



ASSESSING SULTAN QABOOS'S INFLUENCE: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF INDIA-THE SULTANATE OF OMAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE GULF CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore the historical and contemporary dimensions of the relationship between The Sultanate of Oman and India, with a focus on the role of effective communication in facilitating economic and cultural exchanges. The research utilized a comprehensive approach, drawing upon historical records, economic data, and geopolitical analyses. The study sheds light on the significance of effective communication in fostering constructive exchanges and provide insights for policymakers, diplomats, and business leaders. Additionally, it contributes to the broader discourse on geopolitical and economic dynamics in the Gulf region.

Keywords: *The Sultanate of Oman, India, strategic location,geopolitical ties, economic ties, bilateral relations*

INTRODUCTION

International communication plays a crucial role in acquiring diverse information and fostering strong connections between countries, especially when they have interconnected and mutually beneficial relationships. The geopolitical and economic connection between the “Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent” is essential for effective communication. The historical contact between the “Sultanate of The Sultanate of Oman and the Democratic Republic of India is not exhaustive”, but it is important to consider present-day interactions.India, the seventh largest nation in terms of area, is home to 24 main languages and around 1652 dialects, as well as seven main faiths. The Indian federation comprises 28 states with their own local elected government and 7 regions with governors nominated by the central government. The most pertinent states for diplomatic ties with The Sultanate of Oman are Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala (Tirmizi 1993).

The Sultanate of Oman, a sovereign nation in the southeastern region of the Arabian Peninsula, is mostly inhabited by Arab Muslims and spans 309,500 square kilometers. It has land borders with the “Republic of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 84). The Sultanate of Oman's strategic location, halfway between India and Europe, has been a pivotal force in facilitating commercial transactions and fostering cross-cultural and intellectual engagement. Effective communication is essential for facilitating constructive exchanges between both civilizations, particularly in economics and politics.Since the 16th century, “the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian Sub-continent” have been subject to Western colonization, with Portugal gaining control over the East



Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean. This led to competition between France, Britain, and the Netherlands for control of the region. The discovery of oil in the early 1950s transformed the region into a significant and crucial area, with over 40% of the global reserve. Historical connections between “the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian Sub-continent” date back to prehistoric times, with the ports of The Sultanate of Oman and the Gulf serving as international trading hubs. The capture of Byzantine Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453 marked the start of European explorations and the establishment of colonies in various regions worldwide. Despite being under colonialism, historical records indicate robust connections and relationships between the two locations (refer to Saray, Hamad 2006). The Portuguese deliberately directed their ships towards sea ports in the region and captured them, leading to the establishment of colonies in The Sultanate of Oman, Hormuz, Bahrain, and other ports. The British formed an alliance with Shah Abbas in 1622, leading to the The Sultanate of Omanis raising the Flag of Jihad and gaining control over the Arab seas and Indian Ocean. This research paper examines the historical and current ties between The Sultanate of Oman and India, emphasizing the significance of international communication in fostering strong relationships and knowledge exchange. It provides an overview of India's geography, demographics, and history, as well as The Sultanate of Oman's strategic location and its role in commercial transactions and cross-cultural engagement.

OBJECTIVE

- To explore the historical and current ties between The Sultanate of Oman and India.
- To emphasize the importance of effective communication in facilitating constructive exchanges in economics and politics between the two civilizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Sultanate of Omani-Indian relations have been a concern since the British took over the “Portuguese in India and the Arabian Seas after the decline of Omani influence in the 18th century (see Bathurst, 1967). The Al Bu-Saidi Dynasty, led by Imam Ahmad bin Said bin Ahmad Al-Bu Saidi, maintained strong connections with India, particularly with Tipu Sultan of Mysore, Gujarat, and Karachi” (Al-Riyami, 2007, p.280).

The Sultanate of Oman and India have been at odds with the British since the early 1800s, when the British colonized India and began to exert their influence over the Arabian Peninsula. Sayyid Turki bin Said bin Sultan, Sayyid Salim bin Thuwaini bin Said, and their brothers were among the Sultanate of Oman's leaders who were well-treated by India. The The Sultanate of Omani communities helped integrate Indian and Arab cultures in language, religion, rituals, business, and architecture (Butshesh, 2011, pp.145-166). India's massive population, its sizable diaspora in The Sultanate of Oman, India's political aspirations in the Indian Ocean, and The Sultanate of Oman's status as her immediate western neighbor have contributed to such connections. Both India and The Sultanate of Oman care about international peace and stability, and India's assistance for Arabs' challenges is crucial and improves regional and worldwide collaboration on various peace-loving issues (al-Makhaini, Ahmad bin Ali, 2006, pp. 70-81). Officials from both nations visited India, with first direct interaction occurring



following India's independence in 1947. India launched its first Embassy in Muscat in 1971, the Sultanate of “The Sultanate of Oman opened its first embassy in New Delhi in 1972, and the Sultanate opened its first Consulate in Mumbai in 1976”.

Analysis and Discussion

The commercial situation in Dhofar, The Sultanate of Oman, showcases the trade between the two nations. The Al-Qara tribes, known for their possession of frankincense, dyes, tanned leather, natural ghee, and imported textiles from India, were the primary importers. They also imported rice and salt, with an annual import value of around 50,000 Riyals. The region's primary exports were “dates, shark fins, fish bones, turtle bones, salted fish, salt, and mackerel, mainly transported to Bombay and China”. The bilateral trade between The Sultanate of Oman and India from 1903 to 1908 was driven by the availability of commodities in India and the presence of Indian merchants in all towns.

Table 1.1 The commerce between The Sultanate of Oman and India

Year	Value (in thousand)	Percentage of Imports
1993	7.657	5.6%
1994	9.419	5.4%
1995	10.487	7.5%
1996	10.257	6.7%
1997	31.215	16.4%
1998	20.386	16.3%
1999	11.294	12.3%
2000	6.671	6.0%

The table 1.1 shows an imbalance in commerce between India and The Sultanate of Oman, with India having an advantage. This discrepancy may be due to Oman's historical practice of re-exporting goods to Gulf areas, Persia, Yemen, and East Africa. From 1993 to 2003, Oman's exports to India increased, particularly in industries and gas. Joint ventures were also established between the two nations. The “Ministry of National Economy's Statistics Year Book” covers these years.



Table 1.2 Economic and Human Exchanges Between The Sultanate of Oman and India: Trends, Imports, Exports, and Investments

Year	Human labor in Public sector	Human labor in Private sector	Exports	Imports
2001	7.323	295.773	7.423	87.116
2002	7.198	312.055	8.492	104.323
2003	6.926	247.590	8.729	110.641
2004	6.405	256.903	14.039	121.278
2005	6.185	259.118	78.176	153.304
2006	5.884	...	134.567	222.167
2007	5.659	395.657	185.651	400.127
2008	5.532	466.188

The data on the Indian workforce in The Sultanate of Oman, as well as imports and exports between the two countries, shows an increasing trend between 2001 and 2009. India's industrial capabilities in sectors like automotive and electrical appliances contribute to disparities in goods and commodities being exported and imported. The Sultanate of Oman also relies on India for essential resources like food, timber, and materials for social and economic development. The country has a wide range of investment options, with Indian enterprises receiving significant interest. “Contracting businesses and insurance companies operate in the Sultanate, and India has contributed significantly to development projects, such as the fertilizers project at Qalahat”.

Conclusion

The research concludes the economic history and trade between The Sultanate of Omani and Indian civilizations. It reveals that the connections between the two nations have been amicable, with The Sultanate of Oman playing a crucial role in facilitating the spread of Islam and foreign commerce. Many The Sultanate of Omanis migrated to India and established permanent settlements, fostering cultural integration and interaction. Despite a lack of paperwork, commerce between the two nations has been ongoing for a long time. During British rule, communication and commerce between India and The Sultanate of Oman were well documented, with India having a favorable balance due to The Sultanate of Oman's re-exporting practices. The research also highlights the advantages The Sultanate of Oman has gained from “Indian military, commercial, and economic knowledge”, which has become the core of the The Sultanate of Omani Army. The survey also indicates successful collaborative initiatives between the two nations.



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