



India-Brazil Relations

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This article is based on “The final frontier: Bolsonaro’s Republic Day visit should spur strategic bilateral ties and open doors to Latin America” which was published in The Times of India on 25/01/2020. It talks about India-Brazil relations.

India and Brazil established diplomatic relations between India and Brazil in 1948. The long bilateral strategic partnership is based on a common global vision, shared democratic values, and a commitment to foster economic growth with social inclusion for the welfare of the people of both countries.

In this context, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro’s presence as chief guest for the Republic Day parade in 2020 is a booster dose to India’s relations with a prominent power and an opening to deepen India’s footprints in Latin America.

Historical Link

- The connection between India and Brazil is **five-century old**.
 - The history dates back to the time when **Portugal’s Pedro Alvares** was on his way to India and was blown off course, only to discover Brazil in 1500.
 - He made Brazil a stop-over to finally reach Goa. **This led to the Portuguese association between India and Brazil and the exchange of varied agricultural crops and cattle in the colonial times.**
- During the cold war, India and Brazil calibrated against the world order dictated by superpowers (US and USSR). For example in 1967, both the countries condemned the idea of creating Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Political Cooperation

- The strategic partnership established in 2006 between Brazil and India has deepened, with both countries cooperating closely within BRICS, IBSA, G4, G20, and the wider multilateral context of the United Nations.

- Brazil and India (along with Germany and Japan) jointly pursued aspirations of permanent seats in the UN Security Council and worked towards a multipolar world where large developing countries can frame global rules and democratise international institutions.
- Both countries played a pivotal role as leaders of the Global South or South-South cooperation.
- The Brazilian foreign policy of **reciprocal multilateralism** is in concurrence with India's policy of **strategic autonomy**.

Note:

- **Reciprocal multilateralism:** The rules of multilateral order should benefit all nations, and not being merely dictated by the superpowers for their benefit.
- **Strategic autonomy:** It denotes the ability of a state to pursue its national interests and adopt its preferred foreign policy without being constrained in any manner by other states.

Economic Cooperation

Brazil has become one of the most important trading partners of India in the entire LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean) region.

- However, bilateral trade between the two countries stands at a dismal \$8 billion.
- In 2018 Indian investments in Brazil were around U.S.\$ 6 billion and Brazilian investments in India are estimated at \$ 1 billion.

Note:

- The main items of export from India to Brazil are diesel, organic chemicals and pharmaceutical products, man-made filaments, nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, textile products (synthetic filaments/fibres, cotton, apparels, accessories etc.).
- Main items of Brazilian exports to India were Petroleum products, mainly crude oil, cane sugar, copper ore, soya oil and gold.

Defence Cooperation

- Brazil and India signed a bilateral '**Defence Cooperation Agreement**' in 2003 that calls for cooperation in defence-related matters, especially in the field of Research and Development, acquisition and logistic support between the two countries.
- Under the framework of the agreement, a 'Joint Defence Committee (JDC)' has been set-up that meets at regular intervals.

Cultural Cooperation

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- In Brazil, there is enormous interest in India's culture, religion, performing arts and philosophy.
 - Brazil has a strong community of Yoga and Ayurveda practitioners. The **Brazilian Association of Ayurveda (ABRA)** is a non-profit association with offices in 9 states of Brazil and has members all over Brazil.
 - **Mahatma Gandhi** is highly regarded in Brazil and the government and NGOs are trying to inculcate the philosophy of non-violence among students, youth and police.

Challenges

Relationship between India and Brazil has majorly remained stable. However, some minor issues have emerged lately.

- Brazil has filed a complaint at the World Trade Organisation against New Delhi's **subsidies to sugarcane farmers**.
Brazil is the largest producer and exporter of sugar and claims Indian subsidies are inconsistent with global trade rules.
- Brazil already counts China as its number one trade partner. India is facing difficulty to **compete with deep pockets of China**.
- Though BRICS as a group has tremendous potential to grow, it has also received criticism **for not having a common vision**.
- India and Brazil have **developed divergence on climate change cooperation** as India is committed to combating global warming while Brazil has rejected scientific studies on climate change.

Way Forward

- There is plenty of room for cooperation between India and Brazil. For example, upgrading of **Strategic Partnership Action Plan, along with the Bilateral Investment treaty, a Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement (MLAT) on crime, agreements on double taxation avoidance, bio-energy or ethanol production, cybersecurity, health, mining, oil and gas exploration and investment, and animal husbandry**.
- Operationalisation of **Social Security Agreement (SSA)** signed between Brazil and India in March 2017, will allow investments in each other's pension funds, to help business processes and encourage the flow of investment.
- Brazil is considered to have the oldest, most advanced and efficient ethanol programs in the world. At a time when India imports crude oil for around 4 million barrels per day, the alternate use of energy is the need of the hour.
India can collaborate with Brazil and **ethanol's substitution of fossil fuels** to meet its energy needs.

- The issues of health, universal education, infrastructure needs to be addressed. With the cooperation of IBSA and BRICS as major platforms, India and Brazil can come up with plans to deal with these issues.

Conclusion

- India and Brazil are the emerging nations that hold similar principles on democracy, human rights, global governance and liberal strategies.
- They are partners on the basis of trade relations and have a lot to learn from each other. With their uniting stance on various multilateral and plurilateral forums, the two countries are considered to be important for the creation of new world order.

Drishti Mains Question

India and Brazil share a multisectoral relationship.

Discuss
