

Unmasking India's invisible hand in Namibia

In the realm of international cooperation, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme is an excellent example of fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among nations. Namibia has benefited significantly from the ITEC programme, which plays a crucial role in enhancing human resources development, capacity-building and technological advancements. This article explores the multifaceted role of the ITEC programme in Namibia, and the positive impact it has had on various sectors.

The ITEC programme was launched by the Government of India in 1964 to share India's developmental experience and technical expertise with other developing countries. The programme focuses on providing training courses, workshops and capacity-building initiatives to professionals from partner countries. Namibia, having gained independence in 1990, has been an active participant in the ITEC programme, forging a strong bond with India in the areas of education, technology and economic development. One of the primary objectives of the ITEC programme is to enhance human resources development through education and training. Namibian professionals, including government officials, educators and entrepreneurs have availed themselves of opportunities offered by ITEC to attend specialised courses in various disciplines. To date, more than 1 700 Namibian professionals and scholars, along with more than 1 400 ITEC trainees, have received capacity-building assistance. This figure excludes

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those trained in Namibia by Indian deputation. These courses range from information technology and renewable energy to healthcare and agriculture. The training imparts valuable skills, and facilitates the exchange of best-practices, ultimately contributing to Namibia's overall development.

The ITEC programme serves as a conduit for the transfer of cutting-edge technologies and skills. Indian experts often conduct workshops and training sessions in Namibia, covering a spectrum of fields such as information technology, agriculture, healthcare and renewable energy. This technology transfer empowers Namibian professionals to implement innovative solutions in their respective domains, fostering sustainable development and economic growth. Notably, India has entered MoUs with some universities in Namibia, with faculty specifically having a component of ITEC with Indian lectures. This is commendable, and the Indian government should be applauded for such investment. Namibia, like many African nations, faces challenges in healthcare delivery. The ITEC programme

has played a crucial role in addressing these challenges by facilitating training for Namibian healthcare professionals. Indian medical experts have conducted workshops on various medical specialities, sharing their expertise in areas such as telemedicine, maternal and child health, and disease prevention.

This collaboration has not only improved the skill set of Namibian healthcare professionals, but has also contributed to the overall improvement of healthcare services in the country. As a beneficiary of this programme, I can attest to the fact that the ITEC programme catalyses economic partnerships between India and Namibia. The programme fosters economic growth and mutual benefit by promoting collaborations in areas such as trade, investment and entrepreneurship. Indian businesses and entrepreneurs often engage with their Namibian counterparts, creating opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint ventures and technology transfer that contribute to the economic development of both nations. The Indian ITEC programme has played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and strengthening ties between India and Namibia. Development by focusing on education, technology transfer, healthcare and economic partnerships, ITEC has contributed significantly to Namibia. The exchange of knowledge and skills facilitated by the programme underscores the importance of international cooperation in addressing global challenges and promoting sustainable development. As the partnership continues to evolve, the ITEC programme remains a beacon of collaboration, bridging nations, and fostering a brighter future for all involved.

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