

ISSN 0976-6634

JOURNAL OF

SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Special Volume

**After Mandela Met Gandhi:
The Past and Future of India-South Africa Relations**

Goolam Vahed¹ and Ashwin Desai²

¹*Department of Historical Studies, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa*

²*Centre for Sociological Research, University of Johannesburg, South Africa*

E-mail: ¹<vahedg@ukzn.ac.za>, ²<ashdesai1@gmail.com>

KEYWORDS Diaspora. Non-violence. Neo-liberalism. Apartheid. Walmart

ABSTRACT This paper traces the relationship between India and South Africa during the twentieth century. Its main focus is on how the Indian National Congress (INC) came to play such a pivotal role in the struggle to isolate apartheid South Africa. It argues that the first seeds were sown during Gandhi's attempt to garner support in India for local battles. Once Gandhi left, there were significant visits by leading members of the INC, most notably Sarojini Naidu, and the Office of the Agent-General. From the 1940s, independent India raised the issue of apartheid at the United Nations and sought the isolation of South Africa. India also signaled its support for African majority rule, mirroring developments inside South Africa where the Indian Congresses allied themselves with the ANC. A bond between India and the ANC was forged and this was exemplified by Nelson Mandela's visit to India in the immediate aftermath of his release from prison. Today however, with both countries adopting similar neo-liberal trajectories, the relationship is contradictory. There is competition between India and China in Africa and South Africa tries to straddle an African commitment while seeking to maximize its own advantage in the global economy. This paper argues that in the present phase of global capitalism, notions of solidarity are difficult to sustain as states find that their room for manoeuvre is limited, and the search for markets intensifies.

Africa and India in the 21st Century: Contexts Comparisons and Cooperation
Anand Singh and Nandini Sen (Guest Editors)

© Kamla-Raj 2014

JSSA, Special Volume 4: 9-18 (2014)