

# *Indian Diplomacy At Work*



INDIAN TECHNICAL  
&  
ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROGRAMME

OUR VIEW

## INDIAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (ITEC) PROGRAMME

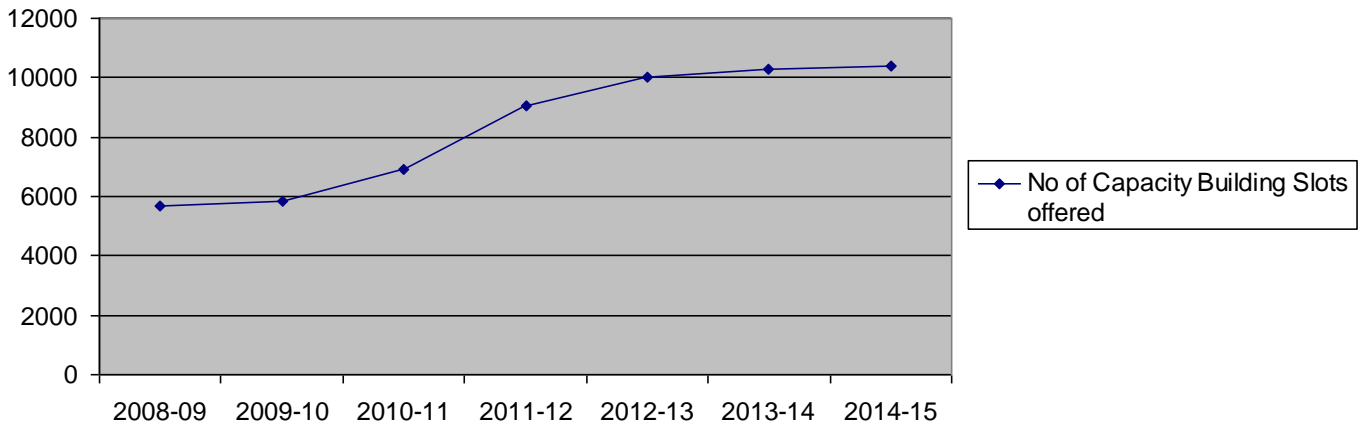
The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (**ITEC**) Programme was instituted on **15 September 1964** by a decision of the Indian Cabinet. While conveying their decision to initiate the ITEC programme, the Cabinet noted that *"a programme of technical and economic cooperation is essential for the development of our relations with the other developing countries on the basis of partnership and cooperation for mutual benefit. It would also be a concrete manifestation of our resolve to contribute to the evolution of world community based on the inter-dependence of all its members in the attainment of their common goal for promoting the social and economic well-being of their people."* Since then 15 September is celebrated as ITEC Day every year.

Under the ITEC and its sister programmes, the **SCAAP** (Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa Programme), and the Technical Cooperation Scheme of **Colombo Plan**, more than **160 countries** are invited to share India's developmental experience acquired over six decades of her existence as a free nation.

Though the ITEC programme itself was initiated only in 1964, the larger vision of "One World" driving India's development cooperation policy started right after India's independence. In 1949 itself, India announced 70 scholarships for students from other developing countries for pursuing studies in India. For a newly-independent nation, there was a strong conviction that some of the economic and other prescriptions that came with the aid received were simply not applicable to the prevailing socioeconomic conditions. At the same time, the assistance received in capacity building was invaluable and had a tremendous impact on India's development. This was the inspiration for the ITEC - the idea genuinely was to share the lessons in development that we were imbibing. Driven by this belief, at various platforms and in debates involving the South-South Cooperation (such as UNCTAD, Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC), the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), New International Economic Order, etc.), India played a key role.

The utility and relevance of ITEC programme has been reflected in the increasing number of participants. In 2013-14, over **10000 scholarship slots** were offered under the ITEC/SCAAP programme; there are **47 trainings institutions** in India which run **more than 280 training courses** in diverse subjects ranging from IT, public administration to election management, SME, entrepreneurship, rural development, parliamentary affairs, renewable energy to name a few. Similarly, training programmes on security and strategic studies, defence management, marine and aeronautical engineering, logistics and management, marine hydrography, counter insurgency, etc., are organized for defence personnel in prestigious institutions like National Defence College, Defence Services Staff College, covering all the three wings of **the defence services** – Army, Navy and Air Force. The facility is also extended and availed by some developed countries on self financing basis. ITEC courses equip the participants with not just professional skills but also prepare them for an increasingly globalised world.

No of Capacity Building Slots offered



Consequent with the increase in number of participants, the budgetary allocation for ITEC has also been growing; from Rs. 4.46 lakhs in 1964-65 to over Rs. 1 crore in the financial year 1971-72, and over Rs. 200 crores in 2013-14 (ITEC+SCAAP+Colombo Plan).

The ITEC Programme has been envisaged **essentially as a bilateral programme**. However, in recent years ITEC resources have also been used for cooperation programmes conceived in regional and inter-regional context such as Economic Commission for Africa, Industrial Development Unit of Commonwealth Secretariat, UNIDO, Group of 77 and G-15. Recently, its activities have also been associated with regional and multilateral organizations and cooperation groupings like Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi—Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMST EC), Mekong—Ganga Cooperation (MGC), African Union (AU), Afro-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), Pan African Parliament, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), World Trade Organization (WTO), Indian Ocean Rim — Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and India-Africa Forum Summit.

The ITEC programme has **several components**. Apart from organizing **training courses in India**, it also covers **deputation of Indian experts abroad, aid for disaster relief, gifting of equipment, study tours and feasibility studies/consultancy services**. ITEC is a demand driven programme, therefore, assistance offered under ITEC is usually in response to requests received from friendly countries and the commitments made by India's political leadership.

Apart from **regular courses** offered under the ITEC, **special courses and training programmes** are also conducted /scheduled at the specific request of partner countries. In recent years, special courses have expanded to new areas such as **election management** (at the International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM), New Delhi), **government performance management** (with Cabinet Secretariat), **mid-career training of civil servants** (at National Institute of Administrative Research/National Centre for Good Governance NIAR/NCGG), **Parliamentary Studies** (Bureau of Parliamentary Studies), **urban infrastructure management** (Human Settlement Management Institute), **fragrance and flavour studies** (Fragrance and

Flavour Development Centre), **WTO related topics** (Centre for WTO Studies, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade), etc. Also, some innovative courses are offered under ITEC, including one on solar technology for semi-literate and illiterate grand mothers from the Least Developed Countries at **Barefoot College, Tilonia**.



**2005-06 ITEC participants with Shri Narendra Modi, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, and the current Prime Minister of India**

For **deputation of Indian experts** under ITEC, the process begins upon receipt of request from the partner country, indicating its specific requirements and confirming the responsibilities/obligations of the two sides. In recent years, Indian experts have been deputed in areas such as information technology, auditing, legal affairs, agriculture, ayurveda, statistics and demography, public administration and textiles. The services of defence experts have been also availed by several countries. Results of feasibility studies and consultancy services carried out at the request of partner countries are handed over to the Governments concerned, free of charge, to use in a manner deemed appropriate by them.

For **study tours** in India, specific areas of interest are identified in consultation with the Indian Mission concerned and one-two week programme is arranged during which the delegates are taken to important institutions, training centres, and places of interest in different parts of India.

ITEC has created a **large network of alumni** across the continents who have become ITEC torch-bearers in their respective countries and in the process, developed a

powerful cultural bridge between India and the country concerned. ITEC alumni have carved a niche for themselves, with many of them becoming ministers, senior diplomats, academics, government officials and leading entrepreneurs. As a result of different activities under ITEC, there is now a visible and growing awareness among other countries about the competence of India as a provider of technical know-how and expertise. Over the years, these programmes have generated immense goodwill for the country.

ITEC is celebrating its golden jubilee this year. It is an opportune time to reflect on the journey traversed so far, milestones achieved and the challenges faced. The knowledge and experience gained in the process will enable India to reach out to partner developing countries in a more innovative and effective manner.

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**Further reading**

<http://www.itec.mea.gov.in/>