Chapter-4

Indo-Israel Trade,
Agricultural, Cultural, Science
and Technological Cooperation
In the past, that is, prior to diplomatic relations, there were limited points of contact between India and Israel. But after developing diplomatic ties, trade relations between these two countries have been growing. Soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states in January 1992, the Consulate in Bombay was made Consulate General. In addition, there was also an honorary Consulate in Calcutta. Since 1992 various agreements have been signed between India and Israel. Prior to 1992 there was little direct trade between India and Israel. However, trade in diamonds was carried through Indian merchants in Israel.

Moreover, India had brisk economic relations with the Arab world, which dates back to the ancient times. In those times, India with exportable surplus of resources like coffee, tea, spices and other consumer goods had been a centre of big competitive market to the West and to the Arab World. India’s trade relations are not only confined to the consumer and commodity products but also entered potential fields like engineering goods, gems, jewellery, chemicals and so on, which has widened the scope for trade. Further, India depended much on the Arab world for its oil consumption. This indicates that Indo-Arab trade relation is a complementary and not competitive one. This emerging trade relationship and mutual economic dependency led to the increasing economic and technological cooperation between
India and the Arab World in the subsequent periods. During the later years, it turned out to be a fact that India's main imports from the Arab states consisted of oil, cotton, phosphate and dates, where the Arab states have alternative and easy source of supply of tea, textile, jute and light engineering goods, India's alternative of oil, cotton, phosphate are too far away to be commercially advantageous to her.

Actually, the oil factor and the Indian manpower in the Gulf region influenced the economic relationship further. Some believed that these strategic and economic factors have largely conditioned India's West Asia policy in a bigger way. The same view was substantiated by M.C.Chagla, as "Even our material interest dictated the very same policy which we were preserving. There was a large volume of trade between India and Arab countries and this would be jeopardized if we adopt a pro-Israeli policy".

Because of the tremendous trade relationship between India and the Arab States, the state of Israel remained off from the policy priorities of India in the region for a long run. But by 1990's some events in the world changed the very character of global politics. It also brought technological progress and shifted traditional approaches to economic policies. Further, the end of the Cold war has unleashed a wave of global political integration and the Marrakesh Agreement of 1994 changed the rules of the global trade. This changed scenario
probably brought both India and Israel closer to each other which resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between these two States in 1992. But the low level of diplomatic relations was a deterrent for the development in trade. According to the Israeli Consul General Giora Becher:  

> the official Indian policy on trade with Israel is still preventing the public sector from dealing with us even if it means spending more money or buying less quality products else where. Further more, although there is no restriction what so ever on the private sector to do business with Israel, the political atmosphere prevailing between the two countries makes many Indian businessmen believe it is better not to be engaged in many commercial contacts with their Israeli counterparts  

By the early 1990 all this started changing. Around the time that India and Israel established the diplomatic relations, India globalized its economy and opened its doors to economic cooperation with the West and the rest of the world. Subsequently, there was a government-to-government interaction between the two states which led in forging of a framework for the trade and economic cooperation. In May 1993, the two States signed a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU, and this followed by the signing of an agreement on such cooperation in
December 1994. This agreement came into action from August 28, 1995. This agreement grants the Most Favoured Nation, MFN, status to both the countries and allowed for import of Indian goods to Israel without import permits, except where such permits are required, from all countries under Israeli custom regulations.

The agreement on customs cooperation was signed in January 1996. Under the standards of cooperation M.O.U, the Standards Institution of Israel (SII) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) have agreed to cooperate in testing of the quality of goods in both the countries. The Industrial Research and Development cooperation MOU envisaged the setting up of a fund to finance Research and Development projects in the private sector, which cover the developments of products and applications of commercial use. The final draft of the agreement was initiated in January 1996, besides this, the agreements on double taxation and bilateral investments were also signed in January 1996. These agreements have smoothened the framework for trade and economic cooperation between the two states. The double taxation treaty signed by both the countries widened the business relationship between the two markets. Despite of imposing new taxes, this treaty ensured that an entity conducting business in the other country will not be exposed to double taxation on the same income both in the country of origin and in the country of residence.
As a result of this facilitation, the trade volume between the two countries has risen by an average of 50% every year from 1992 to 1996. Steadily from $186 million in 1992 to $386 million in 1995 and from $456 million in 1996 it reached to $1004 million in 1999\textsuperscript{11} (see also Table No. 1). This was five times the level of trade in 1992. Amiram Halevy, the Israeli counselor for Economic Affairs remarked that, "it was something unexpected". He further said, "A level of one billion $ bilateral trade was targeted only for the year 2000, but in reality it turned out to be better than expectation"\textsuperscript{12}. But in 2000 the bilateral trade reached to $1009 million. However it declined to $ 857 million in 2001\textsuperscript{13}. The trade between the two states is almost limited to two major items in both sides. That is, rough diamonds and chemicals together form about 63% of Israel's export to India. While as the polished diamonds and cotton yarn account for approximately 76% of Indian exports to Israel\textsuperscript{14}.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between these two states, many delegates from both the countries visited each other for exploring the market opportunities. The delegates from Israel included Ministers of External Affairs, Finance, Industry, Trade, Telecom, Agriculture and various other dignitaries from different firms and associations\textsuperscript{15}. But the recent visit of Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon to India in September 2003 is considered very important as he was the
first Israeli Prime Minister who visited India since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Six bilateral agreements in different fields have been signed during his visit. From the Indian side, the high level delegation included Ministers of Finance, Commerce, Agriculture and chief Ministers of various states. These visits have led to the signing of a series of bilateral agreements between the two governments. The outcome of these exchanges of visits by the delegations of both the countries was the increased cooperation and Joint Ventures in industries and trade. Israelis believe that the Joint ventures could be the best way of doing business with India.

**Joint Ventures:**

Joint venture is an area where both the countries find common areas of cooperation. Ofri, the Israeli Economic Counselor stated:

*The best way to promote trade between India and Israel is through joint ventures, as India has a well trained workforce of dedicated engineers and scientists as well as technology minded companies. While Israel has good connection with the US and Europe, India has direct access to Asia and the third world.*

In this context, Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. And Solel of Israel has jointly set up a solar power plant at accost of Rs. 4 billion in
Rajasthan. The first ever Indo-Israel joint venture was made between Plastro Gvat and Indian company—Finolex in February 1992 in the field of Drip irrigation. Also, a phosphate plant has been setup with joint collaboration of the Gujarat industrial cooperation and Titegarh Steel mills with Rolem fertilizers of Israel. Some other Israeli companies which have agreed for the joint venture were: Amcor and solar (solar energy), Rahan (tissue culture), Tahal (water management), Gadot (citric acid), Zinkal (irrigation pipes), Netafim (drip irrigation), Dan (irrigation) and others.

Both the countries also have signed an agreement on the establishment of a Joint Business council. In late 1992, a high power delegation of Manufacture’s Association of Israel visited India in a bid to explore markets for their products. However, the first industrial mission to Israel was led by Jamshed Irani, the president of the Chamber of Indian industry in September 1992. This was initiated by a mutual programme in Joint ventures, trade agreements and mutually beneficial export and import programmes. And as part of it CII signed on MOU with Manufactures Association in September 1992. It has been assumed that Israel’s access with the US and EEC could be converted for better market access to Indian goods. Likewise, India’s links with South East Asian countries could be utilized for Israel’s access to the region.
After the establishment of ambassadorial relations in 1992 a brisk and probably never ending traffic at the highest level has been going on not just at the government level but also at the level of private industrialists and businessmen. A number of projects in electronics, computer and agricultural sectors are operating under Israeli experts. The active development of Indo-Israeli economic cooperation within the short time is an amazing phenomenon. The India-Israel Business Alliance formed in October 1996 to promote the business industry and trade has a dynamic impact on cooperate sectors. To continue the momentum of the bilateral trade between the two countries commerce Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley visited with a high-level delegation to Tel Aviv recently in January 2004 to attend the third session of the India-Israel Joint trade and economic Committee.\textsuperscript{25}

Indian companies also have shown their keen interest in doing business with the Israeli counterpart. The Confederation of Indian Industry CII, organized a seminar on "Indo-Israeli Business Opportunities" on 15 April 1993. The Manufacture's Association of Israel MAI, was represented by it's the then president, Mr. Dov Lautman. In his presentation, he underlined the advantageous position of both India and Israel in trading with each other. While the India can provide Israel cheap labor, both skilled and unskilled, Israel can provide India with advanced technology. More over, the absence of
language barrier will also help trade and make its future prospect brighter.

During 1999, a series of high-level contacts between the Information Technology Associations of India and Israel were initiated in order to exploit the competitive advantages the two countries possessed in the fast growing field. The electronics and computer software export promotion council EPC and Electronic Industrial Association of Israel have signed an MOU. Also, National Association of Software and Services Companies NASSCOM, signed an agreement for closer cooperation with their counterparts, Israeli association of soft ware houses, IASH. Above all, a major development in 1999 was the finalization of the details of an agreement for Joint Research and Development between D.S.I.R and the chief scientist of Israel. They together moved for an area of cooperation between the two states in the area of Bio-technology, Life science technology, Pharmaceuticals, Agricultural food technology, Scientific and Medical instrumentations, Electronics, Automation, Aero space and Environment.

Besides, the 14th International Agricultural Exhibition, Agritech-99 was held at Haifa from September 5-9, 1999. This was attended by a large number of visitors from India. During the same period, two delegations of small Business Authority of Israel and Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce made direct talks with their
Counterparts in India. Because of these developments, India Trade Promotion Organization ITPO, held a first ever India week in Tel Aviv in May 2000 to project the Indian Industrial strength and business opportunities to the Israel Market. Over hundred leading Indian companies participated in the India week programe, which turned out to be a milestone in the trade relations between the two countries.

Many delegations from India and Israel visited each other's country in order to increase awareness and to explore the economic ties. Notable visitors from Israel were the ministers of External Affairs, Industry and Trade, agricultural and the delegations from the Manufacturers Association of Israel, Federation of Israeli Chamber of Commerce, Electronics Association of Israel as well as several top raking Companies. However the recent visit of Israeli Premier, Ariel Sharon with his delegation to India in September 2003 is considered as the most important one from the Israeli side. During his stay both the countries signed six agreements in different fields. Ministers of Finance, Commerce, Agriculture, and the many State Chief Ministers and the representatives of various Industrial Associations have been visited to Israel from the Indian side. During these visits, a number of bilateral agreements were signed between the two governments. But the visits of the Indian Home Minister Mr. Lal Krishna Advani followed by the visit of the Indian External Affairs Minister, Mr.
Jaswant Singh to Israel in 2000 are considered the most important visits from the Indian side so far.

**Cooperation in Tourism and Culture:**

After the commencement of diplomatic relations, the number of Indian tourists to Israel and Israeli tourists to India increased considerably. This was mainly due to the historical and other cultural peculiarities of the two states. One of the Israeli ambassadors to India expressed his words:

*Every corner in Israel is history...Israel is a great centre of attraction of tourists. The major centres are Bethlehem, Nazarath, and the Sea of Galilee and so on. Another is Kibbuts, which is the only communist society. There are minor collective farming communities in which a member does not have property but works according to what Marx said—according to his ability and according to his needs. It is a unique phenomenon.*

In the early 1992, soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations 3000 to 4000 visas had been issued to Indian citizens to visit Israel. This included pilgrims, businessmen, tourists and those visiting their relatives. Similarly, the Israelis are also fascinated by the Indian tradition, culture and civilizations. This is evident from the
number of visitors who visited India. By 1993, i.e. after the establishment of the ambassadorial relations between the two states 50,000 Israelis visited India. In 2000, their number reached approximately to one lakh.

When Shimon Peres visited India in May 1993 Agreements in Tourism and culture were signed between the two states. The agreement on tourism envisaged for mutual promotion and publicity. It also undertakes to take measures for simplifying the formalities required for trips. Shimon Peres visited India with a large number of Israeli industrialists and businessmen. This was significant because it showed that Israel was earnestly interested in India and in doing business with India. Peres believed that India and Israel could set up joint ventures in many fields where Israel had a strong scientific research base. According to him Israel was more than eager to extend its cooperation to India in the technological and agricultural fields.

When Peres visited India, the Arab League issued a statement in Delhi and appealed India government to use its influence with Israel to make it stop its policy of economic siege and starvation in the occupied territories. The left parties and the Janta Dal also urged the government to make full bilateral ties with Israel conditional on Tel Aviv’s recognition of an Independent Palestinian State. The BJP was in a celebratory mood from the very outset, characterizing the Peres visit as
a vindication of its foreign policy platform. Peres evidently reciprocated the BJP’s feeling and became the first visiting dignitary after a long time to meet the leader of the opposition, L.K. Advani. In fact, Peres was the first important foreign leader to meet the BJP leader after the demolition of the Babri Masjid.\textsuperscript{42}

Tourism has become a common spot for people to people contact. Though tourists as such do not flow heavily to Israel, the visitors consist mainly pilgrims visiting to the holy city of Jerusalem. In August 1997 the government of India opened its Tourist office at Tel Aviv to encourage bilateral tourism.\textsuperscript{43} As, such bilateral tourism is supposed to flourish in the specific context of cultural contacts between the two societies.

Actually, the cultural cooperation between the two societies dates back to the very emergence of both the states. In their days of persecution some of the Jews found shelter in India. The cultural and the tradition of India protected their identity and promoted their well-being. The absence of diplomatic relationship was not at all a hurdle for closer cultural interaction between the two societies. Hence, Jewish are fascinated to India and its culture. This could be seen in Israel that some of the Streets in Israel are named after Tagore and Gandhi. India’s appreciation for Jewish artists was open in 1960’s as the famous Jewish Violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, was chosen to receive the
Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International understanding in 1968. The Israeli Consulate, after its establishment in Bombay has initiated variety of cultural programmes to catch up with the trend. This included symposia, debates, lectures, exhibition and literary events. By this time, the veterans from both the societies have traveled to each other's capital.

In 1993, India and Israel signed a cultural agreement and a framework programme for cultural cooperation for the period of 1993-1996. The agreements for the exchange of Scholars between Tel Aviv University and Banaras Hindu University, The Israeli Academy of Science and Humanities and University Grants Commission and Barllan University and Hyderabad University were made in June 1994. As per the same Israel agreed to seven scholarships annually to students from India for Post-Graduate and Post-doctoral studies. The scholarships cover West Asian and International studies, Jewish culture, Hebraic studies and Agriculture. As part of the academic exchange programme, the Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis IDSA organized an annual seminar with the Jaffe Centre for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University. More over, during the visit of Israeli Minister for Education, A R Ubinstein, in January 1996, a proposal for the establishment of a chair in Hebrew Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University has been proposed and agreed upon.
Inspite of these academic collaborations, there was fast growing Cultural exchanges between the two societies. Leading cultural performers and groups have traveled between Delhi and Jerusalem, Mumbai and Tel Aviv and performed in front of packed houses. These visits have touched nearly every sphere of culture, music, dance, art, literature and so on.

The major highlights of these activities included some cultural festivals organized in both the countries. This included the visit of Zubin Mehta to Israel and the Israel Philanthropic orchestra to India in 1994 and the participation of Zakir Hussain in the 1996 Israel festival in Jerusalem \(^47\). The other important cultural exchanges included The Gathering 1995, the screening of films and discussion with film director, Arnon Zodak in 1997, Israel’s participation in the Delhi International Book Fair, 1996 and Shalom India events \(^48\).

Similarly, India’s representation in Israel included the annual Indian participation in the Jerusalem Film Festival, and Vikram Seth’s visit to Jerusalem poet festival in 1997. This also included the Publication of the Hebrew translation of ‘A Suitable Boy’ and Mallika Sarabahai’s dancing programe. During March 1998, in response to the visit of a 33 member Israeli dance group to India, a 6 member Bharatantyam troop led by Alarmel Valli visited Israel \(^49\).
In addition to this, the bilateral scholarship programs allow young Israelis to learn about Dance, Music and Sanskrit in India. Equally, a large number of Indian students visit Israel to study about West Asia, the Hebrew language, Literature and Agriculture. In this context, the cultural treaty, signed in 1993 meant the exchange of mutual support for sharing the two cultures within the framework of the treaty. Two detailed cultural exchange programs CEP have also been signed and implemented. The second C.E.P was also signed during the visit of President Ezer Weizman in late December 1996. This included future plans for a further increase of exchanges between museums, more academic interaction and mutual participation in Golden Jubilee Celebrations in 1997 and 1998. The joint committee for C.E.P met again in early 2000 and signed a new cooperation plan for the year 2000-2002.

Again in 1997, Israeli embassy organized the Shalom India Festival, a month long celebration to mark India’s 50th anniversary and five years of diplomatic relations. The festival included a fashion show, a dance performance, a food festival and film shows. In 1998 also, Israel’s leading theatre actress and film actress, Gila Almagor visited India. Later, in the same year, a leading Jazz quintet from Israel collaborated with Ustad Zakir Hussain to produce a joint performance in Delhi. In 1999 also, the Embassy organized a festival to celebrate
Israel's 50th anniversary. The festival featured the diversity of Israel's culture. This was held in eight states; from Orissa in the East to Gujarat in the West, from Tamil Nadu in the South to Rajasthan in the North. Another joint project was a workshop on Israel by two prominent artists—Menashe Kadishman of Israel and Jalin Das of India.

Finally, with the opening of an Israeli Cultural Centre in New Delhi, a new chapter was added to the already initiated cultural exchange programmes and schemes. This included Hebrew classes, lectures, film shows, cultural discussions and expansion of the Department of East Asian studies at Tel Aviv University to include a track in Indian and Sanskrit studies. It was also envisaged to plan similar programmes at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

These varying cultural programmes have attained its own novelty and wisdom that the CEP was accepted by many in both the countries. This and the like programmes facilitated the students, artists of both the societies to actively learn about the features of their respective cultures and traditions.
Agricultural Cooperation:

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the cooperation in the Agricultural sector has turned out to be a solid and unique one. So far, a number of Joint venture Agricultural projects were initiated in India. This was mainly in the fields of irrigation, water management, fertilizers, greenhouses, chemicals, pesticides, insecticides, tissue culture, horticulture, use of solar energy, animal husbandry, dairy development and so on. Israel’s know-how in agriculture, pertaining to these areas and power and food industries were also included in the Joint venture projects.

Actually, in short history of bilateral relations between the two countries, cooperation in Agricultural sector, is one of the best exploited and explored one by the two parties. By the signing of an agreement for cooperation in the field of agriculture, in December 1993, it assumed unique dimensions. The agreement was signed between Balram Jhakar, the then Indian Agriculture Minister and his counterpart Yaakov Tour. Also they held wide ranging discussions on promoting bilateral cooperation in this sector. Both the states have agreed that the application of the technology in India would also lead to the solution of the intractable problems of water logging and soil alkalinity. This technology could be successfully applied in
confronting deserts in Rajasthan and Gujarat and in increasing agricultural productivity in the semi-arid areas of Maharashtra. Israel has utilized its marginal water resources to make the desert bloom. Its strides in horticulture, aquaculture and floriculture and arid-zone farming hold applications for India. Indians hope to use Israeli expertise to do the same in Rajasthan and other semi-arid states. Earlier, Tel Aviv had organized an Agro-Tech exhibition in May 1993. Maharashtra the then Chief minister Shard Pawar led a six member delegation to the exhibition in Israel. The delegation included Union Agriculture Secretary M.S.Gill and Punjab Minister for cooperation and others. About 600 farmers from Maharashtra and more about 300 more from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana were also there. The exhibition had generated great interest in the Indian farming community. The delegation had acquired and familiarized themselves with the technologies for optimum water use and productivity.

Subsequently, several proposals for joint ventures especially in the areas of seed production and manufacture of agricultural/manufacturing machinery have been formulated. Pilot-projects and turnkey projects have also been identified for promoting Indo-Israeli cooperation in the Agricultural sector. Besides, a traveling seminar was also organized jointly by the Israeli and Indian experts and arranged a
visit to Indra Gandhi Canal and desert areas of Rajasthan. It was hoped that the same would help in evolving appropriate water management and micro-planning in these areas.

In this context, the planned development of linkages between Ben-Gurion Desert University of Negev and an Indian Academic and Research Institute such as Rajasthan Agricultural University was envisaged to promote the scientists of the two countries in an exchange of ideas in the fields of desert stabilization, water management, and ply-green house technology and so on. India was very much optimistic in exploring the cooperation in this sector. She felt satisfied that the industry level collaboration were being underway for manufacture of drip-irrigation system, tissue culture, hybrid seed production and manufacture of farm machinery. Further, an MOU to stabilize cooperation in this sector was also finalized.

Israel was also ready to share their technology to the demands from India. A five day visit to India by the then Israeli president, Ezer Weizman in December 1996 opened a new chapter in Indo-Israeli cooperation. His visit was the first ever visit to India by the head of the state of Israel. Visualizing the future role of India he stated, “the 21st century belongs to East- China, Japan, Indonesia and India will take its place in the technology world”. Regarding the cooperation between India and Israel, he argued, “we will help each other, not teach each
other. During his visit to India four bilateral agreements were signed between the two countries. President Weizman who was leading the delegation of the Israeli businessmen who came to India in December 1996 offered his country as a base for re-exporting Indian goods to the US, Europe and other countries with which Israel has close political and economic links. Israel has free trade agreements with the Western markets, which, according to the Israeli delegation, will help India to access these markets more easily. It may be noted that Israeli Economy would also get an outlet to the rich markets of East and South East Asia through India. During President Weizman’s visit in December 1996, an Indo-Israeli Research and Development Farm were inaugurated in the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, IARI at Pusa in New Delhi. The farm would demonstrate the Israeli know-how in high-tech agriculture and would endeavour to find different techniques and methods of cultivation suitable for the diverse agro-climatic zones of India. The demonstration farm in Pusa institute is a joint venture undertaken by the government of Israel and India. The farm is operating since November 1999. Within this farm, through training programmes local farmers are given instructions on various effective measures of crop growing as well as water conservation to increase the growth yield. The purpose of the farm is to demonstrate the cultivation of different kinds of crops, through the use of sophisticated irrigation
technology and methods of crop protection, two fields in which Israel has special expertise. The farm serves as a centre for training in various aspects related to the farm technologies, management and so on. The farm grows some kinds of crops, vegetables and flowers.

Also, during the same visit, a cotton demonstration farm in Alkola in Maharashtra was established in collaboration with the state government and agriculture development company, AGRIDEV, in Israel. Further, a series of projects with many state governments in India have been initiated. This included the projects between the Punjab Agro-Industries cooperation and Ozcot Company of Israel and the Indo-Israel demonstration farm in the field of dairy development in Karnal. Besides, the proposal for setting up a hundred cows’ dairy farm by Israeli design, the Israeli Dairy Board and Punjab government signed an MOU to establish the modern satellite dairy farm in Punjab.

Tahal, the Israeli water management company is engaged in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu for waste land development, irrigation and water and modern agricultural pilot projects. Israeli company in the field of agriculture has provided turn-key projects for the establishment of tissue culture laboratories in India. Way back in 1997, an executive agreement was signed between the two nations for future programme of action in this sector. This also included the programmes for establishment of green houses, open field facilities,
infra structure and technical assistance, training and management for specific periods. A steering Committee was also constituted comprising experts from both the countries to monitor the entire programes. It was also decided to provide twenty-five training scholarships for participants from India, particularly in the fields of irrigation, protected agriculture and horticultural production.

Thus, the collaboration in agriculture has turned out to be one of the most attractive and explored one by both the states since the commencement of the diplomatic relations.

So far, there are some 150 joint ventures between India and Israeli companies. Most of them are in the sphere of agriculture. Israel’s famous drip irrigation systems are jointly manufactured in three different locations in India. These ventures enjoy participation by Israel’s leading agricultural companies. Agriculture is still the field for which Israel is best known in India, as can be witnessed in Indian participation in Agritech, Israel’s triannual agricultural exposition (held last in 1996 and 1999). However, cooperation also exists in other sectors, such as telecommunications, including joint manufacturing of high speed modems, voice-mail systems and fiber optic production and software where a couple of companies have setup their offices as well as R and D centers in India. This indicates that both the states have
shown the interest towards the areas of common interests and mutual benefits.

Ephrahim Dowek in an interview stated:  

we have a special experience of developments  
which we think is nearer to the needs of developing countries like India, because it is  
the summing up of a new experience of the last 50 years.

Science and Technology Cooperation:

Besides agriculture, Science and technology too assumes greater dimensions in the bilateral cooperation between India and Israel. Way back in 1993, an agreement on Science and technology was signed between the two states during the visit of the then Israeli foreign minister, Shimion Peres. This agreement stood for direct scientific and technological cooperation between governmental agencies, academies of science, research institutes, and enterprises, institutions of higher education and scientific communities of the two states.

However, a detailed work plan was finalized in September 1993, identifying specific areas of cooperation namely bio-technology, Lasers, electro-optics and information technology. In November 1994, during the visit of the Israeli minister for communications and science and technology, Shulamit Aloni, the two governments installed an agreement setting up a science and technology fund with a corpus of $
three million. This was made possible by equal share by both the governments to facilitate joint R and D projects in the areas identified for cooperation.

Subsequently, a meeting of the Joint Working group and a Seminar on advanced materials was held in July 1996 in Israel. The next meeting of the Joint Working Group and a seminar on Biotechnology was held in March 1997 in Delhi. Some research projects are underway. In 1999, another one was extended for the research on ‘Human genome’. The project found enthusiasm and interest in both the states and a series of collaborative endeavours on ‘Human genome’ have been initiated in 2000. The Joint Committee which met in New Delhi in 1997 agreed that four to six Indian researchers will visit Israel in 1998 for a period of four to six weeks each. So far, four such visits have been approved and undertaken. Thus, there has been an impressive representation of Israeli and Indian scholars in International Scientific conferences in both the countries and also there is a regular flow of Indian students of advanced studies to Israel.

The tempo of bilateral cooperation is reflected in the Bi-national conferences that have already taken place. At first, a bi-national conference on genetics and research on human genome was organized in Israel in 1998. This conference was attended by six Indian scholars.
Second bilateral symposium on current issues of condensed matter and material physics took place in Delhi in the beginning of 1999. In this conference over twenty Israeli students participated. The momentum gained in the scientific sector is reflected in the sharing of technology as well. Tahal Consulting Engineering Ltd, an Israel based multinational Company, has entered an agreement with several Indian partners in the field of engineering, ground water management, desalination, agro-industries and prevention of desertification. Already, this firm has played an active role in the development of Israel’s water resources, agricultural industry and infrastructure. It has signed an MOU with the state governments of Gujarat and Rajasthan for the transfer of technical know-how. Likewise, Tadiran, Israel’s leading electronic industry is also cooperating with India in transfer of technology and production on sharing arrangements.

An agreement has also been signed between the Indian Science Academy and Israeli National Academy of science and Humanities for providing regular cooperation and exchange in the field of science and technology. In this regard, discussions have been held regarding collaboration in the field of commercial application of solar energy, operationalisation of Indian solar energy on the lines of those in Israel, Joint R and D with the Weizman Institute in a project for direct conversion of solar energy into steam and petrochemical refining.
The fourth Indo-Israeli joint committee meeting on science and technology was held in Jerusalem on 3rd of November 1999. The meeting finalized four proposals for joint research projects in the area of human genome research. In short, there was a very healthy bilateral relationship in almost all the areas of common interest between the two countries. On January 22, 2002 Indo-Israeli cooperation attained yet another zenith, this time in the field of electronics and information technology close on the heels of the Deputy Prime Minister Shimon peres's visit to India, communication and information technology minister of India Shri Pramod Mahajan made a three day visit to Israel with an auspicious proposal up his sleeve very earnestly, the two countries signed a MOU to promote bilateral trade in electronics and information technology, thus giving a fillip to research and development activities and technology transfer between the two countries. The memorandum was signed between Shri Mahajan and his Israeli counterpart, Mr. Reuven Rivlin, as a first step towards the establishment of a framework for cooperation between the two countries in information technology and electronics. Earlier, an agreement had been initiated in the area of telecom and posts in 1994 that came into effect from 1998. This new agreement would enhance industrial and technical competitiveness of both countries through cooperation in industrial research and development. Besides, the
memorandum would add further bytes to technology transfer potential between the two countries. One of the areas India is keen on enhancing with the applications of this cooperation is the defence sector. During Mr. Mahajan's visit to Israel in 2002 he also called upon the defense minister of Israel, Binyamin Ben-Elizer, which clearly indicated that India is very much interested to utilize the Israeli information technology techniques in its defense sector.79

India and Israel also have signed various agreements to cooperate in Space Research in an effort to benefit from each other's experience and form an alliance to reach out to the global market. The agreements were signed during the visit of the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization ISRO, K. Kasturirangan to Israel in August 2003. The ISRO chief also met the Israel's Science and Technology Minister, Eliezer Sandberg, and the Director of Israel Space Research, Avi Hareven and exchanged the information regarding the ongoing developments in Space Research.80

At the economic level, relationship between India and Israel has been showing some upward trend almost since 1992. The total bilateral trade showed some increase after the establishment of diplomatic relations. In 1991 the total trade between the two States was 129 US $ million. However, slowly increase year by year pushed the trade to 1099 US $ million in 2000. India's exports to Israel are mainly
precious stones and jewelry, cotton yarn, fabrics, drugs, pharmaceuticals, and so on. Whereas the Israeli exports to India apart from pearls, fertilizers are the military arms, which are being sold to India worth million dollars. Defense analysts estimated that Israel sold weapons to India crossed $500 million during the 1997-2000. By 2001, India had signed weapons contracts worth $2 billion with Israel. Recently the Israeli Cabinet headed by Ariel Sharon has approved the sale of Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control Systems worth US $1.1 million. It is clear from the above estimations that India is providing the market to Israel for selling her arms worth million US dollars to India. From the above estimation, one can easily analyze that India is being treated by Israeli arms exporters as conducive market, which could be exploited by them even if they sold their hardware at exorbitant price. Indo-Israel arms trade is unilateral. Arms from Israel to India. Only the pretext is combating terrorism and fundamentalism. This is high time top echelons in the government realize and save the poor Indian taxpayers from misery.

On the other hand, India's relation with the Arabs dates back to many centuries. The intensive interaction among the people of Arabia and the Indian subcontinent since centuries was primarily promoted by trade, which saw the flowering of the two-way exchanges that have left
their imprint also on literature, lifestyles and the languages of the two regions.

India's trade relations with the Arabs are growing fast since decades. The oil, which is in abundance in the Arab World, has built these trade relations very much strong and almost still overwhelming. India is heavily dependent on this oil of Arabia. Almost the GCC countries including Iran presently account for almost all of the India's oil imports. Ever since OPEC became an effective cartel in 1973-74, oil has become the biggest single Indian import. Now in this age (1990's), India's security hinges critically on the oil exporting countries of the region (Arab/Gulf). Analysts point out that India can easily lose a war for its poor petroleum policies. It was thought that India's stakes were much higher in the region, as according to one analyst, "the Gulf is our lifeline as much as that of the West. We could be thwarted much more easily by development in this region". Even though at the time of the invasion of Iraq, India had major economic stakes in both Iraq and Kuwait. India was importing crude oil from Iraq to the tune of 2.2 millions tons and 1.5 millions from Kuwait. Further, there were around 170000, Indian workers in both Iraq and Kuwait when the crisis broke out.

The total indo-Arab trade reached $4463 million in 1990 and in 1991, it stood at $4232 million. In the following year, the total
bilateral trade between Arab and India reached $6415 million. In this year, India established the diplomatic relations with Israel but this step could not reach the trade figures of India and Arab in the same year or after that. India’s trade relations with the Arabs were overwhelming not only prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel but are still increasing and overwhelming and are still higher than Israel. The Indo-Arab trade which was $4232 million in 1991, reached $6727 million in 1993 and the trade stood at $10448 million in 1996, whereas it touched $9941 million in 2000. On the other hand the Indo-Israel trade was $129 million in 1991 and in 1993 it reached $370 million but in 2000 it reached $1099 million.\(^9^0\) (See tables 1, 2).

From the trade figures mentioned above, it is clear that Indo-Arab trade is overwhelming than its trade with Israel. The oil, which is mainly imported from the Arabs, has increased the trade levels. This oil is playing a very much significant role in the Industrial development in India. On the other hand, the arms and ammunitions that are being imported worth of million dollars from Israel can strangle the industrial development since huge amount is being wasted on the purchase of Israeli arms and ammunitions.

Moreover above three million Indian workers are working in the Gulf States. They constitute the largest proportion of the total foreign population living in the Gulf region as whole, as well as in each of the
gulf countries, ranging from 21.5% in Kuwait to 54% in Oman, from 25.4% in Saudi Arabia to 41.1% in UAE.

It means that the Gulf is playing a significant role in minimizing the job crisis in India by providing jobs to millions of Indian workers in the region. The Indian expatriates remit some four billion dollars per annum to India\(^9\). It should be noted that Israel’s recent step of recruiting Indian workers in their hotels\(^2\) is minimal compared to millions of Indian workers already working in the Gulf and sending remittances strengthening Indian economy.

As far as India’s trade relations with Israel one can deduce that through this relationship Israelis have gained immensely and India meagerly. While Israeli exports to India are of larger volume, the Indian exports are negligible. The trade relations between the two countries at this stage are tilted heavily to Israel’s advantage at a heavy cost of Indian taxpayers money and without dividends in real terms. Moreover, the tables depict that trade volume with the Arab world is very substantial and India cannot afford to annoy the Arabs at the cost of its newfound trade relations with Israel.
Table-1: Indo-Israeli Bilateral trade (from 1990-2000), US $ million

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<th>Year</th>
<th>India’s Export</th>
<th>India’s Imports</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>370</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>292</td>
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<td>236</td>
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<tr>
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<td>281</td>
<td>325</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>1004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>1099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2379</td>
<td>3138</td>
<td>5517</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table-2: India’s Trade with Arab States (Mentioned in Table No. 3 & 4) From 1990-2000, US $ million

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Exports</td>
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<td>2072</td>
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### Table-3: India's trade with Arab States (1990-2000) US $ million (Exports)

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</table>

### Table-4: India’s trade with Arab States (1990-2000), US $ million (Imports).

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**Source:** Direction of Trade Statistics Year book (Washington, DC: IMF) 1998 and 2001
Table 5: Total Import and Export Trade with some Arab Countries (Mentioned in Table No. 3 & 4) (1990-2000), US $ million

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<th>Country</th>
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<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Kuwait</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Oman</th>
<th>Qatar</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>UAE</th>
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<td>12013</td>
<td>560</td>
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<td>435</td>
<td>1009</td>
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Total Import and Export Trade with some Arab Countries (1990-2000) in US $ million
India's Trade with Arab States From 1990-2000 in US $ million

VALUES (US $ Million)

YEAR
1999
1998
1997
1996
1995
1994
1993
1992
1991
2000

Imports
Exports
Total Import Export

12000 11000 10000 9000 8000 7000 6000 5000 4000 3000 2000 1000 0
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