CHAPTER – 1
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The relationship between India and the Francophone West African countries is unique in itself; it is one forged by the bonds of history and consolidated by a deep commitment to shared values and ideas. Both regions have much in common, geographical and historical circumstances, diversity in terms of people, cultures and above all, a commitment to recognize the fundamental worth and potential of every human being. Both have common areas of understanding and mutual benefits in the fields of political, diplomatic, economic and cultural relations.

India and the Francophone West African countries together are facing truly awesome challenges in the changed world environment of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG). It is in their interest as well as of the respective region in the context of South-South Cooperation, that relations between these two regions should be strengthened.

This chapter attempts to sum up the historical ties between India and the Francophone West African states in general and Senegal, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso in particular, prior to the period taken up in this study (1975-2000). In doing so it will look into how the historical relationship is an important factor in shaping the relationship between them in the said period. It will explore the historical linkages between India and the Francophone West African countries in
political, diplomatic, economic and socio-cultural context during 1965-75. This chapter will also attempt to highlight the trade relations in the period 1965-1975 between India and the Francophone West African countries, which will include direction of trade and commodity pattern of exports and imports. It will further discuss the investment and joint ventures as well as multilateral cooperation in the South-South Cooperation framework through Non Aligned Movement (NAM), Group of 77 (G-77) and technical cooperation through Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme (ITEC) between both India and the Francophone West African countries. It will further elaborate the constraints in Indo-Francophone West African relations in the period 1965-75. Thus, this chapter will serve as a proper backdrop to the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

1.2 India’s Relations with Francophone West Africa under South-South Cooperation Framework

Since India’s independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was helping to hasten the process of decolonization in Africa. He was also trying to promote, in a modest way, economic stability of the continent. With its limited resources, whatever little contribution India could make or is making towards the well being of Africa, stemmed from India’s genuine desire to strengthen the roots of their hard-won independence. In looking at India’s economic assistance Nehru’s fundamental approach was that India desired to appear as a friend and ally and not as an exploiter. He was eager to share and exchange
knowledge and experience. During the Nehru years of India's policy, the 'basics' of dismantling colonial mould were worked out. The South-South Cooperation and Collective Self-Reliance was an important aspect of that policy thrust. Both for India and for Africa, Nehru prescribed the evolution of their own models of economic development. He was of the view that there could be no wholesale import of such models from the West. Each developing country must look into its own national conditions, genius and ethos. Nehru kept on emphasizing that India's friendly relations with the Africa could be and should be strengthened through economic and technical cooperation. Even at that time Nehru realized that the economic cooperation among the developing countries was a must for the gigantic effort to overcome poverty, hunger and under-development. He was an advocate of North-South Cooperation, but he felt that economic self-reliance, meaning thereby South-South Cooperation, was more important for the developing world. Jawaharlal Nehru has thus rightly been called the founder of the economic cooperation programme with the countries of Africa. This cooperation programme has, in fact, become a model of South-South Cooperation. He was aware that the complementarities and similarities between in India and African social and economic conditions presented a tremendous scope for mutually beneficial cooperation. It was Nehru's foresight which realized that what Africa needed most urgently was trained and

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educated manpower. He was aware that the educational facilities available in most African countries were meager and they would not be able to build a trained, technical and bureaucratic infrastructure with their limited resources and training facilities. Thus, to encourage "people to people" cooperation the Indian government started sending small numbers of teachers, doctors, engineers and other professionals to Africa. 3

Thus, in historical perspective, South-South Cooperation is considered a must for the gigantic effort to overcome poverty, hunger and under-development in the Third World countries. It stands for safeguarding political independence, economic strength and collective self-reliance among the developing countries and to do away with the dependency syndrome.4

With an urge for economic emancipation and democratization of international economic relations, the countries of the Third World raised the voice for a just and New International Economic Order (NIEO) during early 1960s. To this end, they initiated the North-South dialogue but that proved frustrating due to intransigence of the North. As a result, these countries had no option but to cooperate among themselves to avoid their exploitation by the North, to build up their (sound) economic foundation and also to develop their strong bargaining position vis-à-vis the North. Hence, they decided to enter
into mutual dialogue for the South-South Cooperation for their economic emancipation and future prosperity.5

These countries launched concerted efforts in the UN which led to the establishment of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which held its first meeting in March 1964 and the Group of 77 also in 1964 which became the principal forum and instrument respectively of the Non-Aligned countries in the UN for achieving the required changes in the international economic relations. The sixth special session of the UN General Assembly in 1974 adopted a 'Declaration of Programme of Action for the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO), which envisages more active economic relationships among the developing countries.6

Thus, the thrust for the mutual cooperation among the Third World countries has varying expressions, viz., NAM meets since 1955; UNCTAD meetings since 1964; the G-77 meetings since 1964; Technological cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC); Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC); the G-15 meetings since 1990, SAARC, African Union, ECOWAS and so on.

1.3 Political and Diplomatic Relations between India and Francophone West African states (1965-75)

Since its independence, India based her foreign policy pronouncements on anti-colonialism, anti-racialism, non-interference

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5 Sudhmshu Tripathi, "NAM and South-South Cooperation", World Focus (New Delhi), no. 279 (March 2003), p. 11.
6 ibid, p. 12.
in internal problems of others and for a free hand to build up economic base for the country. India wasted no time after becoming free to extend its support for the African cause through various international organizations, most notably through the United Nations. India extended its fullest support to all the African countries in their struggle for liberty, race-wise equality and for economic opportunities. Pandit Nehru, the architect of the Indian foreign policy made eradication of colonialism and racism as one of his missions. Independent India’s pursuit of the goal of freedom and self-government for all countries in Africa as well as Asia brought the French dominated territories in Africa within the general ambit of India’s Africa policy. India consistently and constantly championed the cause of the political advancement of the African colonies of France in the UN Trusteeship Council and the UN committee on non-self governing territories.

However, India’s anti-colonial pronouncements on the French imperialism were generally muted. This was partly because of the peculiar juridical status and constitutional evolution of the African colonies of France and partly because India was engaged in delegate negotiations with France for the transfer of sovereignty in respect of former French settlements in India.


9 Ramamurthi, n. 7, p. 40.
The confidence of the Francophone West African countries on India stems from the fact that India had always been in the forefront of all motions, actions and movements that pressed and aimed at the decolonisation of the African countries and doing away with "settler colonialism". India had initiated and chaired UN committees on decolonisation. Thus, the increasing cooperation between India and the Francophone West African countries in all fields is due to India's historical affinities and innate sympathies with the aspirations of the people of the Francophone West Africa and equally innate desire to assist the development of their personality in all ways possible.\(^\text{10}\)

The declaration of Independence by the then French territories in August-September 1960, led by Ivory Coast leading was greeted by India with caution, probably as their juridical status was still uncertain. When Togo, another French Trust Territory, got full sovereignty under the UN auspices, on 27\(^\text{th}\) April 1960, the Indian ambassador in Khartoum (Sudan) attended the celebrations. By August 1961, when the Francophone West African states were celebrating the first anniversary of their independence, India was represented in almost every capital by a special envoy, though in most cases it was the head of the Indian mission in a neighboring Anglophone country.\(^\text{11}\)

Ever since the present Francophone West African countries were granted independence, India had attempted to establish and strengthen political ties and economic relations with the region mainly

\(^{10}\) ibid.

\(^{11}\) ibid, p. 39.
through the opening up of diplomatic missions and exploring trading and other economic avenues of cooperation. Diplomatic relations was opened with most of the countries of Francophone West Africa, though again, mostly through concurrent accreditation. Diplomatic missions were opened in Ivory Coast and Senegal. It was also opened in Guinea in 1966 (but closed down in 1992.)\textsuperscript{12} Thus, India had resident mission in two Francophone West African states only, Ivory Coast and Senegal, with concurrent accreditation in the remaining countries during the period 1965-75. On their part, financial constraints rather than any political considerations had inhibited the opening of missions by the Francophone West African states in India. Only Senegal had resident mission in New Delhi during the period 1965-75 (later Burkina Faso in the 1990s). Thus the diplomatic representation between India and the Francophone West African countries stands at the low level.\textsuperscript{13}

Ties between India and the Francophone West African countries were strengthened by a number of visits exchanged by dignitaries at all levels. At the high level, the President of Guinea (Conakry) Sekou Toure was the first Head of State of a Francophone African country to visit India in September 1960. Senegal’s first President, Leopold Sedar Senghor paid a state visit to India in 1974.\textsuperscript{14} From the Indian side, the then external affairs minister visited a number of Francophone West African countries like Senegal, Guinea and others. There were visits of


\textsuperscript{14} Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, \textit{Foreign Relations} (Online: web) URL: http://meaindia.nic.in.
other delegations also to each country. An Indian industrial delegation sponsored by the FICCI visited these countries under the leadership of Kamalnayan Bajaj, MP, in 1965 and observed that there is good scope for the Indian participation in the establishment of medium and small-size industries in the countries like Ivory Coast and Senegal.\textsuperscript{15}

While there was a steady expansion and extension of India’s diplomatic relations with the Francophone West African states, on the whole, the intensity of relationship seems very limited. Consequently among other reasons, few agreements with Francophone West African countries had all along constituted an important reason for India’s low profile economic relations with the region. Till mid 1970s, India had bilateral agreements with only Senegal. Indo-Senegalese bilateral trade agreement was signed in 1974. An accord on cultural cooperation and another on commerce and economic and technical cooperation between India and Senegal was also signed at New Delhi on 22\textsuperscript{nd} May 1974 and was ratified on 17\textsuperscript{th} June 1975.\textsuperscript{16} Bilateral agreements are generally considered as a major canalizing and stimulating agency in fostering trade and raising it to continually higher levels.\textsuperscript{17} Thus the signing of bilateral agreements with the other selected Francophone West African states, which are important clients or suppliers, will go a long way in strengthening India’s economic ties with the Francophone West African states.


\textsuperscript{16} Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, \textit{Bilateral Agreements}, (Online: web) URL: http://meaindia.nic.in.

Thus, there is an urgent need of joint initiatives by both, India and the Francophone West African countries, to put the bilateral relations on sound footing.

1.4 Trade Relations (1965-1975)

Foreign trade is indeed the barometer of the level of economic relations existing between any two states. The continent of Africa as a whole was a small trading partner of India during the period 1965-66 to 1976-77* and same was India's trade with the Francophone West African states. Indian exports to these countries were a small fraction of its total exports and imports from them were also insignificant compared to India's total imports during the period 1965-66 to 1976-77.

Indian exports to the Francophone West African states in the 1965-66 amounted to Rs. 21.9 lakhs, which gradually increased to Rs 208.50 lakhs during 1971-72, and Rs. 16.17 crore in 1976-77 (see, table-3). Thus it was during the 1970s that a breakthrough was achieved with export rising but they still lagged behind the import capabilities of these countries. Evidently during the ten-year period under review in this chapter, there was a very sharp increase in India's exports to the Francophone West African countries. Taking the ten-year period as a whole there was a breakthrough in exports to the Francophone West African countries from Rs 21.9 lakhs in 1965-66 to Rs. 16.17 crore in 1976-77(see, table-3). This was indeed a remarkable achievement in

* Data for the year 1974-75 is not available.
promoting sales in almost a new region where a good number of barriers like language, inadequate knowledge about markets and communication/transport problem had to be crossed.\textsuperscript{18}

India's imports from the Francophone West African countries also gradually increased from Rs. 95 lakhs in 1965-66 to Rs. 8.77 crore in 1976-77. However, it was on declining trend between 1967-68 to 1968-69. It is evident from the table-3 that Togo was the single exporter from that region to India during 1965-66 to 1967-68. However, after Ivory Coast, Senegal and Guinea became the major exporters to India from this region in 1976-77, there has been increase in the imports to India from this region.

The increasing needs of India for industrial raw materials and mineral products in the context of the development plans on the one hand and greater awareness on the part of all developing countries of the need to come closer to each other on the other hand, hold the promise of a welcome shift in this traditional pattern of trade between India and the Francophone West African countries. There has, in fact, already been an upward trend in India's trade exchanges with these countries, particularly in the field of imports.

During the period 1965-66 to 1968-69, India had in general, a deficit in trade balance with the Francophone West African countries. However, in 1971-72 and 1976-77 India had a favorable trade balance with the Francophone West African countries due to increase in export

\textsuperscript{18} ibid, p. 247.
to Benin. Thus, it may be stated that the Francophone West Africa region is a small trading partner of India.

1.4.1 Direction of Trade

The bulk of India's trade during the period 1965-66 to 1976-77 was confined to two or three countries of Francophone West Africa. India's main clients in Francophone West Africa were Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Mauritania. During 1968-69, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Togo imported goods from India. Interestingly, Benin, a small Francophone African state had been India's major client all along in 1976-77. However, it has to be admitted that India's export base in Francophone West Africa was rather fragile in the sense that her major client namely Benin was economically weak with its small national market. Thus, India needs to diversify the regional distribution of her exports so as to ensure a lasting and solid export base all over the Francophone West Africa.

India's imports from Francophone West Africa were also confined to a small number of states. During the 1960s, Togo was the leading Francophone West African supplier to India. However, during 1976-77, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Senegal became the leading suppliers to India.

Historically, the bulk of trade of the Francophone West African states had been with the members of the European Economic Community.

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19 Singh, n. 13, p. 343.
Their main imports and exports were with the six member countries of EEC and the UK.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{1.4.2 Commodity pattern of exports and imports}

The commodity range was also equally limited in terms of exports and imports from Francophone West Africa during this period. The main items of export were of jute and cotton textile, cotton yarn and thread. While light engineering goods, rice, tobacco and machinery and cotton manufacturers also started to figure among the Francophone West Africa favourites from India later. Three commodities namely cotton textiles, cotton yarn and unmanufactured tobacco constituted the major part of the Indian export to these countries. The sluggishness of India's export performance was partly attributed to the narrow base of India's export mix to Francophone West Africa.\textsuperscript{21}

The bulk of India's imports from the Francophone West African countries consisted of minerals, industrial diamonds, precious and semi-precious stones, Zinc and other metals, cashew nuts, phosphates, bauxites, electrolytic copper wire and bars. India imported phosphates and phosphoric acid from Senegal, bauxite from Guinea and phosphates from Togo. Cashew nut was also imported from the Francophone West Africa.\textsuperscript{22} Indian needs for minerals and some agricultural raw material like palm oil or cashew are substantial and requirements of minerals are likely to grow further. Thus, India

\textsuperscript{20} M.L.Garg, "India's Trade with the Associated African States- In Retrospect and Prospect", \textit{Africa Quarterly}, vol.10, no. 2 (1970), p. 112.
\textsuperscript{21} Singh, n. 17, p. 254.
\textsuperscript{22} ibid.
needs to concentrate on developing economic contacts with these countries, which would have possibilities of export promotion as well.

1.5 Investment and Joint Ventures

Joint ventures are receiving increasing attention in the collaboration efforts of developing countries to promote trade and industrialization. However, it was only in the 1970s that interest in this particular form of cooperation became widespread. Joint ventures are a comparatively flexible instrument in that they can assume many different modalities concerning initiative for establishment, ownership, sources of management and technology and market arrangements for the provision of inputs or sale of the products.23 India has, in fact a long history of setting up joint ventures in developing countries of Africa and Asia. India's first ever-joint venture in Africa (JVA) was commissioned in Ethiopia in 1958.24 Thereafter a good number of joint ventures came up in other parts of Africa as well. There were about 70 joint Indo-African ventures at various stages of implementation in the mid 1970s. The cooperation was extended to small-scale industrial sector too. Evidently, the scale of Indian collaboration projects in Francophone West Africa was negligible during 1970s. And it was only in the mid 1980s that India opened her JV account in Francophone West Africa with the setting up of a

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24 Singh, n. 17, p. 255.
project in Senegal.\textsuperscript{25} However, there is ample scope for collaboration for a variety of products. Paper and pulp, mineral processing and agro-based industries provide ample scope for Indian joint ventures in these countries. Joint ventures are indeed the most useful trade promoting instruments and directly as well as indirectly foster and stabilize economic relations.\textsuperscript{26}

The present stage of development of the Francophone West African countries makes it desirable that for their industrialization programmes in the medium and small-scale sectors they should adopt a technology, which is simple in nature, at least in the initial stage. The Indian experience, where simple technology has yielded rich dividends, should prove extremely attractive to these countries. India has always been prepared to share with the other underdeveloped countries the benefit of her own technological development and industrial capabilities, which are in many cases of greater relevance to the needs of the Francophone West African countries. In her industrial advancement India has taken several strides and claimed the place among the top ten of the industrially most advanced countries of the world. Hundreds of Indian technological experts, artisans and other professionals like doctors, engineers, teachers and professors are working in several African countries and hundreds of Africans are undergoing technical and other high level training in India.\textsuperscript{27} Thus, India at its present stage of development has attained certain technological and manpower capabilities whose supply price is

\textsuperscript{25} ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} ibid., p. 256.
generally much lower to that of the western sources. Again certain production processes, having been developed in labour surplus market, are comparatively more labour intensive. Therefore, they are likely to be found by the Francophone West African countries to be of greater relevance to their present requirements.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, the possibilities of building up a fruitful economic relationship between India and the Francophone West African countries exist in abundant measure but would require serious planning and efforts on the part of all concerned. Long-term advantages must be considered while resolving difficulties, which exist at present. There is a real chance of a fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship between India and the Francophone West African countries.

1.6 Multilateral Cooperation

The new states of Africa inherited their basic position within the international community direct from the colonial relationship. In strategic terms, this meant that they remained within the western orbit and in economic terms, it meant that the majority remained virtually client states on the periphery of the western economic system. In all developing countries including India the capacity to explore, exploit and use their own natural wealth above and underground and in the oceans, grows very, very slowly. Thus, ‘foreign’ technology, management skills, designs, money and even men

\textsuperscript{28} ibid, p. 3.
were necessary to start the process of so-called 'progress'. Most of the African countries has to seek support and depends upon for the internal struggles and their programmes of development on the western countries and America. Their economy was intricately linked with the western capitalist system. They were exporters of cheaply paid raw materials and importers of heavily priced industrial goods. Thus in these circumstances, they were unable to hold an independent position in the arena of international relations. They all want to improve their economic condition and be less dependent on the western powers. It is widely realized that political independence without economic self-reliance does not mean much to the people of the former colonial territories. But to achieve even some semblance of economic independence the old colonial dependent structures have to be modified to serve new policy goals. Since the old colonial pattern of development certainly constituted a major hindrance to their internal development that pattern had to be modified or given up in favour of a more meaningful model. In that lies the significance of the North-South dialogue. This is what underlines the concept of Collective Self-Reliance and closer horizontal cooperation between the underdeveloped countries themselves.

The socio-economic and political structure of the new states and consequently their foreign policies emanated largely from the circumstances, methods and actions through which independence

30 Ramchandani, n. 27, pp. 4-5.
was achieved. The varying levels of political and economic independence and different alignment of class forces defined different foreign policies pursued by various countries of this region. In the countries where the anti-imperialist circles were in power, the governments refused to participate in power bloc and came out against the policy of neo-colonialism and yearned for peace and security in their respective regions and throughout the world. The principal manifestation of their foreign policy was the policy of non-alignment. The basis was their need of restructuring their backward economies, freedom of their countries from imperialist hold and marching towards faster socio-economic development.\textsuperscript{31}

In view of the growing realization that the struggle for political independence and the exercise of their sovereignty cannot be disassociated from the struggle for the attainment of economic emancipation, a new international economic order was proposed as a system of collective bargaining against collective colonialism. The economic cooperation among developing nations is an essential part of the struggle to maintain their freedom. Without it they shall each became even more involved in the economies and thus in the power of the big states.\textsuperscript{32} The independence of third world nations becomes increasingly impossible in real sense, unless they combine and cooperate together.


\textsuperscript{32} ibid, p. 46.
In view of these observations, the role of the multilateral forums in strengthening the cooperation between India and the Francophone West African countries become crucial. India and the Francophone West African countries have been cooperating under the aegis of various multilateral forums such as UNCTAD, NAM and G-77 etc over the years. These forums have represented developing countries on a common platform on political, diplomatic and economic front while dealing with developed countries on various issues. Thus, they have not only strengthened the South-South Cooperation but also increased the bargaining power of the developing countries over the North and their institutions.

1.6.1 UNCTAD
In December 1961, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated the 1960s as the “United Nations Development Decade.” At the same time, it also adopted a resolution on “International Trade as the primary instrument for Economic Development”, which led to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). UNCTAD I met in Geneva between the 23rd of March and the 16th of June 1964. It was the first major North-South conference on development questions.33 The “Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven”, adopted on 15 June 1964, referred to UNCTAD I as “an event of historic significance.” UNCTAD I was recognized as a significant step towards “creating a new and just world economic order.” The

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General Assembly decided to institutionalize UNCTAD as an organ of the General Assembly. UNCTAD remained the main forum for global development discussions and became the focal point of the activities of the Group of 77 which by the 1980, counted 122 members.34

1.6.2 NAM

Independent India’s direct interest in the African affairs could be traced as far back as 1948, just a year after she became independent. The main tenets of India’s Africa policy were reinforced by its emphasis on “non alignment” as its major foreign policy precept and as an instrument of Collective Self-Reliance. It was largely the fulfillment of the ‘Bandung’ principles under which India refused to be entangled in the cold-war politics. It urged new nations to do the same. The NAM reflected on the collective wisdom of the newly independent states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Non-Aligned Movement had, spearheaded the cause of all post-colonial states. At the very first non-aligned summit held in Belgrade in 1961, it urged to promote greater economic cooperation among developing countries. This reflected the Nehruvian stamp in the declaration achieving economic emancipation through the modus operandi of collective self-reliance among the developing countries. The issue, which involved NAM in its early years as movement, was decolonization. Theme of democratization of international system is one more contribution attached to NAM. Meanwhile, the issue of peace remained the major concern of NAM. During the early years member states insisted that their non-

34 ibid, pp. 2-3.
participation in cold war will allow them to conduct their own affairs in peaceful manner and give them more opportunity for development. It is in this context that they insisted on the problems of disarmament and other related issues. They argued for more positive role of world organization like UN.

At the beginning of the 1970s, several developments converged to produce a change in attitudes and environment in the world. The political decolonisation process had largely run its course and the political independence of most of the new states in the third world had been consolidated, the political-military pressures of the cold war were subsiding, the regional and international development efforts had shown disappointing results and doubts had began to be voiced about the prevailing development model. For the developing countries, this meant that the question of economic development began to receive greater attention and they became increasingly aware that the institutions of the international economic system had been established by the developed market economies to serve primarily their own purposes. Hence, fundamental changes in the international economic system were required to establish a framework conducive to development and to create the economic basis of independence. In fact, the system itself had come under serious strain with the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system, the food and oil crises, payments imbalances, a general surge of inflation, world recessions, increasing protectionism, rising environmental concerns and the spectre of the scarcity of raw materials. When the economic tranquility
of the 1960s gave way to the turbulence of the 1970s, international economic matters could no longer be ignored.35

The Non-Aligned Movement offered the framework for this recognition to grow and within a few years development questions became “high politics.” Between 1970 and 1973, the non-aligned movement evolved into a pressure group for the re-organization of the international economic system. Since the non-aligned countries considered themselves to be playing a catalytic role within the Group of 77, the politicization of the development issue had an important effect on the manner in which this issue was perceived, presented and pursued within the North-South negotiations. Thus, the political clout and pressure of the non-aligned countries, coupled with OPEC’s forceful actions, led to the sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly which adopted on 1 May 1974, the “Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.” Hence, almost exactly one decade after the first session of UNCTAD, and after years of debates about improvements in the international economic system, the call for a new beginning was again taken up, this time, however, with a view to a structural re-organization of the world economy. The establishment of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) has since been the main objective of the Third World. Thus, the concept of self-reliance was introduced into the international development discussion by the non-

aligned countries in 1970, which were also responsible for most of the practical follow-up that has been undertaken so far in this area. Although self-reliance can be strengthened by international measures, it requires primarily a strengthening of linkages among developing countries.\textsuperscript{36} Therefore, NAM addressed the asymmetries and imbalances of the global economy and developed strategies to promote the economic and social empowerment of the South. Sustainable economic growth and development can be pursued within the context of the NAM and within the axis of South-South Cooperation. There is consensus within the NAM on a number of challenges, which developing countries are facing.\textsuperscript{37} The non-aligned nations have adopted economic cooperation among themselves as an alternative means to reduce their dependence on the industrially advanced countries. The concept of South-South cooperation has emerged as a universal principle, both as strategy in support of the development efforts of the developing countries and as an instrument for promoting Collective Self-Reliance in order to ensure their effective participation in the international economic system. It is realized that the strengthening of South-South Cooperation was necessary to create a more truly interdependent global economic order. It is in this context that the role of industrially more-advanced countries like India became crucial. India had laid greater stress on mutually beneficial economic relationship to

\textsuperscript{36} ibid, pp. 5-7.
\textsuperscript{37} Jerry M. Matsila, “Message from the High Commissioner”, \textit{UBUNTU} (New Delhi), vol. 3, no.3 (1999), pp. 3-4.
underscore the significance of South-South Collective Self-Reliance. Member-states could use NAM to lobby for their cause and protect their interests more effectively. The economic and technical cooperation among developing countries have thus evolved as the central concern for the NAM and G-77 fora.\textsuperscript{38}

Thus, while the non-aligned countries played a key role in making the development issue a priority item on the international agenda, the Group of 77 became the principal organ of the third world through which the concrete actions required for the establishment of the NIEO were negotiated within the framework of the United Nations system.\textsuperscript{39}

1.6.3 G-77

The Group of 77 came into being at the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 1964. Since its inception in 1964, the Group of 77 has served as the principal organ of the third world for articulating and promoting its collective economic interest. In the performance of this function, the Group has shaped large parts of the international economic programme of the third world and hence the substantial content of the international development discussions. Therefore, most of these discussions and the activities of the Group of 77 took place in the framework of the United Nations system during this period. The Group of 77 became an integral part of UNCTAD and was one of the most important agents for the socialization of the developing countries in matters relating to


\textsuperscript{39} Sauvant, n. 33, p. 5.
international political economy, and established itself firmly in all major relevant parts of the United Nations system as the third world's principal organ for the articulation and aggregation of its collective economic interest and for its representation in the negotiations with the developed countries.40

The third world succeeded, at the 1974 sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, in making the development task a priority item on the international agenda. The energy crisis at the beginning of the 1970s, gave the Group of 77 the unique opportunity to launch the idea of the New International Economic Order. The adoption of the "Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order" by that Session marked to be served by the international economic system. This initiative galvanized the Group of 77 and permeated all subsequent international discussions on development issues. One of the high points of these discussions was the seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly at which a consensus between the North and the South was reached. Since then, the North-South dialogue has returned to the United Nations. There, the Group of 77 has again taken the initiative by proposing global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development.

UNCTAD was the institutional focal point of the Group of 77 until mid-1970s. But following a directive of the Charter of Algiers that "Informal coordinating groups of the Group of 77 should be

40 ibid, p. 3.
established at all the headquarters of the various United Nations specialized agencies", the Group began to constitute itself, with more or less permanent and institutional infrastructure in several other fora. As a result, the Group of 77 became a multi-central organization whose main foci were UNCTAD, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the United Nations. In addition, the Group constituted itself at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi and since 1975 at virtually all global United Nations conferences.

The Group of 77 represents the collective economic interest of the third world in all global negotiations with the developed countries. North-South negotiations about the international economic system in general and its impact on the development process of the third world in particular were thus unthinkable without the Group of 77. The concerns of the Group of 77 influence nearly all consideration of international economic issues in the United Nations system. 41

The course of the Group of 77 has not been only for the benefit of the developing countries, but also for the benefit of the world community as a whole. The concept of the New International Economic Order represents the only innovative and challenging blueprint for a new

41 ibid, p. 27.
world order that has been offered by any group of countries. Through it, the Group of 77, whether in New York, Geneva or elsewhere, has become an important moral and political force in international economic relations.

The diversity among developing countries provides them with immense opportunities for mutually beneficial exchanges. And it could be seen as a source of present and future strength for the Group of 77 as a whole.

Thus, it was during Nehru’s time that developing countries organized themselves into an operational agency with the formation of ‘Group of 77’ in 1964 to enhance their negotiating power in the context of ensuring North-South dialogue and simultaneously to extend strong support to economic cooperation among developing countries. Nehru was all along eager to institutionalize economic cooperation among developing countries through both the multilateral institutional arrangement such as Group of 77 and bilateral instrumentation of mutually beneficial economic relationship.

In the post-Nehru period, the ‘Group of 77’ came to be recognized as the authentic voice of the poor and the depressed, they represented three-fourths of the world’s humanity. The Group of 77 became principal forum and instrument respectively of the non-aligned countries in the UN for achieving the required changes in the international economic relations. The non-aligned nations constituting the majority of members of the Group of 77 (presently 134 members including some aligned states) continuously exert pressure on the
international community to reform the prevailing economic and
monetary systems.

1.7 Technical Cooperation through ITEC

As African countries in quick succession threw off colonial rule and emerged as independent nation states, it was clear that the inherited colonial structures of economic relations would need to be basically reformed to meet the nationalist aspirations of peoples of independent African countries. Nehru was eager to forge a new pattern of economic relationship largely out side the colonial underpinnings with these countries. A notable feature in this respect was the setting up of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme in 1964. It was the first concerted initiative from the Indian side to restructure economic relations with developing countries, especially those in Africa. It was yet another major milestone in the Nehruvian institutional framework aimed at cutting across the “metropole-colony”– North-South axis. Although the major thrust of this programme was registered in the post-Nehru period. The major objective of this programme was to strengthen ties with the newly independent developing countries, which had considerable potential.

The Indian cabinet decision establishing the ITEC Programme in 1964 mentioned the following three objectives of the programme: (1) In relations with neighbouring countries, political as well as basic economic and commercial independence had to be re-inforced and continuously enhanced; (2) Countries where India had a large population of persons of Indian origin had a legitimate claim on India’s capacity to help and (3) It was important to strengthen ties with the newly independent developing countries which had

42 Ramchandani, n. 1, p. 323.
considerable potential.\textsuperscript{43} The objectives at (2) and (3) are of relevance in the context of strengthening of India’s economic relations with African counties.

The ITEC programme was from the very start an agency with a multi-dimensional coverage in terms of what has been described as India’s major economic diplomatic initiative. The main forms of technical assistance under this programme related to providing help in several technical and professional areas such as rural development and small industries, foreign trade promotion and standardization, railways, journalism, constitutional and parliamentary studies. Simultaneously, the programme also envisaged posting and loaning Indian experts, be it economists and accountants, engineers and doctors, teachers and scientists, agriculturists and transportation experts etc. Assistance was also given for setting up industrial estates and technical training institutes in the host countries and simultaneously to provide the requisite technical equipment wherever such need was felt. The scope of the ITEC programme has been steadily extended to enable India to participate in development programme of several African countries.\textsuperscript{44}

Besides the ITEC, Nehru took keen interest in the formation of another multilateral Special Commonwealth Africa Assistance Programme (SCAAP) in 1963 and the Colombo Plan. Under these programmes aid and assistance were provided for creating training places and for deputing experts to African countries. Several African


\textsuperscript{44} Ramchandani, n. 1, p. 323.
countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Gambia in West Africa participated and availed the facilities and opportunities provided under these programme.\textsuperscript{45}

India offered African countries to cooperate in the field of human resources development through the provision of training slots, deputation of experts and supply of equipment under the Indian Technology and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. The scope of the ITEC programme is rather extensive and multi-dimensional and covers at least 40 countries of Africa. Training facilities have been provided in such diverse fields as development of water resources, foreign trade promotion, rural development, small-scale industries, standardization, journalism, railways etc. Equipment has been supplied mainly in the areas of scientific laboratories, agriculture and engineering. Assistance in setting up industrial estates and technical training institutes is rather significant. The main planks of the Indian technical assistance to the African countries are providing training in India, deploying Indian experts for short or long terms, underwriting feasibility and techno-economic studies, organizing technical workshops and supplying of equipment.

India has provided technical and financial assistance to these countries under ITEC programme (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation), SCAAP (Special Commonwealth Assistance programme) and ADR (Aid to Disaster Relief Programme). India is providing training facilities for a good number of Africans from various

\textsuperscript{45} ibid.
countries, including in the military field. These facilities are arranged mostly through the ITEC programme mainly meant for the poorer nations of Africa and Asia.\textsuperscript{46} The ITEC provides not only training facilities in India, but also for deputation of specialists abroad, assistance in feasibility studies and techno-economic surveys. In some African countries, it has also assisted in setting up development projects. The Francophone African countries, which have benefited by such assistance from India through ITEC in feasibility studies and techno-economic surveys, include Senegal and Gabon.\textsuperscript{47}

There has also been added cooperation in the cultural field. Nearly twenty African countries sent 250 scholars for study in India till 1976. India was the first among the Third World countries to institute educational scholarships for the Africans, way back in 1949. By 1965-66, there were around 2000 African students in the Indian universities and other educational institutions of higher learning. The African students came to India from several countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius, Togo and Senegal.\textsuperscript{48}

Thus, the ITEC programme has strengthened friendly relations between India and the partner African countries and has helped in the growth of mutually beneficial relations in economic and commercial fields.

\textsuperscript{46} Taliyarkhan, n. 8, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{47} ibid, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{48} Ramchandani, n. 27, pp. 4-5.
1.8 Constraints on Indo-Francophone West African Relations

There are certain inherent restrictive features, which inhibit any expansion of India's trade and economic relations with these countries.

Though, theoretically the Francophone West African states are free to manage their own political and economic affairs, in practice most of them are even now not free to follow independent fiscal and trade policies. Their common monetary unit of account, the centralization resulting from the existence of three French controlled banks of issue, their membership of the Franc zone and their dependence on France for covering their budgetary deficits form a very strong link between the former French African territories and France and greatly reduce the possibilities of trade with countries outside the EEC. Nearly 70 percent of the Francophone African states total imports came from France alone.49 Thus, the neo-classical structure, which binds these countries economically and strategically with France, is among the major constraints on India's economic relations with these countries.

With the exception of Guinea, all these countries have entered into an association with the European Economic Community under the Yaounde convention of 1964. This association provides mutual tariff concession, which are not available to other countries including India. Moreover, the EEC countries have utilized the investment fund as a means of export expansion to the Francophone African states. For example, 46 percent and 58 percent of the contracts for works during the first fund and second fund respectively were concluded with

49 Garg, n. 20, p. 112.
France alone. It has been estimated that French firms earn more money through the fund than the French Government contributes to it and the French balance of payments profits from the foreign exchange received by the countries of the Franc zone and by the French firms. The hold of France on the Francophone West African states is thus obvious and is detrimental to the interests of other countries outside the EEC.\textsuperscript{50}

Some of the provisions enumerated in Yaounde convention militate against the larger exports from India. While the products of the common market countries entered the Francophone West African states duty free, there was a duty on imports from other countries including India, which make them uncompetitive vis-à-vis, the community countries. For example, cotton textiles, which accounted for major item of Indian exports to the Francophone West African states, face a stiff competition from the EEC countries. Even in jute goods, the competition was severe from countries like Belgium. In engineering products, a new line of Indian exports which India very much wanted to develop, the competition has been severe and Indian infant industries were not able to make any headway against the free imports from the community countries. Because of the investment aid, all the imports of equipment and machinery have been taking place from the members of the community.\textsuperscript{51}

Not only have exports of Indian commodities been greatly hampered by this association but also the prospect of Indian participation in the

\textsuperscript{50} ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} ibid, p. 113.
economic development of these Francophone West African states. In the convention special treatment for private investment from the EEC countries was envisaged, thereby closing the door to any investment from other countries. The main concern of the developing countries like India over the preferential treatment accorded by the EEC countries to exports from Francophone West African countries arises not because they want to oppose the economic development of the latter but because they eventually close the door to greater trade and investment opportunities in the Francophone West African states.\textsuperscript{52} Undoubtedly India's interest is to help these states in their attempt to industrialize and develop themselves. For this purpose opportunities for trade and investment have to be widened.

The traditional contacts with erstwhile metropolitan powers and the continual vested interests of nationals of former colonial powers who have entrenched themselves in the fields of distribution, wholesale trade etc. hinder efforts at diversification of sources and destinations of external trade. Further, most of the trade is channelised through European firms, which have a strong hold in African markets. With the close economic and political link between EEC and the Francophone West African states, the hold of European exporters on these markets has further strengthened. In addition, there is a considerable flow of foreign aid to these countries from France and Belgium. France is the only developed country which has come up to the UNCTAD goal of contributing 1 percent of the GNP as aid, nearly all of which flows to French speaking Africa. This aid naturally is of a

\textsuperscript{52} ibid, p. 114.
tied nature and such needs of capital equipment as exist are financed from this aid. 53

Furthermore, the total trade of the Francophone African states is itself low. Together they account for less than 1 percent of the world trade. Language is yet another problem. Most of Indian export efforts, particularly in the field of publicity, have been directed to the English-speaking world. There are hardly any facilities available to the Indian exporters and importers for correspondence or publicity, media being conducted in French. 54

There is, in addition, lack of direct shipping services to these countries, difficulties in communication and other transport facilities, which hinder the growth of commercial relations. Thus, differences in colonial language and cultural background and distance have prevented any significant development of commercial and economic contacts between India and the Francophone African countries. Meanwhile, some earlier logistical difficulties like visa, transport and communication are being overcome slowly but steadily. 55

1.9 Conclusion

Historically India and Africa had close and cordial relations. It is observed that Indo-African relations have passed through several

54 ibid.
55 Ramamurthi, n, 7, p. 42.
phases. During the colonial period the issues of colonialism, apartheid
and Afro-Asian solidarity etc brought the two sub-continents together.
In the post-independent period India played a constructive role in
bringing Afro-Asian solidarity for better cooperation both at bilateral
and multilateral level. Since early 1990s, the international political
economy has been changed considerably with the beginning of the era
of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) and it provides
greater opportunity for countries of the world to become much closer
in furthering their relations.
In the light of above observation and findings of this chapter it can be
inferred that while there was a steady expansion and extension of
India's diplomatic relations with Francophone West African states
during the period of 1965-75, on the whole, the intensity of
relationship seems very limited. The diplomatic representation
between India and the Francophone West African states stood at the
low level during the period of analysis of this chapter. Further, India
had also just a few cultural or trade agreements with Francophone
West African countries during this period. Consequently among other
reasons, this had all along constituted an important reason for India's
low profile economic relations with the region.
Trade and commercial relations between India and the Francophone
West African countries are flourishing and are definitely on the
upswing. Evidently during the ten-year period under review in this
chapter, there was a sharp increase in India's exports to the
Francophone West African countries. Taking the ten-year period as a
whole there was a breakthrough in exports to the Francophone West African countries from Rs 21.9 lakhs in 1965-66 to Rs. 16.17 crore in 1976-77. India's imports from the Francophone West African countries also gradually increased from Rs. 95 lakhs in 1965-66 to Rs. 8.77 crore in 1976-77.

However, it may be stated that the Francophone West African region was a small trading partner of India during the period 1965-75. India's trade with the Francophone West Africa was insignificant compared to the India's total trade during the period of analysis in this chapter. However this region has potential to become the important trading partner of India and an enhanced trade with this region will increase overall Indo-African trade.

The scale of Indian collaboration projects in Francophone West Africa was negligible during the period of 1965-75. And it was only in the mid 1980s that India opened her JV account in Francophone West Africa with the setting up of a project in Senegal. However, there is ample scope for collaboration between India and the Francophone West African states for a variety of products. Joint ventures are indeed the most useful trade promoting instruments and directly as well as indirectly foster and stabilize economic relations between the two regions.

The regional groupings give additional dimensions to growing bilateral relations between India and these countries. They have provided a framework for promoting technical co-operation in all fields of economic activity and seek to promote and facilitate increased trade
and investment flows between India and members of these regional groupings i.e. the Francophone West African countries.

India has also provided technical and financial assistance to these countries under ITEC Programme (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) SCAAP (Special Commonwealth Assistance Programme) and ADR (Aid to Disaster Relief Programme).

France has been able to maintain in Francophone West Africa, a considerable degree of influence in the post-independence era also, through a combination of cultural, linguistic and economic cooperation. However, in the wake of radical global changes, there is little doubt that Franco-African relationship is no longer what it used to be. The bond between France and Francophone West Africa is loosening and the initial hurdles of transport, communications etc have also been crossed. Now, it is the time to take the initiative for greater co-operation between India and these countries.

The relations between India and the Francophone West African countries are free from any friction or misunderstanding and are based on immense mutual goodwill and clear understanding of each others problems. On several issues concerning conflict situations in the world, India and most of the independent Francophone West African countries have often stood on the common platform, strictly adhering to the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. India seems to perceive a certain commonality of interests and aspirations with Francophone West African states, be it in the bilateral context, in the NAM or the UN. The Francophone West African states along with India can be identified with the Non-Aligned
Movement. They not only have a numerical strength in the UN but they also give a firm anti-racial and anti-colonial content to the movement. They also gave impetus to the demands for a new international economic order. They work hand in hand on the wider economic issues in the North-South dialogue. They are aware of the tremendous prospects of their economic cooperation and have already taken several strides in that direction. New patterns of development are emerging both in India and Francophone West African states and a new economic order is taking shape. Essentially it initiated cooperation between India and Francophone West African states to act as one voice in matters of common concern. Further, they reaffirm their commitment to the goal of universal human freedom and equality among nations. The scope for economic cooperation between India and these countries is huge. As India and countries of Francophone West Africa are moving on the path of economic liberalization, their economies hold immense opportunities for mutually beneficial economic collaborations in the changing global environment. The series of efforts at both bilateral and multilateral levels have facilitated both the regions to forge greater cooperation among themselves. All these developments in the relations between India and Francophone West African countries are widely discussed in the subsequent chapters of this work.