash	0.43%	6.70%	1.87%	1.33%
Lead and articles	0.37%	0.51%	0.26%	0.74%
Salt; sulphur; earths and				
stone;	0.17%	0.23%	0.14%	0.52%
Copper and articles	0.16%	0.07%	0.59%	6.30%
Aluminium and articles	0.04%	0.15%	0.50%	0.25%
Electrical machinery and				
equipment	0.00%	0.17%	0.19%	0.08%

While the share of the Mineral Fuels has increased between the period 2014-2023 the share of Edible vegetables declined to 15 percent in those years. Iron and Steel and Edible Fruits and Nuts (Brazil nuts and Cashew nuts, fresh or dried Grapes, fresh or dried Apricots, Cherries, Peaches) which accounted for 20 percent and 60 percent respectively in the years 2004-2008 have fallen sharply to around 2 percent each at the end of 2023.

Trade Intensity Index

According to the World Bank, Using the trade intensity index (T), one can ascertain whether the value of commerce between two nations is higher or lower than one would anticipate given their significance in global trade. It is calculated by dividing the amount of a nation's exports to a partner by the total amount of exports to that partner worldwide. It is computed as follows:

Tij = (xij/Xit)/(xwj/Xwt)

Where x_{ij} and x_{wj} are the values of country i's exports and of world exports to country j and where X_{it} and X_{wt} are country i's total exports and total world exports respectively. An index of more (less) than one indicates a bilateral trade flow that is larger (smaller) than expected, given the partner country's importance in world trade(Trade Indicators worldbank.org)

Table - 4
Trade Intensity Index of India with Mozambique

Year	India's export to Mozambique	India's export to the world	Worlds' export to Mozambique	World's total export	TII of India with Mozambique
2004	73,939	7,59,04,200	20,34,672	9,10,88,42,024	4.4
2005	1,12,018	10,03,52,637	24,08,195	10,35,39,20,380	4.8
2006	1,74,935	12,12,00,606	28,69,327	11,97,64,05,730	6.0
2007	3,93,177	14,58,98,053	30,49,746	13,80,97,45,453	12.2
2008	4,23,227	18,18,60,898	40,07,763	16,01,51,93,458	9.3
2009	3,66,043	17,67,65,036	37,64,207	12,38,69,24,567	6.8

2010	4,95,450	22,04,08,496	35,64,230	15,09,32,63,749	9.5
2011	5,70,582	30,14,83,250	63,05,647	18,13,76,64,368	5.4
2012	8,88,370	28,95,64,769	61,77,210	18,39,19,08,309	9.1
2013	16,15,538	33,66,11,389	1,00,99,147	18,84,98,43,134	9.0
2014	19,57,866	31,75,44,642	87,43,074	18,85,69,57,626	13.3
2015	14,76,378	26,38,89,005	79,07,623	16,41,80,63,890	11.6
2016	8,73,974	26,09,63,959	52,95,313	15,92,42,03,652	10.1
2017	10,52,960	29,58,62,157	57,61,505	17,56,35,86,196	10.8
2018	8,11,484	32,39,97,680	68,19,155	19,32,90,50,174	7.1
2019	21,35,314	32,32,50,726	76,38,740	18,76,18,14,917	16.2
2020	14,44,427	27,54,88,745	64,37,597	17,51,49,68,797	14.3
2021	18,35,716	39,48,13,673	86,22,697	22,15,40,54,456	11.9
2022	23,00,851	45,26,84,214	1,45,12,194	24,71,97,95,601	8.7
2023	22,72,886	43,14,18,488	1,00,91,853	23,29,10,72,313	12.2

Source: ITC Trade Map

The Trade Intensity Index depicts that the trade intensity of India with Mozambique in 2023 has increased 177 percent from 4.4 intensity value in 2004. The trend of India's trade with Mozambique since 2004 has shown an upward surge which reached its peak in 2019 and had a decline to 11.9 in 2021 due to the impact of Covid-19. It had again seen an uptrend reaching 12.2 in 2023.

6. INVESTMENT

The upward surge in the economy after globalisation, caused the need for energy resources in India to increase dramatically, such that energy security concern has occupied a significant place in India's Foreign Policy discourse. Hence, investment in oil and gas ventures abroad, has become a significant objective of India's Foreign Policy. The heavy investments by the Indian companies in the energy resources of Mozambique had strengthened the economic ties between both the countries India and Mozambique. Next to Mauritius, Mozambique ranks second in India's foreign direct investment in Africa and India is the biggest investor in Mozambique's natural gas and coal industries, invested around US\$ 10.5 billion. Almost 50 percent of its need for natural gas has been imported by India and so it is seeking for new liquified natural gas (LNG) sources in Mozambique, with its large gas reserves of 180 million cubic feet. In 2008, 10% of the stake in Rovuma Area-1 gas project in Mozambique has been held by Indian PSU, BPRL and in addition to that in 2014, acquisition of 20 percent of stake in Area 1 of the Rovuma gas block has been taken by two Indian Public Sector Companies, ONGC Videsh Ltd. and Oil India Ltd. International Coal Ventures Private Ltd, a consortium of five Indian PSUs (SAIL, NMDC, RISL, CIL and NTPC) had acquired a 65% of stake in the coal assets sold by Rio Tinto, in Mozambique during 2014. There are some more Indian companies JSPL, JSW, Coal India Ltd, Tata Steel, Essar, Midwest Africa, etc had invested in the coal mining sector of Mozambique. The Brazilian mining Giant, Vale, sold their Moatize coal mining asset and the 920-km Nacala Logistical Corridor in Mozambique to another Indian company the Jindal Group, in 2021. There are other Indian companies which had invested in sectors other than mining include Godrej group's interest in hair & beauty products in Matola. The other few companies like Pure Diets, Rajarambapu Group, and Asian Tea Company have their investments in commercial agriculture. Indian companies like Tata and Mahindra have invested in automobile sector, in Mozambique. The newer sectors of Mozambique, including healthcare, education, electricity, information technology, pharmaceuticals, have attracted new companies from India to invest in Mozambique.

7. FUTURE PROSPECTS

Mozambique is a nation, which has ample resources including rich water sources, arable land of 5,650,000 hectares, energy, mineral resources and natural gas deposits off its coast. Because Mozambique has a large amount of untapped arable land, favourable agro-ecological conditions, and an unfulfilled demand for food, the agriculture sector has the most potential. India can share its expertise in agriculture and food processing to help Mozambique improve its agricultural productivity and can be a collaborator in sustainable irrigation systems, second-hand equipment and machinery, cold chain solutions, particularly in infrastructure and storage, agro-processing, packaging, and agricultural

inputs. Though, abundant in resources, with unskilled labour and a high illiteracy rate among 15- to 34-year-olds (31.4%), skills mismatches, lack of infrastructure, and a low level of industrialization, Mozambique faces a hindrance in its structural transformation. Collaborations in Mozambique's healthcare, education, rail and road infrastructure can significantly impact Mozambique's economic and human capital development. Due to the start of the Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) production at the Coral South offshore the economy of Mozambique has been fuelled and grew by 5 percent in 2023. While the extractive and service sectors were the main drivers of growth on the supply side, the government should make policies to use the available resources in an efficient way. India, with its growing demand for natural gas and its current dependency on imports for about 50 per cent of its natural gas needs, made to search for new liquified natural gas (LNG) sources. Hence, India's investment in Mozambique for LNG, can benefit both the nations equally. As the utilisation is at burgeoning stage, focus without ceasing may be given to the mining and energy sectors.

8. CONCLUSION

Trade has been instrumental in transforming both developing nations India and Mozambique which is endowed with outstanding human resources and abundant natural resources, as a developed nation. Both nations are forging a path together in the vision of achieving greater economic and social progress through the exchange of resources. A relationship dating back thousands of years helped lay strong foundation in people-to-people connect which has been further enhanced in modern times to forge a strong bilateral relationship based on regular political contacts, intensifying economic involvement, and a well-integrated Indian diaspora in Mozambique. The bilateral ties had become more important and significant for both the nations India and Mozambique after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Kampala Principles" of 2018, which was based on shared goals of prosperity, equality, opportunity, liberty for all and the results of the trade and investment between both the nations have proven it.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

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