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INDIA-TURKEY RELATIONS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



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SUMMARY



Throughout this analysis, India-Turkey relations discussed historically, politically, socially, and economically and the existing challenges and opportunities in bilateral relations have been examined. Moreover, in this work, Turkey's changing foreign policy and its impact on bilateral relations in the field of economy with India in the AK Party era have been examined. In the last chapter, opportunities for cooperation between Turkey-India, with the existing challenges in bilateral relations of Turkey with respective countries have been given suggestions.



ABSTRACT

India and Turkey have an unshakeable and incontestable relationship in the fields of political, social, cultural, and historical. These two countries, which cradle significant civilizations in history, have given shape to regional and world politics directly or indirectly and showed determination respecting the creation of a road map own political and economic future. India and Turkey are one of the world's most significant political, cultural, and economic centers. Both countries are members of the G20(or Group of Twenty), which consisted of the biggest economies in the world. India has a vibrant ancient history and cultural heritage, whereas Turkey is a crossroads of civilizations whose is cultural diversity very intense. At the same time, India and Turkey have gained their independence against imperialism and give the liberation struggle against the colonial powers.

Throughout this analysis, India-Turkey relations have been discussed in many aspects, and the existing challenges and opportunities in bilateral relations have been examined. Moreover, in this work, Turkey's changing foreign policy and its impact on bilateral relations in the field of the economy with India in the AK Party era have been examined. In the last chapter, opportunities for cooperation between Turkey-India, with the existing challenges in bilateral relations of Turkey with respective countries, have been given suggestions.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TURKEY-INDIA RELATIONS

Turkish-Indian relations have a very long history. The arrival of Turks to India and the rule of Turkic-Muslim empires opened a new historical page. The two communities' relations have continued to date with their historical, cultural, religious, and political aspects. Turkish-Indian relations followed a distant course after India became independent in 1947.

Turkey was one of the first nation-states which recognized India's independence in 1947. Turkey-India relations in the years 1950-1960 were generally commercial relations;

particularly, Turkey was the importer and India was the exporter. Turkey's import products from India were jute, canvas and bags.

Turkey recognized India immediately and diplomatic relations started between the two countries. Indian Muslims supported the national Liberation Fight in Anatolia financially and morally. During the national struggle, the Indian people provided 750.000 Turkish Lira¹ of aid to the national struggle. With this money, the urgent needs of the Turkish navy were met. In addition, it has been spent for the reconstruction of the city of Izmir, the establishment of İŞ Bank and the purchase of land to Atatürk Orman Çiftliği and the establishment of food and beverage factories on this land.²

Ideological factors influenced the relations between India and Turkey during the Cold War. Turkey was a member of NATO and the western bloc since 1952, whereas India stayed away from superpower politics and did not participate in any bloc. India adopted a "non-alignment" policy and led the Non-Alignment Movement. Non-alignment policy contains anti-imperialist, not participating in any power blocs, anti-colonial, supporting peaceful settlements in international disputes, mutual-benefit, equal distribution of wealth, and promoting the UN's role. On the other hand, Turkish policymakers did not share a similar attitude with their Indian counterparts. Therefore, the ideological divergence and the power structure of the Cold war led the bilateral relations not to reach the desired level.

In the Democrat Party period, political relations started to develop besides diplomatic relations between the two countries. As a guest of the Indian Parliament, the Turkish Parliament delegation who went to this country on 7 March 1953 visited the tomb of Mahatma Gandhi on 15 March 1953 and left a wreath.³ The Prime Minister of India Nehru welcomed the parliament

¹ Approximately 120.000 pounds

² India-Turkey Relations, Embassy of India, <https://www.indembassyankara.gov.in/page/relation/> (Accessed on 18.07.2021)

³Sertel, S. (2015). Arşiv Belgelerine Göre İnönü Döneminde Türkiye-Hindistan İlişkileri. <https://turkishstudies.net/DergiTamDetay.aspx?ID=7555>

delegation on 16 March. One year later, in 1954, fifteen Indian delegations, including Lok Sabha members, officials and diplomats, visited Turkey as the Turkish assembly invited them to Turkey last year. Indian visitors met with Prime Minister Adnan Menderes in Ankara.

Turkey-India political relations were going well until April 1955 suffered significant damage during this period. The conference was held on April 18-24, 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia. The conference brought together the Asian-African states that newly gained their independence. Representatives of 29 countries attended the meeting. The conference's objectives were to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism or neo-colonialism by any nation. The conference was a significant step towards the formation of the Non-Alignment Movement. The Deputy Prime Minister representing Turkey at the Congress was Fatin Rüştü Zorlu. Zorlu gave a pro-American and pro-Western speech at the meeting. In the opening of the conference, Indian Prime Minister Pandit Nehru gave a speech against NATO and. Nehru accused NATO of colonialism. Fatin Rüştü Zorlu clashed with Nehru about his non-alignment policy during the session on April 21. Zorlu would talk about the disadvantages of non-alignment, while Nehru was asserting the benefits of it. According to Nehru anyway, joining one of these blocks was an "unbearable humiliation" for an Asian-African state.⁴ After this argument, the coldness between Nehru and Menderes' governments continued for a long time. The Democratic Party had done its best to improve the relations between the two countries. However, Turkey-India relations in the conference held in Bandung had been shaken.

Both sides tried to keep economic relations awake and developed through bilateral trade agreements. When prime minister Adnan Menderes paid an official visit to India in 1958, he met with Nehru, and Turkey's demand for utilizing economic opportunities between two

⁴ Malkoç, Eminaalp. (2016). "20. YÜZYILIN İKİNCİ YARISINDA TÜRKİYE İLE HİNDİSTAN'IN SİYASİ İLİŞKİLERİ" *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, V/1, 109-145.
<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/iuavid/issue/28828/309204>

countries was emphasized. It was proposed that Turkey would sell fiber cotton, cereal and dry fruits to India, and purchase jute, leather, canvas and tea from India. However, trade of tobacco products, alcohol and cigarettes was also discussed but not finalized.⁵ Despite the efforts of both sides, economic relations were below what it was expected to be.

In the 80's Ozal government adopted neoliberal policies in the Turkish economy, which led Turkey to increase its export and import with neighbouring countries as well as extended neighbours. PM Turgut Ozal's visit to India in 1986 was fruitful for bilateral relations. In addition to inter-delegations meetings, PM Turgut Ozal had meetings with the President of India, the Minister of Industry, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other officials. He had met with Rajiv Gandhi twice and met with the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The visit aimed to improve and increase the dialogue and contacts between the parties in many fields from economy to communication. Ankara and New Delhi signed the Air Transportation treaty and agreed on collaboration among media & communication institutions.⁶ The first Turkish President who paid a visit to India was Kenan Evren; when he was welcomed in Delhi in 1989, the relationship between India and Turkey got warm and developed.

Nevertheless, Pakistan was one of the biggest challenges in the development of the relationships between Ankara and New Delhi. Turkey's military relations with Pakistan and Turkey's support to Pakistan in the Kashmir issue have been the main determinant of India-Turkey bilateral relations. In other words, Turkey-Pakistan alliance in RCD and CENTO and Ankara's support to Pakistan in Kashmir Issue, while India's stand to Makarios's side in Cyprus issue, were main factors in underdeveloped relations of Turkey-India. In order to improve the relations, these obstacles should be dealt with by both states. Thus, Turkish

⁵Sertel, S. (2015). Arşiv Belgelerine Göre İnönü Döneminde Türkiye-Hindistan İlişkileri.

<https://turkishstudies.net/DergiTamDetay.aspx?ID=7555>

⁶ Ibid.

ambassador to India Mahmut Dikerdem (1969-72) pointed out that “*being friendly with Pakistan does not mean being hostile with India.*”⁷

The relations between the two countries were getting worse and regressed rather than developing in the direction of friendship. However, in 1947, when India gained independence, there was no reason to prevent improving the Turkish-Indian relations on solid and realistic foundations. In contrast, representatives of the two deep-rooted civilizations in the East and the people of both civilizations had more than enough links to facilitate closer together.

Turkey-India relations can be traced with frequent contact between both states, and it gained momentum at the end of the 20th century. In this context, the visits of Turgut Özal and Kenan Evren, and then Bülent Ecevit in India in the 1980s and the return made by the Indian authorities against these visits created the impression that the relations of the two countries will develop easily in the future. However, although some progress was made in Turkish-Indian relations in the late 20th century, the expected or desired level could not be reached.

RELATIONS IN THE NEW CENTURY: AK PARTY ERA

The 21st century has witnessed several changes and developments in Turkish domestic and foreign policy. External and internal factors that have both compelling and encouraging characteristics played in this change, such as the post-cold war political and economic structure of the international system- as an external factor- and the new government under the strong leadership- as an internal factor.

Various elements such as geography, new geopolitical developments, history, Ottoman legacy, westernism, identity have been considered when the Turkish foreign policy is reformulated in the new century, particularly under the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) era.

⁷ Malkoç, Eminaalp. “20. YÜZYILIN İKİNCİ YARISINDA TÜRKİYE İLE HİNDİSTAN’IN SİYASİ İLİŞKİLERİ”

After 2002 when the AK party captured the power position with a single-party government with a parliamentary majority bringing about political stability after the turbulent 1990s and the economy returning to a growth trajectory after severe economic crises, policy-making broke the deadlock of the previous coalition governments.⁸ Turkey has adopted more active and strategic policies and endeavoured in a more assertive and determined way in foreign policy. Foreign policy initiatives launched by AK Party aimed at fostering ties with hitherto excluded nearby neighbours and regions. Opening to Africa, Central Asia and Distant Neighbourhoods are seen as the endeavours of Turkish policy makers in the age of globalized world.

Dynamics behind the paradigm shift in Turkish foreign policy have political, economic, cultural and ideological preferences. Disillusion in the European Union project after a long effortful process, Turkey's Muslim identity factor and policy attention to other Muslim neighbouring states and regions, aspiration of regional and global influence, multifaceted policy orientation, and the growing economic capability are the main dynamics behind the reformulation of Turkish foreign policy since 2000.

Economic considerations in the formulation of policy are a crucial defining aspect of Turkey's evolving foreign policy. Stronger economic ties with the rest of the world constitute both an end and the means to an end for Turkish policymakers.⁹ Turkey's ambitions to increase its global and regional influence relies on its ability to project power abroad, which can only be accomplished through a growing economic presence in the neighbourhood and beyond.¹⁰

Apart from economic motives, which is the main pillar of Turkey's changing foreign policy, emphasis on humanitarian assistance and mediation efforts, and the Islamic connection

⁸ Selçuk Esenbel & Altay Atlı (2013). https://www.mei.edu/publications/turkeys-changing-foreign-policy-stance-getting-closer-asia#_ftn2

⁹ Altay Atlı, "Businessmen and Turkey's Foreign Policy," International Policy and Leadership Institute (Paris), 2011. http://altayatli.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Atli_IPLI-brief.pdf

¹⁰ Selçuk Esenbel & Altay Atlı (2013).

are other significant themes in Ankara's initiatives towards regions. Turkey's humanitarian assistance to Myanmar and Bangladesh refugees, the initiative for peace talks in Afghanistan, and intergovernmental mechanism for promoting cooperation, peace and security in Asia through *Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)*.

11th Ambassadors Conference on August 5 in Ankara when minister of external affairs Çavuşoğlu announced a new foreign policy initiative called the Asia Anew¹¹ the formulation of a new holistic approach toward Asia in a diverse set of areas from trade and defense industry to technology and culture is imperative for Turkish foreign policy to be effective.¹² He stated that “*we will develop the tools we need to embrace Asia as a whole, on the basis of the cooperation of our state, private sector, universities and peoples.*”¹³

In summary, reformulation and reorientation of Turkish foreign policy aim to actively interact with the different parts of the globalized world to increase Turkey's influence and promote national interest at regional and international levels. This aim would be achieved through concrete efforts in political, economic, cultural, and social initiatives by the state as well as non-state actors.

Turkey- India Bilateral Relations in AK Party Era

During the Cold War, Turkey could not establish close political and economic relations to the desired extent with India, which is the second largest state in Asia. Turkey-Pakistan relations and ideological differences in foreign policy with India championing the Non-alignment Movement were the main constraints in enhancing bilateral relations between Turkey and India. However, the change of the foreign policy orientation of the two countries

¹¹ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/BAKAN/bkon2019-tr.pdf> Mr. Çavuşoğlu “*It is time to create a new policy that looks at the differences of Asia as well as look at the region in a holistic way.*”

¹² Ümit Alperen and Eyüp Ersoy, “Turkey and Asia Anew: A Foreign Policy Initiative in Passing”. (2019). The Diplomat <https://thediplomat.com/2019/10/turkey-and-asia-anew-a-foreign-policy-initiative-in-passing/>

¹³ Mr. Çavuşoğlu. 2019

after the end of the Cold War brought about the development of Turkey-India bilateral relations.

As a G-20-member, Turkey aspires to be a member of the world's largest 10 economies so that she would be a global power. In an effort to strengthen its economic interaction with all economic blocks, it started to see India, which is close to Central Asian countries, has a strategic position on the Indian Ocean transportation routes and is an important power in nuclear technology, space and information technology as one of its important partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Turkey in 1948, political and bilateral relations have been usually characterized by warmth and cordiality¹⁴, so that it can be argued that developments occurred in the Turkish- Indo bilateral relations because of political, economic and societal relations that have undergone a deep transformation.

In 2001, then Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani was the first high-level dignitary of the NDA government to have visited Turkey, which concluded with an important agreement on an extradition treaty.¹⁵ In 2003, Atal Vajpayee's visit to Turkey was a qualitative step forward for the relationship. PM Vajpayee met with his counterparts and participated in the G-20 summit in Antalya. After fruitful and cordial meetings between leaderships, both sides saw the need for a new impetus to bilateral relations. In addition to the economy, leaders discussed global terrorism and agreed on collaborating shared concerns. The global war on terror brought India and Turkey on a common platform as they have been victims of the menace for quite some time. As a result, the establishment of a Joint Working Group on fighting against terrorism is a step to co-operate in inter-regional levels.

¹⁴ Aswini K. Mohapatra, "Bridge to Anatolia: An Overview of Indo-Turkish Relations," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, No. 39, 2008, pp.164-167. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/tyir/issue/49996/640890>

¹⁵ Abdul Ruff, Turkish President Erdogan visits India, supports Kashmiri cause, *Foreign Policy News*, May 12, 2017. <https://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/05/12/turkish-president-erdogan-visits-india-supports-kashmiri-cause/>

In his speech, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee stressed that relations should be developed in various fields and on a large scale. *“The long history of friendly contact between India and Turkey should be translated into a vibrant, revitalised economic partnership, based on our respective strengths. This should cover not only trade in goods and services, but also two-way investment, third country projects, scientific research collaboration, joint commercialization of new technologies, and many other areas.”*¹⁶

Both parties have agreed to constitute a special bilateral Working Group, drawn from Economic Ministries, to identify areas of promise in hitherto unexplored sectors and analyse how they can best be developed. The new trade target by 2005 was set as one billion dollars from 650 million dollars in the meeting. To strengthen trade facilitation infrastructure, priority requirements should be done, such as the air link, travel exchange, direct shipping links, and easy banking and transaction channels. So, these topics took place in the leaders’ meetings. A.B. Vajpayee emphasized the need for mutual willingness and initiatives from both sides to utilize the potential opportunities sufficiently.

*“Governments can only encourage and facilitate this process by creating the necessary infrastructure and ensuring the necessary legal framework. After that, it is for business to pick up the gauntlet. I hope you will devote some thought to this during your deliberations here. I also hope that business and industry on both sides will maintain uninterrupted contact and dialogue to achieve this objective.”*¹⁷

In 2008, PM Erdogan visited India with many delegations, and two years later, in 2010, President Abdullah Gul’s visit to New Delhi was seen as Turkey’s interest in India. After the high-rank visits to India in the AK Party era led policy analysis and scholars to discuss Turkey’s Asia policy and the position of Pakistan. It is clear that the new Turkey is no longer interested

¹⁶ Prime Minister’s Speech at the India-Turkey Business Meeting, 2003.

<https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/4771/prime+ministers+speech+at+the+indiaturkey+business+meeting>

¹⁷ Ibid.

in formulating its Asian policy based on Pakistan as it was a decade ago; thus “the Pakistan factor today does not exist as an overriding determinant in Turkey’s South Asia policies (Kapila, 2008)”.¹⁸ Ozkan argued that Turkey’s pro-Pakistani approach had been softened due to the importance of building up a coherent and comprehensive relationship with India in parallel to developing a holistic Asian policy. Pakistan supports the Taliban and its disregard to spread of Islamist radicals threatening the stability of Central Asia and Turkey’s concerns on peace and security of the region.

As a result, Turkey has since reversed its support to Pakistan’s position on Kashmir, moving from a call for a plebiscite under UN supervision to stressing the importance of India-Pakistan bilateral talks to resolve the issue by and large closer to India’s position.¹⁹ In terms of terrorism and security issues, for Turkey and India, the 9/11 attack and the global war on terror were turning points in commonly shared security concerns. They have begun to move closer to these issues and started cooperating and taking various steps towards a more substantive partnership.²⁰ Thus, it should be noted that solutions cannot be national when threats are global or regional.

During the Gul’s visit, Ankara and New Delhi decided to develop and expand cooperation in science and technology by launching the advanced science and technology dialogue and also offered to work together in mutually identified projects in areas such as telecommunications, computerization, space research, and biotechnology and environmental technology; and also to convene a joint workshop.²¹ Collaboration in science and technology

¹⁸ Mehmet Özkan, Can Rise of “New” Turkey lead to a “New” Era in India- Turkey Relations. 2010. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46377872_Can_the_Rise_of_'New'_Turkey_Lead_to_a_'New'_Era_in_India-Turkey_Relations

¹⁹ Ishtiaq Ahmad, “Turkey and Pakistan: Bridging the Growing Divergence,” *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 3, September-November 2000. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/perception/issue/49023/625355>

²⁰ Sarah Akram, “Turkey-India Relations Redefined,” *Reflections*, No. 4, 2010. http://www.issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/1299049555_791291.pdf

²¹ Ibid.

will promote the exchange of ideas, skills, information, and human resources such as scientists, technicians, scholars, etc.

In order to promote people to people ties, Ankara adopted a new visa policy facilitating getting visas for Indian citizenship. So, Indian citizens who have a valid US visa or Schengen visa can get a Turkish visa at entry. Although last year experienced a 40% reduction in the number of tourists arriving in Turkey, the 80,000 Indian tourists visited Turkey in 2016. Indian tourists constitute about 0.3% of the total number of foreign tourists attracted by Turkey, whereas the number of tourists from Turkey to India was about 25,000 constituting 0.32% of total tourists attracted by India.²² Every year 10 million Indians go abroad, but only 80 thousand Indian tourists come to Turkey. Turkey desires to get more shares from the Indian tourist pie.

Economic relations are steadily growing between two developing economies; however, it is not at desired levels. Despite the increase in trade volume between Turkey and India, trade balance results are continuously against Turkey. In 2017, exports increased by 16.4% to 758.6 million dollars. On the other hand, imports from India increased by 8.0%. In 2008, trade volume was around 3 billion US dollars, and New Delhi and Ankara committed to increase the trade volume to 6 billion by 2011. Moreover, in 2010 efforts towards a Free Trade Agreement were negotiated between two states, yet not realized. According to Turkey's Investment Support and Promotion Agency, three direct investment agreements were also signed by Turkish and Indian entrepreneurs during Abdullah Gul's formal visit to India. Officials say that these agreements would bring Turkey direct investments of nearly 150 million USD, providing employment opportunities for 200 people.²³

²² Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), *DEIK Report, Hindistan Firsat Analizi 2017*.

<https://www.deik.org.tr/uploads/hindistan-firsat-analizi-nisan-2017.PDF>

²³ Mehmet Özkan, Can Rise of "New" Turkey lead to a "New" Era in India- Turkey Relations. 2010.

Turkey's export items to India include marble, ecosin, cast iron and steel scrap, auto components, leather, gold, precious metals, porcelain and glass bottles, white appliances, carpets and rugs, bitumen minerals, textiles products, tobacco, cigarettes, pulses, cruise ships, ferries, mechanical devices, food products etc. On the other hand, major import items from India are steel, granite, antibiotics, carpets, unwrought zinc, cotton yarn, synthetic yarn, organic dyes, organic chemicals, denim, sesame seed, mobile handsets, clothing and apparel.

Figure 1: Turkey's export, import and trade volume with India (million \$)

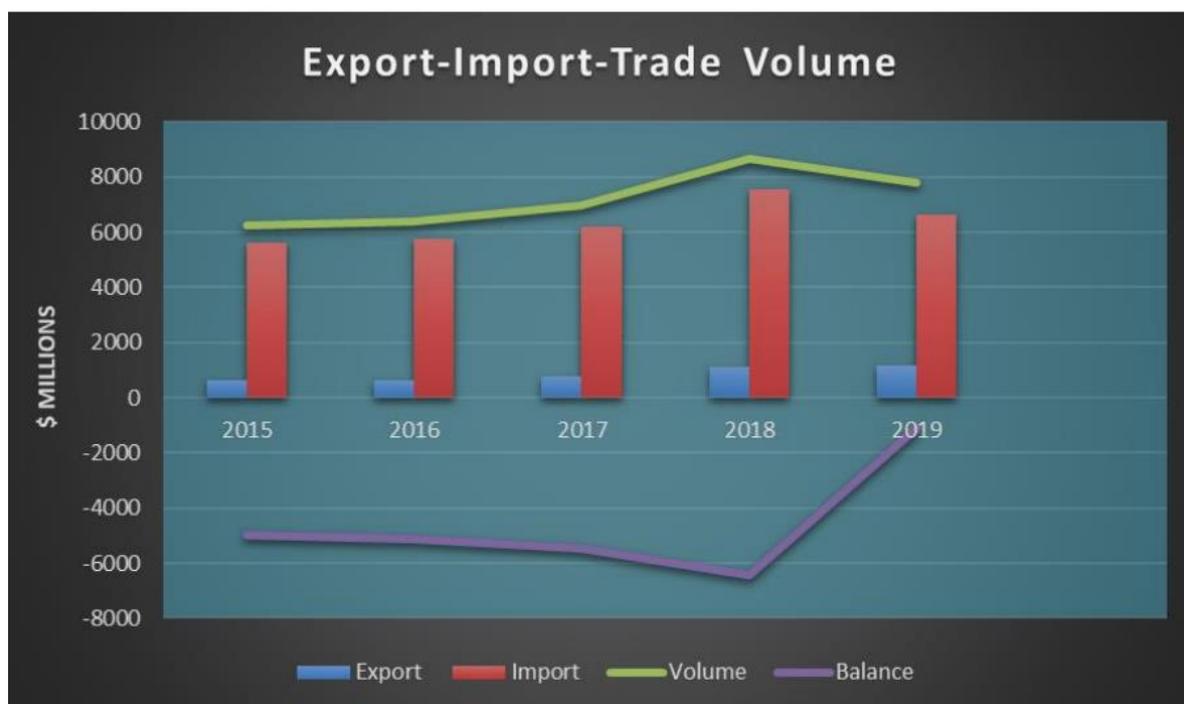
Year	Export	Import	Volume	Balance
2015	650,3	5.613,5	6.263,8	-4.963,1
2016	651,7	5.757,2	6.408,9	-5.105,5
2017	758,5	6.216,6	6.975,1	-5.458,1
2018	1,121,5	7.535,7	8.657,2	-6.414,2
2019	1,166,5	6,635,2	7.801,7	-5,468,7
2020/3 months	244,6	1,360	1,604,6	-1,115,4

(Resource: Republic of Turkey- Ministry of Foreign Affairs)²⁴

Figure 2: Bilateral Economic and Trade Relation between Turkey and India.²⁵

²⁴ https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-india.en.mfa

²⁵ Gujrati R., Uygun H., "Bilateral Trade: Between India and Turkey", Journal of Business and Trade (JOINBAT) 1(1), 53-60, 2020. <https://journals.subu.edu.tr/index.php/joinbat/article/view/31/15>



President Recep Tayyip Erdogan paid an official visit to India following days after he won the referendum election in 2017 and met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was the first meeting for both leaders, especially when Modi won the general election in 2014. They have signed significant bilateral agreements and discussed various multilateral and bilateral issues. This visit drew the attention of the media from both sides. Ruff (2017) stressed that Turkey is an important world power, no matter how close it may be with India's arch-rival Pakistan. India and Turkey have to build on their many convergences and build mutual trust soon. This is possible at a time when both countries have powerful leaders and stable governments.²⁶

Erdogan was accompanied by the First Lady and five Cabinet Ministers (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Economy, Minister of Energy, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Minister of Transport, Communications and Maritime Affairs). Chief of General Staff General

²⁶ Abdul Ruff. *Foreign Policy News* 2017.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/05/12/turkish-president-erdogan-visits-india-supports-kashmiri-cause/>

Hulusi Akar, parliamentarians, senior officials and a 150-member business delegation from Turkey accompanied President Erdogan. In two days trips, respective delegational levels meetings were held between two states. The issues discussed ranged from politics, economy, nuclear energy, security and terrorism to tourism, student exchange and scholarship programmes, cultural projects, and media and movie sectors.

Both leaders agreed that India and Turkey, being among the top 20 economies in the world with sound economic fundamentals and increasing convergence of positions, could contribute to addressing international issues of mutual interest such as new economic order, stability and security of the respective regions.

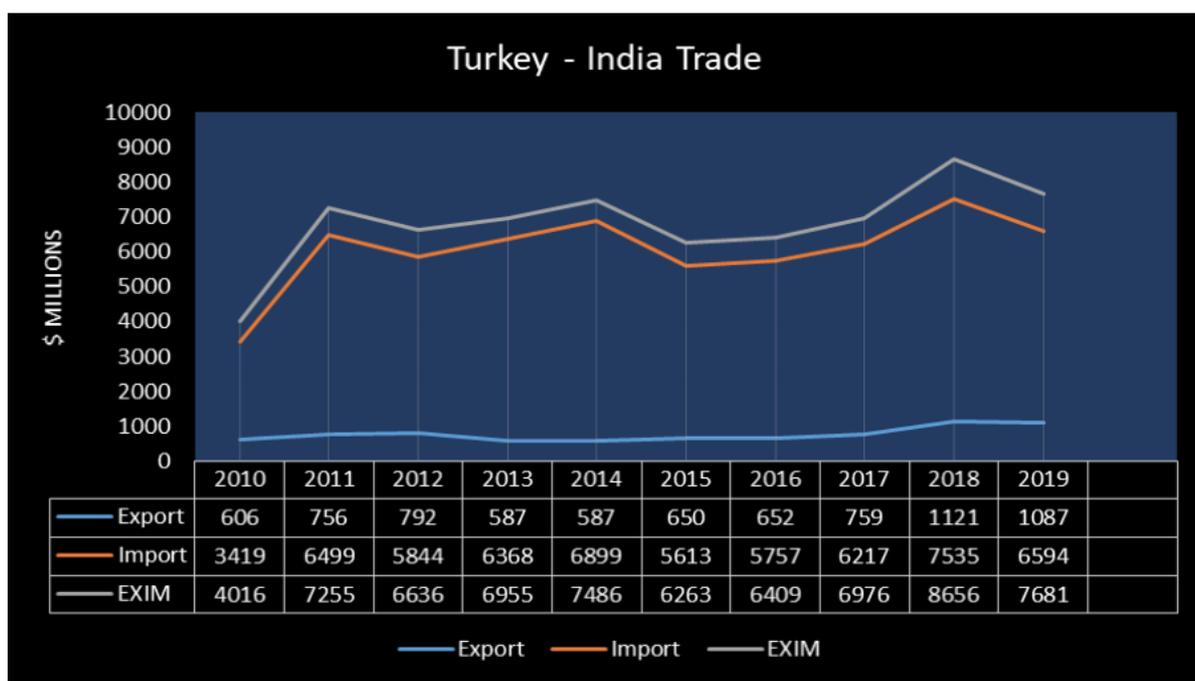


Figure 3: Turkey – India Trade (2011-2019).²⁷

PM Modi explained the opportunities of the “Make in India” Project and highlighted Turkish investment in India would be mutually beneficial to both economies. Erdogan emphasized that Turkish capacities in the construction field would satisfy India’s

²⁷ Gujrati R., Uygun H., “Bilateral Trade: Between India and Turkey”, Journal of Business and Trade (JOINBAT) 1(1), 53-60, 2020. <https://journals.subu.edu.tr/index.php/joinbat/article/view/31/15>

infrastructural requirements and match Modi's Smart Cities Project. In addition, it was agreed that energy cooperation is a significant point in bilateral relations, particularly in civil nuclear energy, hydrocarbons, solar and wind energy.

To enhance people to people contact, both sides agreed on encouraging the exchange of people and cooperation in tourism. Indian movies, "Bollywood", are a significant instrument for creating interest in people's minds. Modi highlighted India's yoga diplomacy and the crucial influence of public policy.

Recognizing the need for comprehensive UN reforms, including the Security Council expansion to make the body more representative, accountable, and effective, both sides agreed to work towards the reform of the UN Security Council to enhance its democratic nature and reflect the reality of the twenty-first century.²⁸

During the visit of President Erdogan, Ankara and New Delhi signed several bilateral agreements.²⁹

- Cultural Exchange Program for 2017-2020
- MoU for Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute of India and Diplomacy Academy of Turkey
- Agreement between the Government of The Republic of Turkey and the Government of The Republic of India on Gainful Occupation for Family Members of the Members of Diplomatic Mission or Consular Post
- MoU between Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), India and Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA), Turkey

²⁸ *India-Turkey Joint Statement (1 May 2017)* https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/28433/IndiaTurkey_Joint_Statement_during_the_State_Visit_of_the_President_of_Turkey_to_India_30_April_to_1_May_2017

²⁹ India-Turkey Joint Statement during the State Visit of the President of Turkey to India, 2017.

- Cooperation Agreement between Press Trust of India (PTI) and Anadolu Agency (AA) of Turkey

In conclusion, Indo-Turk bilateral relations have remarkably grown in the new century. This is the significant impact of re-orientation and change of Turkish foreign policy, stressing the importance of Asia and relations with rising regional powers in the globalized world. Turkey- India bilateral relations include a variety of fields such as politics, economy, regional and international security, nuclear proliferation, trade and energy, culture, tourism, media, health, technology and science, intellectual activities, academy through the state as well as non-state actors including NGOs, civil society organizations, human capital. Ankara and New Delhi also showed their willingness to cooperate in inter-regional and international issues in both bilateral and multilateral forms.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Numbers are not always able to tell the whole story of relations among nations. In today's globalized world, states are subject to change and given opportunities to be utilized. So, Turkey's bilateral relations with India contain many opportunities as well as challenges. It is vital to be aware of given opportunities and discover new ones to increase ties between states. To overcome the challenges in the relations is as crucial as utilizing the opportunities.

Opportunities

India and Turkey share a common vision as both are committed to becoming self-dependent in critical areas such as technology, defence, science. Both are growing economies as well as in respect to being a regional power, their several cooperation areas both nations can mutually benefit.

Turkey's growing bilateral relations with India is largely based on economic ties offering many opportunities for both sides to boost trade. Products that may increase Turkey's export are motor vehicles and parts, ship repair, aircraft industry parts, machinery sector. In

addition to them, India can be considered as a profitable market for Turkish food and agricultural products.

The Indian government has launched several giant development projects nationwide. These projects include infrastructure, industry, manufacturing, science, health and education, IT technologies. The government plans to focus on the following 5 main areas in infrastructure development: - Railways, Highways, Ports, Housing and Inland waterways.

India has the largest railway network in Asia; more than 20 million people travel in a day by 12,500 trains on the 114.000 km railways. Government desires to increase the number of passengers and develop modern technologies in the railway network. In addition to railway, highway and ports projects have the largest portion of government's investment. In 2016, fifteen highway projects were opened to tender as a PPP model. National Highway Development Project aims to construct a 50.000 km highway within seven phases by \$55 billion investment and offers beneficial opportunities to Turkish investors. Sagarmala is a big step for the development of ports and increasing the port efficiency through modernization of the ports. The Indian government is aiming to build 12 new big ports, which are worth \$11 billion. Shipbuilding, construction of modern ports, piers and marinas will attract the attention of Turkish ship-owner firms as well as construction firms.

Housing development projects are offering the biggest opportunities to boost the economic ties between Turkey and India. In 22 states (1050 cities) construction of 20 million houses has been targeted by 2025. The Smart Cities Mission (worth \$15 billion) is designed to improve local regions and life in the country, especially by equipping it with smart technologies and improving its quality and ensuring economic growth. Housing projects will stimulate other sectors providing input to the construction sector, e.g. cement, iron, steel, dyeing etc.

Cooperation at the global level should be promoted. India and Turkey, as G-20 members, should encourage cooperation in shared interest issues such as inter-regional

economic forums -BRICS, ASEAN, SCO-, nuclear deal, counterterrorism, and reformation of the UN Security Council. With its advanced IT capacity and trained staff, cooperation between India and Turkey has great benefits. Bio-technology, space research, software industry are other opportunities for cooperation.

Energy cooperation is quite significant for both states since Turkey demands nuclear energy to generate electricity and reactors. In contrast, India is looking for diversification of energy supply and renewable energy resources.

Tourism is the most significant instrument for the promotion of people-to-people contacts. Each year, 10 million Indian tourists go abroad, but only 50.000 come to Turkey. In order to utilize the tourism potential, several steps should be taken.

- Facilitation and extension of visas for Indians,
- Increasing the number of flights of THY and increasing the service quality of the flights,
- Starting charter flights from India,
- Special training to Turkish tourism professionals for attracting Indian tourists
- Cooperation with Bollywood in the promotion of Turkey,
- Emphasis on history-culture, shopping, entertainment, sports and health tourism instead of sea-sun tourism for India³⁰

To increase cultural ties and awareness of Turkey in India, cultural exchange programmes, frequent exchange of academics and research, cooperation between think tanks and NGOs will play a crucial role. Turkey draws the attention of the Indian people as a safe and touristic entertainment destination. Moreover, Indian couples looking for an amazing and breath-taking

³⁰ Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), *DEIK Report, Hindistan Firsat Analizi 2017*.
<https://www.deik.org.tr/uploads/hindistan-firsat-analizi-nisan-2017.PDF>

destination for their wedding should be attracted through fairs, advertisements, movies, and special trip offerings.

Indian cinema and Turkish TV series constitute the newest cultural bridge between the two countries. Turkey's becoming a hub country for international students in education, so that education cooperation between India and Turkey will bring people together. It is important to benefit the contribution of qualified Indian students who would be a bridge between the two nations as well as a source of Turkey's soft power. It can be achieved through scholarship programmes, informing Indian students regarding the Turkish education system and institutions, and joint research projects.

Challenges

The main challenge in the development of bilateral relations between Turkey and India is Pakistan. Turkey's close relationship with Pakistan and support for the Kashmir issue discourage the development of relations with India. Traditional ties in the military alliance are the main challenge in trust-building between Turkey and India. Although, Turkish policymakers stress that being close with Pakistan does not mean being negative to India. However, India disagrees with this approach and looks at Turkey through the Pakistani prism. Turkish policymakers need an immediate review of their India policy.

Another challenge we can count on is the Turkish economy's limited financial and institutional capacity- GDP. Trade volume is growing, yet in favour of India. Turkey's export to India should be increased so that a win-win situation could be achieved. Lack of awareness of economic opportunities is another problem of underdeveloped bilateral relations with India. Entrepreneurs from both sides should be well-informed and encouraged to invest. A Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between two nations will boost the economy and trade.

Security and stability concerns are other challenges in the interaction between two nations. Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war destroyed the stability and security of the region.

Several internal and external security threats, refugee problems, economic crises, and political turbulences eroded Turkey's investment credibility.

Turkey's deficiency of a comprehensive policy towards two rival countries, India and Pakistan, constrains the harvest of Turkey's efforts. Indian viewpoint to Turkey through Pakistan and Kashmir issue would not give a positive outcome for the bilateral relations with Turkey. Pakistan's stance in Afghanistan and "shadow support" to the Taliban are the divergence areas between Turkey and Pakistan. Democracy and civil-military relations are issues that Turkey has concerns.