

India-Cambodia Bilateral Relations

Historically, India-Cambodia relations dates back to the beginning of C.E. or perhaps even before when Hindu and Buddhist religious and cultural influences emanated out of India to Cambodia & greater region of South East Asia. Cambodians are predominantly Buddhist but they retain a strong influence of Brahminical rituals and mythology. The magnificent structure of Angkor Wat temple, built between 12th to 14th centuries, is a glorious testimony of pervading influence of temple architecture of India. Indian influences are also seen on the earlier temples of Cambodia such as Preah Vihear dedicated to Lord Shiva built from late 9th century onwards, Angkor Thom, Bayon, Ta Phrom, Sambor Prei Kuk and other historical sites.

A. Political Relations

India and Cambodia enjoy warm and cordial relations. In the 1950s, India was associated with the International Control Commission on Indo-China. India's contribution as Co-Chairman of this Commission came in for widespread appreciation in Cambodia. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, India was the first country to recognize the new government and reopened its Embassy in 1981. The Embassy had been closed during the Khmer Rouge regime. Post Khmer Rouge phase (1979-91), India offered legitimacy to the regime and helped building capacity of the leadership. India also responded to an appeal by the Cambodian Government to send a team of experts from Archaeological Survey of India in 1986 for the restoration of the famous Angkor Wat temple.

There exists abundance of goodwill for India in Cambodia, which has been sustained by regular interactions of political leaders, exchange of bilateral visits, aid and assistance, capacity building, cultural exchanges, concessional loans for developmental projects and restoration and conservation of old temples in Cambodia.

In the context of India's 'Act East' policy and the ASEAN, Cambodia is an important interlocutor and a good partner. Contemporary times have witnessed expansion of cooperation in diverse fields such as institutional capacity building, human resource development and extension of financial assistance in infrastructure projects, social security projects and capacity building in defence.

The bilateral relations have been reinforced by several high level visits. Post colonial era, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Cambodia in 1954. Subsequently, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Cambodia in April 2002 and November 2002. President of India Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil visited Cambodia in September 2010. Other high level visits to Cambodia included PM Dr. Manmohan Singh in November 2012, Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari in September 2015. In 2018, there had been three high level visits from India. Commerce Minister Shri Suresh Prabhu visited Cambodia in May, 2018, Raksha Mantri Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman in June, 2018 and External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj in August 2018.

From Cambodian side, Prime Minister Hun Sen has visited India many times; the recent being in January 2018 when he paid a state Visit to India and also participated in the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and as Guest of Honour at the Republic Day Parade 2018 along with other ASEAN Leaders.

Assistance & Aid Projects:

India and Cambodia have signed various Agreements and MoUs in the fields of bilateral cooperation, trade & commerce, cultural exchanges, capacity building, concessional loans for developmental projects and restoration and conservation of old temples in Cambodia.

Government of India had sent experts from Archaeological Survey of India for restoration and conservation of Angkor Wat temple from 1986-1993. The excellent work carried out by Indian experts is still appreciated by Cambodia. Restoration of another temple complex at Ta Prohm has been a major ongoing project. In 2018, India committed to help part restoration of ancient temple of Preah Vihear.

India had been assisting Cambodia in diverse fields for its economic and social growth and is continuing to do so. In the past, India had gifted medicines, rice, indelible ink to Cambodia. Lines of Credit have been extended for Water Resource Development, Transmission Line and Supply of water pumps. India also assisted in the project for redevelopment of India-Cambodia Friendship school in 2015.

Under the Mekong Ganga Cooperation(MGC) initiative, India helped in establishment of the Asian Traditional Textile Museum at Siem Reap. The museum, one of its first kind in Cambodia, was completed in December 2011. It is headed by an Indian Director appointed by ICCR. It has exhibits on textiles from the Mekong Ganga region along with interactive facilities. It also has a training center and workshop in textiles; a fashion design and development center using traditional ethnic designs; and various children activities in the center.

Also under MGC initiative, beginning from 2015-16 India has been assisting Cambodia with small Socio-Economic projects known as Quick Impact Projects in the fields of agriculture, health, women empowerment, capacity building, sanitation, environment and information technology every year. These Projects have received overwhelming response and created a distinct and visible impact among beneficiaries.

As a major initiative towards capacity building, in addition to the existing schemes of training of Cambodians under ITEC programme & ICCR scholarships for students, India has also committed to offer assistance in setting up a Centre of Excellence in IT and IT-enabled services in Cambodia.

The cooperation has been continuing in defence sector with the conduct of annual training capsule for Royal Cambodian Armed Forces in Peacekeeping and Demining modules; defence courses under ITEC; goodwill visits by Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard ships and exchange of official delegations. India has also gifted fifteen sniffer dogs to Cambodia for demining activities.

B. Commercial Relations

Cambodia has maintained its high growth at the average rate of 7 percent for decades where agriculture, construction, tourism and garment & footwear sectors are the main sources of such robust growth. Cambodia's overall total trade reached US \$ 25.55 billion in 2017. Its exports valued at US \$ 11.27 billion in 2017, increased 11.96 percent as compared to 2016 while imports increased to US \$ 14.28 billion, changed 15.47 percent. Cambodia imported significantly from Asia up to 92.74 percent of total imports in 2017. Key imported commodities are vehicles, petroleum products, motorbikes, and other consumable goods. The first export destination is European continent which accounts for 40.22 percent followed by Asia which accounts at 28.62% of total exports in the same year. Garment, footwear, rubber, textiles, fish products and other agricultural products are top exports to the globe.

Though economic interaction between India and Cambodia are limited. However, trade and investment figures have changed positively in recent years. India exported US \$ 120.27 million worth of good to Cambodia, showing 9.32 percent increasing in 2017 while imports valued at US \$ 48.02 million, increasing by 11.33 percent at the same year. Total trade reached US \$ 168.02 million in 2017, increased 9.71 percent as compared to 2016.

To promote trade and business relations, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce, Trade and Civil Aviation, Sri. Suresh Prabhu, visited Cambodia in May 2018 to participate in Indian - CLMV Business Conclave in Phnom Penh and held bilateral meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, H.E. Pan Sorasak on trade improvement and connectivity. India and Cambodia jointly organized some events in Cambodia such as 5th India-CLMV Business Conclave in May 2018 and Incredible India Road Show in May 2018. Besides organizing events in Cambodia, Cambodian government official and business delegation were invited to participate in Advantage Assam-India's Expressway to ASEAN in February 2018, FICCI Higher Education Summit, Saurashtra Vepar Udyog Maha Mandi (SVUM) in July 2018, and other mega events and Expo in India.

On bilateral investment front, India invested US \$ 19.8 million in 2016. There are few Indian companies which are investing in multiple sectors including Mesco Gold, Bajaj Cambodia, and Sram Mram Limited. The Government of India is planning to create a Special Purpose Vehicle for US \$ 68.27 million fund to increase Indian economic presence in CLMV. We are negotiating India-Cambodia Bilateral Investment Treaty. Cambodia and India have signed agreements on cooperation in the areas of but not limited to agriculture, scientific and technological cooperation, entrepreneurship development and tourism. The economic relations between the countries are also facilitated by the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation and the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement.

India-Cambodia Merchandise Trade

India - Cambodia trade has been growing steadily in the last few years. The total trade between India and Cambodia stood at US \$ 188.02 million in 2015, which indicated a 10.66% increase over the corresponding figure for 2014 (total trade US \$ 169.90 million). Of this, exports from India were US \$ 145.66 million (a decrease of about 5% over 2014) and the imports from Cambodia were US \$42.36 million (an increase of 157.66%). While the overall trade has shown a continuous trend of growth, the trade basket remains very narrow. Indian exports are dominated by pharmaceuticals, yarn, leather and some engineering items. Cambodian exports are mostly primary products. However, her exports declined in 2016. Indian exports were US \$ 110.01 million and Cambodian exports to India were US \$ 43.13 million. Indian exports showed a decline of -24.47% and the Cambodian exports registered 1.81% growth. The drop in Indian exports in 2016 is largely attributable to drop in exports of Oil Meals, Cotton and other yarns (possibly due to supply/demand linked to regional apparel manufacturing chains) and milled products. There was a positive change in total trade volume from 2016 at US \$ 153.14 million to US \$ 168.02 million in 2017 with 9.71% growth. Potential items of exports from India could include machinery, auto parts (two/three wheelers), drugs and pharmaceuticals, agricultural products including agricultural product processing industry, leather and leather products.

Figure 1: India-Cambodia Trade Volume (2015-2017)

Trade with India	2015	2016	2017
Total Trade	188.02	153.14	168.02
Exports	145.66	110.01	120.27
Import	42.36	43.13	48.02
Growth %	-	(18.54)	9.71

Source: The Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India

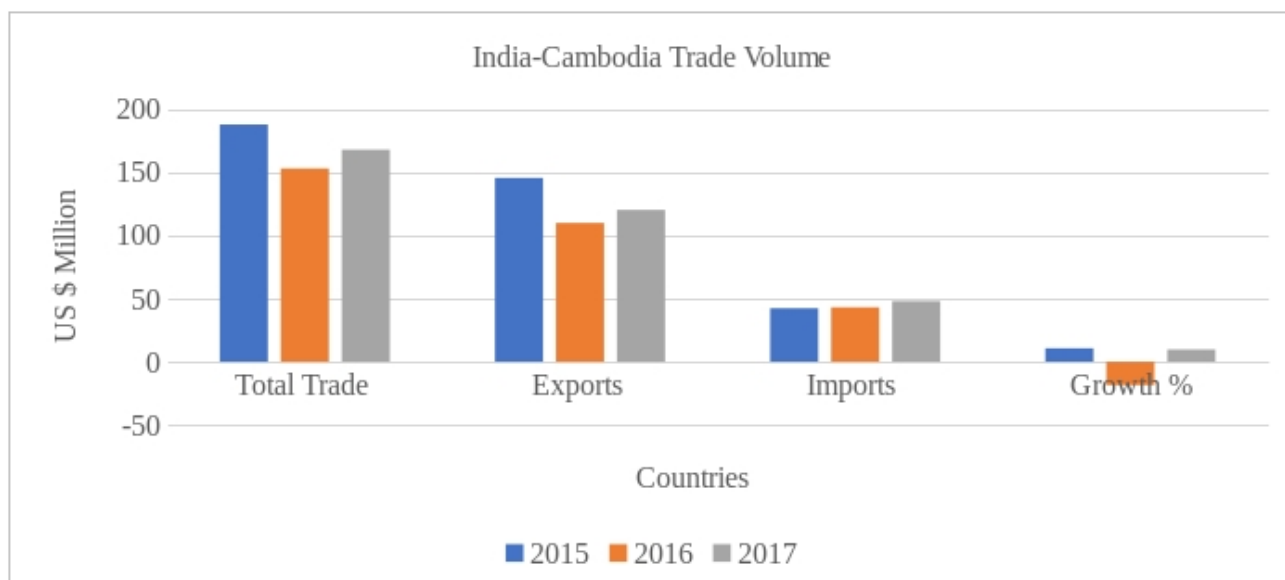


Figure 2: India Top 10 Items of Export to Cambodia (Jan-Dec 2017)

(By principle commodity code)

Pc Code	Commodity	Value (US\$)
H8	DRUG FORMULATIONS, BIOLOGICALS	39047035
Q3	MANMADE YARN, FABRICS, MADEUPS	13936839
P8	COTTON FABRICS, MADEUPS ETC.	13154088
O5	MOTOR VEHICLE/CARS	7315983
F8	FINISHED LEATHER	7149855
B9	OIL MEALS	5013006
N6	INDL. MACHNRY FOR DAIRY ETC	3193006
D4	MILLED PRODUCTS	2468319
O8	TWO AND THREE WHEELERS	1943512
P9	OTH TXTL YRN, FBRIC MDUP ARTCL	1622549

Source: The Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India

Figure 3: India Top 10 Items of Import to Cambodia (Jan-Dec 2017)

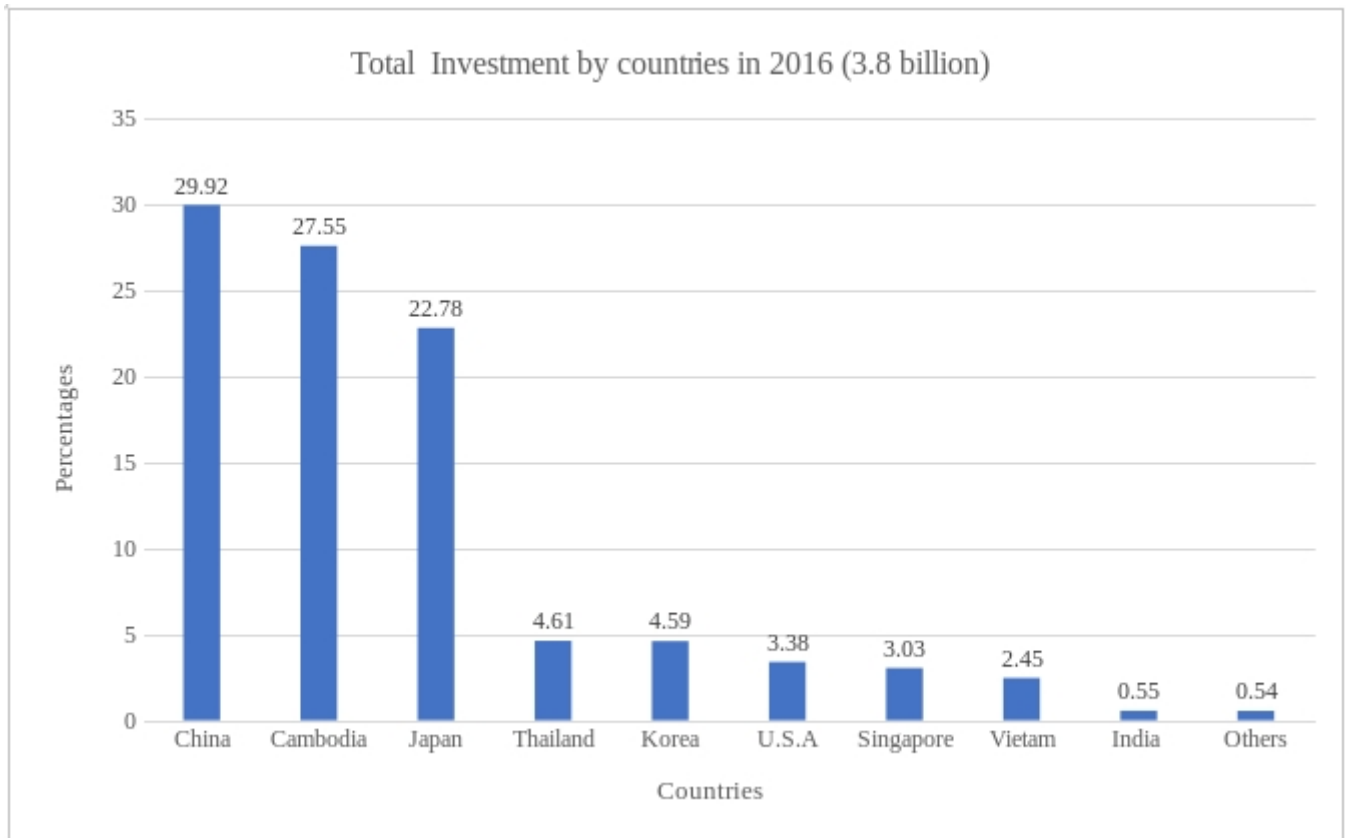
(By principle commodity code)

Pc Code	Commodity	Value (US\$)
E5	NATURAL RUBBER	10316190
Q8	RMG MANMADE FIBRES	9444817
D5	MISC PROCESSED ITEMS	9277470
Q6	RMG COTTON INCL ACCESSORIES	4437731
N2	BICYCLE AND PARTS	2610215
G2	FOOTWEAR OF LEATHER	2592836
K2	OTHER WOOD AND WOOD PRODUCTS	2206480
R1	RMG OF OTHR TEXTLE MATRL	1808783
M8	MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC INSTRUM	1119950
H5	BULK DRUGS, DRUG INTERMEDIATES	1005457

Source: The Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

India – Cambodia Investment

With a positive growth, Foreign investment inflow to Cambodian is expanding continuously. According to The Council for the development of Cambodia, total foreign investment reached US\$3.6 billion in 2016 and was 24% increase from 2012 to 2016. In the same year, India investment reached US\$19.8 million (0.55%) out of overall \$3.6 billion and rank in top10 for foreign investor in Cambodia. The major investment from India are in the field of agricultural machinery, power, construction and mining.



(Source: The Council for the Development of Cambodia)

C. Cultural Relations

India-Cambodia cultural and historical relations are more than a millennium old when Indian culture, religion and trade emanated out of India and spread rapidly in various parts of South-East Asia. However, Cambodia witnessed Indian influence centuries before that whose living example is the temples of Sambor Prei Kuk built by Ishanvarmana I and other kings of Chenla empire during 6th and 7th Century AD in Ishanapura, the then capital of the Kingdom, which is so far the oldest known example of existence of Indian culture and religion in Cambodia. However, some scholars are of the opinion that the cultural and religious connect between India and Cambodia date back to 1st century. According to Cambodian belief, Khmer people's founding legend centers around an Indian prince Kaundinya called Preah Thaong in Cambodian folklore. Cambodian society which is now predominantly Buddhist retains a strong influence of Indian Hindu and Buddhist rituals, idolatry and mythology which can be seen in many of its rituals having resemblance with Indian culture and traditions. Khmer language too is a live example of Indian culture which has approximately more than 3000 words originated from ancient Indian Sanskrit language. Later the pervading influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indian architecture are borne out by the magnificent structures at Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Bayon, Ta Prohm, Banteay Srei, Preah Vihear and other religious and historical sites in Cambodia. In order to strengthen our old age close cultural links, Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between India and Kingdom of Cambodia was signed in 2000 which has been renewed from time to time. During the State Visit of Prime Minister Hun Sen to India in January 2018, the CEP has been renewed for a further period of four years till 2022. During recent visit of Hon'ble EAM, a Memorandum of

Understanding between the Government of India and National Authority on Preah Vihear has been signed for restoration of some parts of Preah Vihear temple.

In order to strengthen our close cultural bonds, India, under Mekong Ganga Cooperation initiative, announced and setup MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum at Siem Reap which is a unique repository of traditional textiles of India and Southeast Asian countries including Cambodia. It also has a training centre and workshop in textiles; a fashion design and development centre using traditional ethnic designs; and various children activities in the centre. It also helps preserve the age-old tradition of textiles in this region. The Museum is another attraction for tourists coming to Siem Reap.

India had undertaken work for restoration and conservation of the Angkor Wat temple which is a world heritage site of UNESCO and an important tourist destination in Cambodia visited by millions of tourist every year. At present, India is engaged in the restoration work of Ta Prohm temple in Angkor Archaeological Park. India was appointed Co-chair for the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) on Preah Vihear, another world heritage site and one of the oldest temples of Lord Shiva. ICCR has been maintaining a Chair on Buddhist & Sanskrit Studies at Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University and a full time Indian Professor on Sanskrit and Buddhist Studies is deployed by Government of India in the University.

Government of India with the support of Cambodian Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has been organizing yoga events to celebrate International Day of Yoga (IDY). The 3rd IDY was celebrated in three cities of Cambodia in June 2017 which was attended by more than 2500 participants. In 2018, escalating the level of celebration of Yoga Day, Embassy organized celebration of International Yoga Day in four cities namely Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Siem Reap and Battambang which witnessed increased number of attendees. Similarly, Festival of India which included many cultural events including event on the theme of Ramayana, which is a shared tradition of both India and Cambodia, had been organized by Embassy of India in Cambodia. Cambodian Ramayana troupes frequently visit India for their performances in various cultural programmes. Embassy of India in collaboration with Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University organized a four day international Conference on 'Buddhism in Southeast Asia' in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in September, 2018 which was attended by prominent Buddhist scholars of almost all Buddhist countries of the world. To highlight the linkages between Sanskrit and Khmer language, Embassy of India organized maiden Sanskrit Day celebration in Embassy premises with participation of eminent Sanskrit scholars of Cambodia. Various cultural/educational programmes are being organized by Embassy to revive the old age cultural linkages between India and Cambodia.

Government of India has deputed a full time Bharatnatyam teacher in the Embassy who has been conducting dance classes at Royal University of Fine Arts and at the Embassy and schools etc. to propagate one of the Indian classical dance forms. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Government of India has deployed a full time Teacher of Indian Culture in Embassy of India, Phnom Penh for propagation of Yoga, Sanskrit and Veda in Cambodia through organization of regular

classes in Universities, organization of seminars, demonstrations etc. in various institutions/organizations.

Both India and Cambodia recognize and value not only our old age cultural and historical linkages but also our present robust cultural and people to people relationship and are engaged in strengthening bilateral cultural relationship between the two countries.

D. Indian Diaspora

The first Indians in modern times to settle in Cambodia arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of them came from the Southern province of Tamilnadu and they worked as jewelers, moneylenders and traders around Central Market in Phnom Penh. But they had to leave the country once the Khmer Rouge arrived. The Indians returned to Cambodia when Khmer Rouge was defeated.

Indian population in Cambodia is though small in number but it remains an intimate and close-knit group that has integrated well into local society. Approximate population of Indians in Cambodia is around 2000, which includes floating population of small scale sellers of household items from eastern India. Indians in Cambodia in general are working as professionals like doctors, NGO workers and also involved in business sectors like pharmaceuticals, education, restaurants, agriculture and plantations etc. Some of them are working for various institutions of the United Nations and also as advisors to Cambodian government agencies and institutions. The growing economy and stability in Cambodia is also attracting more opportunity seekers from India.

Despite small numbers of Indians in Cambodia, Indian culture is visible in this country. Indians usually mix in well with the local population. Indian festivals like Diwali and Holi are celebrated by the Indian community. Similarities in various cultural/religious practices of India and Cambodia make Indians feel at home in Cambodia. Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism are traditionally linked together and share traditions, rituals and holidays. Due to reach of satellite television, popular Hindi soap operas and films are shown by local TV channels dubbed in local Khmer language. Hindi film DVDs can be bought throughout the capital, and expatriates can peruse a number of Indian-based websites for the latest news and entertainment. The Indian Association Cambodia (IAC) is a non-profit Indian Community Development and Social Association, founded in the year 1993. It is run by an executive committee and supported by its general members. All executive committee members are volunteers and come from all walks of life for the support and development of India-Cambodia relations through various voluntary cultural, social and community development programs. IAC can be approached by Indian nationals in Cambodia for support and assistance

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Phnom Penh: <https://embindpp.gov.in>

Facebook page of the Embassy: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInCambodia/>

Twitter handle of the Embassy: @indembcam

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