CHAPTER 3
POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS
(1975-2000)

3.1 Introduction

The essence of India's political-diplomatic relations with Francophone West African countries needs to be underscored in the changing global context. In fact the political-diplomatic ties between India and Francophone West African countries in the era of LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) in the 1990s, indeed have acquired a distinct economic basis as it is the political economy of globalization that is stimulating forms of political, diplomatic, strategic and economic diplomacy in this period. India and these countries are actively engaged in their socio-economic development by initiating reforms in their economy and polity in this changed world environment.

Thus, in light of the above observation and in continuation of the first chapter of this thesis, the present chapter represents an attempt to trace and analyze the political, diplomatic and cultural relations between India and Francophone West African countries in the period of 1975-2000. This chapter will enquire about the modes of diplomacy and also reflect on the changing priorities and trends in foreign policies of India and the Francophone West African countries. It will further identify the areas of cooperation between both the regions and will also assess the impact of globalization on Indo-Francophone West African relations.
Ever since the present Francophone West African countries were granted independence, India has attempted to establish and strengthen political ties and economic relations with the region mainly through the opening up of diplomatic missions and exploring trading and other economic avenues of co-operation. With most of the countries diplomatic relations were established, though mostly through concurrent accreditation. \(^1\) India has full-fledged resident diplomatic missions in only three Francophone West African states with concurrent accreditation in the remaining countries. Ivory Coast (Cote d’Ivoire), Senegal and Burkina Faso have Indian Missions. While only Senegal and Burkina Faso have their resident missions in New Delhi. Thus the diplomatic representation between India and Francophone West Africa currently stands at low level. \(^2\)

However, in the late 80s and 90s, a significant thrust was given to the promotion of relations with Francophone West African countries. India has so far shied away from this region but all this is changing because of the economic growth these countries are witnessing. As the members of the third world fora like NAM, G-77, G-15 etc, they share common views on almost every international issue and are committed to strengthening their relationship in the genuine spirit of south-south cooperation. Francophone West African countries hold immense opportunities of mutually beneficial economic collaborations and strategic co-operation with India in the changing global environment.


\(^2\) For details see, Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs official web site, URL: http://meaindia.nic.in
3.2 Agreements and High level visits

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations with Francophone West African states after their independence in the 1960s, a few agreements have been concluded between India and these countries. Till the mid 1980s, India had bilateral agreement with only Senegal. However, in the later eighties and nineties, a significant thrust was given to the promotion of relations with Francophone West African states and India took concrete steps in forging closer links with them. India has taken the necessary steps for signing agreements with the selected Francophone West African states. In fact more recently bilateral agreements, covering cultural, trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation have been entered into with the Francophone West African states namely Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Senegal.

Indo-Senegalese bilateral trade agreement was signed in 1974. However, the first session of the joint trade committee took place in Dakar only in August 1995 under the co-chairmanship of commerce secretary. An accord on cultural cooperation between India and Senegal was signed at New Delhi on 22nd May 1974 and was ratified on 17th June 1975. Another accord on commerce and Economic and Technical cooperation was also signed at New Delhi on 22nd May 1974 and ratified on 17th and 20th June 1975 respectively. A cultural exchange programme for the year 1977 was signed at New Delhi on

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14th September 1976 between India and Senegal. India and Senegal signed on 30 April 1979, a protocol on industrial and economic cooperation between the two countries. The protocol accords priority to programmes for Indian participation in Senegalese development projects. These are mainly for the manufacture of agricultural implements, pumps, light tractors and automotive spares. Further, India and Senegal signed a memorandum of understanding on deputation of experts. An agreement was reached for cooperation in the field of science and technology in February 1980. Meanwhile, the Senegalese Mission in New Delhi was one of the 22 missions closed down by the Government of Senegal during 1980 as a measure of overall economy. However, India was assured that this was a temporary economic measure and did not reflect on close friendly relations between India and Senegal.

The friendly relation between India and Guinea was strengthened with the visit of President Sekou Toure from 17 to 20 March 1981. The Government of Guinea sought India expertise and technical cooperation in the fields of agriculture and small-scale industries. India continued to strengthen its relations with countries of the Francophone West African region. The hallmark of Indian policy towards Francophone West Africa was the attainment of closer

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5 Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, Africa Division, Current Status of Various Bilateral Agreements, (New Delhi, 2001). For details see Appendix.
understanding through personal meetings between Indian leaders and those of Francophone West Africa. Opportunities for wide ranging exchange of views at the highest political level were provided by the 7 Non-Aligned Summit in March 1983, which was held in New Delhi. Numerous other visits also took place, important among which were those by the Foreign Ministers of Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) and ministerial level visits from Mali etc.9

Dr. Leopold Sedar Senghor, former President of Senegal visited India to receive the “Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding.” Indian President Gyani Zail Singh presented the award to Dr. Senghor on 12 December 1984 in New Delhi for his rich contribution to international understanding and his unwavering commitment to the struggle for freedom, justice and universal brotherhood. Receiving the award, Dr. Senghor said “the jury of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award has honoured me by bestowing on me this very coveted award. I have appreciated this all the more because my teachers at Sorboune had taught me to admire Indian civilization when I was a student.”10

A number of delegations were exchanged between India and the countries in Francophone West Africa to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and have mutual exchange of views in diverse fields. India and Burkina Faso signed a cultural agreement in 1984. Shri Eduardo Faleiro, MP, paid a goodwill visit to Senegal and Ivory Coast in October

10 The Hindu (New Delhi), 13 December 1984.
1985. Relations between India and the Francophone West African countries continued to be cordial during the year 1986-87. An important visit from Francophone West Africa during the year was of Minister for Commerce of Senegal. Further, visits by Head of States and high-ranking officials have contributed to strengthening of diplomatic, economic and commercial relations between India and these countries. There were a number of trade-related delegations exchanged between India and individual Francophone West African states. A 20-member delegation from the Ivory Coast in 1987 and a sixty-member delegation from the Ivory Coast and Senegal in 1988 visited India. A multi-disciplinary delegation led by the Indian Minister of state for Industry also visited Ivory Coast in 1988.

The then External Affairs Minister, Shri I K Gujral, chaired a meeting of the Heads of Mission in Sub-Saharan countries in Nairobi from 9 to 11 July 1990 at which a high level review was conducted of India's relations with Sub-Saharan Africa and ways and means to further enhance cooperation. Two important events during the year 1990 were the visit by Shri Arun Nehru, the then Minister for Commerce to Senegal on 2 April and the visit of the then Minister of State for External Affairs to Benin and Guinea on 18-19 and 24 May respectively. While in Senegal, Shri Arun Nehru held wide-ranging

13 Ramamurthi, n. 1, p. 42.
discussions with the Ministers of Finance, International Cooperation, Culture and Commerce. He also announced that India was willing to buy more from Senegal provided the Senegalese also responded positively to the Indian request for balancing of trade which was largely in favour of Senegal. The proposed State visit of President Diouf of Senegal in November was called off because of political changes in India.\textsuperscript{14}

During 1993, India had intense interaction with the countries in Francophone West Africa. From Francophone West Africa, India had the first ever-state visit from the Burkina Faso. It was decided to gift grinding mills, Bajaj three wheelers and a drilling rig to Burkina Faso, which would assist in their development plans and introduce Indian products to Burkina Faso. It was also decided in principle to establish a joint commission. In the year 1993, India closed down its mission in Zaire due to financial considerations, while maintaining traditional friendly relations.\textsuperscript{15} On 17\textsuperscript{th} February 1993, a trade agreement was signed between India and the Government of Republic of Cote ‘d’ Ivoire (Ivory Coast).

In 1994 also India continued to have close interaction with them. From Francophone West Africa there were the state visits of Presidents of Burkina Faso and Togo. President of Senegal too visited India, in connection with the G-15 Summit. Relations between India


and Burkina Faso took a decisive turn when H.E. Mr. Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso paid a visit to India on 22 and 23 July 1994 and held talks with the President and the Prime Minister. On that occasion the foundation was laid for wider cooperation between the two countries. India announced a grant of Rs 15 crore approximately for setting up an agricultural development project in Burkina Faso and a team of Indian experts visited Burkina Faso in September for holding discussions with the Burkinabe authorities for implementation of the scheme. General Gnassingbe Eyadema, President of Togo paid a state visit to India from 26 to 29 September 1994. Being the first visit by a President of Togo, this opened a new chapter in mutual relations and added impetus to bilateral cooperation between the two countries. India also announced a grant of Rs 10 crore approximately for setting up an agricultural project in Togo and agreed to cooperate in the fields of city transportation, health care, scientific research, trade, industry and agriculture. India and Togo also decided to set-up a joint Commission and sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the two countries. Government of India also agreed to supply agricultural tractors, agricultural implements, etc to the Togolese government. President Diouf of Senegal visited New Delhi in March 1994 to attend the G-15 Summit. He was preceded by Foreign Minister Moustaph Niasse who attended the G-15 Troika and Ministerial level meetings. While in Delhi President Diouf had wide ranging bilateral discussions with Prime
Minister. A memorandum of understanding on trade cooperation between India and Burkina Faso was signed in 1995. An agreement on Railways project (protocol for the construction of 240 km railway line) was also signed in 1995. An accord creating the joint commission for cooperation between the two countries was signed in 1995. Building on almost five decades of close political support and provision of technical assistance, India is slowly but steadily moving towards closer economic and trade relations with the countries Francophone West Africa in true spirit of South-South Cooperation.

The first meeting of the India-Senegal Joint Trade Committee was held in Dakar in August 1995. India and Senegal are also partners within the G-15 group of developing countries and India is undertaking a number of projects in Senegal aimed at a practical demonstration of her commitment to South-South Cooperation. The Visit of Prime Minister of India to Burkina Faso along with several ministerial and senior official level exchanges have all contributed to strengthening ties with Francophone West African countries. Francophone West African countries are also now receiving greater attention with the establishment of a high-level inter-ministerial coordination board for the sub-region.

The Indian Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao visited Burkina Faso on 3-5 November 1995 with a high level delegation. This was the first bilateral visit of an Indian Prime Minister to a Francophone West


African country. He was honoured with the highest civil award of Burkina Faso. His visit was intended to demonstrate India’s interest in strengthening relations with the region. During his three-day visit, he holds talks with President Compaore on matters of mutual interest followed by delegation level talks between the two countries. The focus of the talks was on expanding trade and economic cooperation mainly in agriculture and transport. India has also signed agreements and offered development aid and assistance to Burkina Faso to support this nation.18 India initiated an Rs 15.8 crore Agricultural Development Project in Burkina Faso. The Prime Minister personally handed over the first consignment of tractors and other agricultural implements during his visit. A Trade Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding on railway cooperation were also signed. The Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Salman Khurshid visited Guinea and Ivory Coast in November 1995. Relations were further strengthened with the visit to India of Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso Ablasse Ouedraogo and the holding of the second meeting of the bilateral Joint Commission in February 1996. The Minister of State for Education and Culture Km Selja visited Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast in July 1996 with the aim of intensifying educational and cultural relations with the countries of the region. The President of Mali Alpha Oumar Konare visited India in August 1995 when India agreed to assist Mali in areas of agriculture, rural development and employment generation, drinking water supply, small scale industries, etc. These

18 Times of India (New Delhi), 6 November 1995.
understandings were consolidated further with the visit to India of the
Ministers of Industries, Tourism and Handicrafts and of Rural
Development and Environment in March 1996.19

India was an active participant at the partnership meeting of the
United Nation Economic Commission for Africa at Addis Ababa in
April 1996. Special Envoys of the Prime Minister and the Minister of
External Affairs were also deputed to represent India at the Summit
and ministerial meetings of the Economic Community of West African
States in Abuja in July 1996. India also participated in the Tokyo
International Conference on African Development (TICAD) at Abidjan
in July 1996. India’s relations with the countries of Francophone West
Africa was further consolidated with the visits of Special Envoys of the
Minister of External Affairs to various Francophone West African
countries, and progress in bilateral agricultural and rural
development projects being undertaken in Burkina Faso, Mali and
Senegal. A team of agriculture experts visited Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire,
and Togo in August and September 1996 with a view to formulating
specific programmer of agricultural cooperation with these countries.

In August 1996, a Project for the computerization of the office of the
Prime Minister of Senegal was successfully commissioned with Indian
assistance. The Prime Ministers of India and Senegal also signed a
memorandum of understanding (MOU) for establishment of the
Entrepreneur and Technical Development Centre for vocational and

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small-scale industries training in Dakar (Senegal) during the G-15 Summit at Harare in November 1996. The project has since been implemented and handed over to the Senegalese Government in June 2000. India participated in the Dakar International Trade Fair in December 1996.20

Relations with Senegal moved significantly forward with the visit to India of President of Senegal Abdou Diouf in February 1997. President of Senegal along with Foreign Minister of Senegal visited New Delhi to attend the G-15 summit. He had wide-ranging bilateral discussions with Prime Minister of India. During the visit an agreement on the establishment of the Indo-Senegalese Joint Commission for Economic, Technical, Political and Cultural Cooperation was concluded on 16th February 1997 at New Delhi. The first meeting of the Indo-Senegal joint commission held in Dakar in September 1997 agreed on cooperation in the areas of agriculture, transport, mining and training of human resources. The Senegalese side had expressed interest on concluding agreements on the (a) Avoidance of double taxation agreement; (b) Bilateral investment promotion and protection agreement and (c) Agreement on Technical assistance whereas India had proposed the signing of a cultural exchange programme. The Senegalese side had immediately sent a draft MoU on cultural exchange to India. A Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of an agricultural development

project in Senegal was also signed at New Delhi on 16th February 1997 and implemented in February 1997 for the duration of ten years. The project has been successfully implemented.\textsuperscript{21}

The relations between India and the countries in Francophone West Africa continued to expand in all fields. India's rapidly developing relations with individual Francophone West African countries were heightened with the visits of the Minister of state for External Affairs of India, Smt. Kamala Sinha in September 1997 to Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire.\textsuperscript{22} The Minister for Technical Education and Professional Training of Cote d'Ivoire also visited India in October 1997.\textsuperscript{23} India's rapidly developing relations with Francophone West African states was further heightened with the visits to India of the President of Burkina Faso Mr Blaise Compaore and the Foreign Minister of Benin, Mr Pierre Osho in November 1997. In 1997, the President of Burkina Faso H.E. Mr. Blaise Compaore made a second official visit to India along with a delegation of Ministers of his government.\textsuperscript{24} The visit to India of the President of Burkina Faso, Mr Blaise Campaore reflected the desire of this country to strengthen its ties of fraternity and understanding with India.

An agreement on establishing a joint Committee between India and Benin on political, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation was signed on 21 November 1997 during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Benin. The fiftieth anniversary year of India's

\textsuperscript{21} Government of India, n. 5.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Government of India, n. 4, pp. 61-62.
\textsuperscript{24} Embassy of Burkina Faso, n. 17, p. 10.
independence was commemorated throughout Africa through a series of events including dance and music performances, photograph exhibitions, seminars, fashion shows, sports events, food festivals etc. These events helped to recall the historic solidarity between India and the countries of Africa and to reinforce the traditional bonds of amity and fellow feeling between their peoples.25

Indian Prime Minister, Shri A B Vajpayee, addressed a message to the Organization of African Unity Summit (June 8-10, 1998) held at Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso. It was handed over by Shri S T Devare, Secretary (ER) and was put on record as a document of the proceedings of the Summit. India also gifted seven heavy-duty photocopiers to Burkina Faso for use during the Summit.

Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala, the then Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Consumer Affairs visited Dakar, Senegal on 7-10 November 1998 to attend the foundation laying ceremony as Chief Guest of the project of the Industries Chimique Du Senegal (ICS) in which Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Organization is an equity partner. H. E. Mr Salifou Diallo, Minister of State, Minister for Environment and Water of Burkina Faso visited India over 12 &13 October 1998 to exchange views on the ongoing aspects of bilateral cooperation. India’s relations with Cote d’Ivoire have been improving steadily. A delegation organised by the EXIM Bank of India and the Confederation of Indian Industries visited Cote d’Ivoire and also had

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discussions with the Abidjan based African Development Bank in May 1998. Shri Kashiram Rana, the Minister of Textiles led a delegation of the Indian jute industry to Cote d'Ivoire in August 1998 for promoting export of hydrocarbon free jute bags to the Francophone West African region.26

As a part of assistance under G-15 cooperation, a MOU was signed between Government of India and Government of Senegal in January 1999 for implementation of a solar energy project under which the villages of Soune and Touly near Dakar were provided with solar energy equipment for home and public lighting. The project has been successfully implemented and the system is functional since March 2000. A memorandum of understanding for cooperation between CII and Chamber of Commerce, Industry and handicraft of Burkina Faso was signed in 1999. A memorandum of understanding was also signed on 26th April 1999 for setting up a pilot agriculture farm in Burkina Faso managed by farmers from Punjab.27

Secretary to the Prime Minister's Cabinet of Cote d'Ivoire, Mr Jean Claude Brou led a two-member delegation to India in September 1999. During their stay in Delhi they called on Commerce Secretary and Secretary, Food Processing Industries. They also visited National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) headquarters in New Delhi and met some Indian industrialists at a seminar organized by the CII.28

27 ibid.
As in the past, the year 2000 also saw a continuation of the high level of interaction between India and the countries of the Francophone West Africa. Idji Kolawole Antoine, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin, accompanied by a large delegation visited India from October 24-26, 2000. During this visit India announced a donation of 60 diesel water pumps, 30 rice hullers and 30 groundnut shellers to the Government of Benin. Cooperation in the fields of Human Resource Development, SME's and Defence was also discussed. Various Ministries/Departments/Organizations of the Government of India and those of the governments of the various Francophone West African countries exchanged visits for further expansion of bilateral relations in industrial technical and other fields.

ITPO participated in the 14th Dakar International Trade Fair held from 23 November to 5 December 2000. An Entrepreneurial Training and Development Centre (ETDC), built with Indian technical and financial assistance under G-15 at an estimated cost of US $ 4.49 million by HMT (I), was handed over to the Government of Senegal on 16 June 2000.²⁹

India's traditionally friendly ties with the countries of Francophone West Africa were also reinforced through bilateral contacts at the highest levels on the margins of major multilateral events such as the 51st UNGA in New York, Sixth G-15 Summit at Harare, and the World Food Summit in Rome and through the visits of several Special

Envoys. The presence of Prime Minister Shri H D Deve Gowda at Harare for the G-15 Summit, and India's participation at the Summit and Ministerial Meetings of the Organization of African Unity, and Economic Community of West African States were reflective of India's desire to play a meaningful role in regional initiatives for development in Africa. For the second year in succession India was represented by a Special Envoy of the Prime Minister at the Summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity at Harare. The Prime Minister addressed a message to the Summit recalling the shared destiny of the two great continents of Asia and Africa and the need for them to work as partners in their common endeavour to enrich the lives of their peoples. The 12th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in New Delhi in April 1997, the 52nd United Nations General Assembly in New York and the 7th G-15 Summit meeting at Kuala Lumpur in November 1997 also provided occasions for substantive bilateral interaction and exchange of views on international issues between India and Francophone West African countries. India is also engaged in constructing relations of partnership and cooperation with regional organizations like Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and African Development Bank.

Thus, the intensity of the relationship between India and the Francophone West African states seems very limited. However, the effort to strengthen political understanding and expand economic

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30 Government of India, n. 19, p.49.
cooperation between them has yielded results. These visits and agreements have definitely strengthened and diversified India's relations with Francophone West African countries and have added an impetus to growing bilateral co-operation between them.

3.3 Indian Foreign Policy Perspective

Pandit Nehru, immediately after the independence, observed that the objectives of Indian Foreign policy are the preservation of world peace and the enlargement of human freedom. Thus, the evolution of Indian foreign policy that took place immediately after independence was informed with idealism. He described the idealism of today as the realism of tomorrow. Thus, the idealism formed the bedrock of Indian foreign policy and there was no dearth of issues for her to espouse. As a result of this idealism during the decade of 50s and 60s, India was among the most prominent countries, which had not only achieved independence but was also working for the independence of other countries.31 It was natural for India to assume leadership role against colonialism and racism. India has a creditable record of supporting liberation movements in Africa and the anti-apartheid struggle. India had been in the forefront of the global struggle for decolonization of Africa. In recognition of India's positive contribution, India was unanimously elected chairman of the UN special committee on

31 Foreign Policy statement by Shri Yashwant Sinha, Minister of External Affairs, Government of India on 18 November 2002 at National Defence College, New Delhi, (Online web) URL: http://mea.india.nic.in
decolonisation set up in 1961. The war against colonialism and racism formed, some of the basic ingredients of India's early foreign policy. Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, India was the founder member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). India has played an active role in strengthening the movement and making it an effective voice in representing the collective aspirations and interests of the developing countries on such vital issues as development, peace and stability. NAM has not only acquired a political dimension but also strong economic content over a period of time. The Group of 77 (which consist mostly of the non-aligned countries) has become an important instrument of negotiation and articulation of views of the developing countries in all fora where economic issues were discussed. Thus, the Indian role in international affairs was disproportionate to its military and economic strength and was sustained by the idealism and morality that informed Indian foreign policy. It is this idealism, which gave India, the stature internationally.

In the decade of 1990s, a unipolar world has been emerged with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The international economic as well as political and strategic environment has also undergone dramatic change. Globalization has become a force, which no country could ignore. Thus, the four-decade-old domestic economic policy of India was reversed which has implications to foreign policy too. The new and continuing policy has meant opening up of the Indian economy to

32 ibid.
33 High Commission of India, Indian Foreign Policy- 50 Years of Achievement, (London, Indian High Commision, 2003).
foreign economic competition. India launched itself on a definite path of economic reforms, liberalization and greater integration with the global economy. The reversal of this old domestic economic policy has also brought about a significant shift in India’s priorities in world affairs and its traditional diplomacy. India has practically abandoned its old active role in political developments and in favour of a higher priority for promoting international economic cooperation and consequently economic diplomacy.34

Today, it is the experience of nations that a major content of foreign policy at bilateral and global level is economic arrangements. Every country is looking for some economic benefit or the other for itself. Thus, economic development has become the primary concern of Indian foreign policy. It is now more realistic and in the pursuit of national interest and is based on the recognition that India’s place in the community of nations will be determined by the economic and military strength. Issues such as non-alignment and disarmament have taken a backseat in this era of globalization. In the recent years the Indian foreign policy has witnessed the rise of economic thrust. Economic diplomacy has been a key component of India’s foreign policy. Apart from long established divisions in the ministry to deal with economic issues, an Investment Publicity Unit (IPU) was specifically set up in 1990 with a view to disseminating economic information and coordinating the economic and commercial activities

of Indian missions abroad in the light of the recent economic reforms underway in the country. One aspect of economic diplomacy has been the promotion of South-South Cooperation. The Indian Economic and Technical Cooperation (ITEC) Programme was established in 1964. Today it extends to 110 countries in Asia, East Europe, Africa and Latin America and facilitates the training of as many as 1,000 foreign candidates in Indian institutions each year. In the early Nineties, the Ministry of External Affairs annual reports reiterated that, "in the future, new relationships based on concrete economic, technological and educational cooperation will assume enhanced significance". Indeed, ever since economic liberalization in 1991, India's foreign policy has been increasingly driven towards finding export markets, attracting foreign capital and know-how. This policy shift is echoed across Africa as most of the economies are going through economic reforms and liberalization. They are looking for partnerships to ameliorate their economic woes and have sought India's help. Thus, commensurate with national interests and security, the improvement of bilateral relations is an important component of any foreign policy and India has succeeded in establishing a network of mutually beneficial relations with all the countries of the world.

India is committed to multi-plurism. It is not in favour of uni-polarity and therefore the kind of world order, which India envisage and is working for, is not one merely of technical equality in the United

35 High Commission of India, n. 33.
36 Ruchita Beri, “India & Africa: The Road Ahead”, Diplomatist Online: www.diplomatist.com
Nations but greater balance among Nations of the world. India is working for a better world order in the economic sphere. India is trying to coordinate activities with other developing countries in order to be able to deal with the enormity of the inequality, which exists in the world today and create an environment, which is more equitable. India has played an active role in the deliberations of the United Nations on the creation of a more equitable international economic order. It has been an active member of the G-77 and later the G-15. Other issues, such as environmentally sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights have also been an important focus of India’s foreign policy in international forums.37

The other impact of multi-polarity would be in the security area and in all the arrangements internationally, which govern nuclear weapons, missiles, high technology etc. India has been consistently of the view that world cannot have two categories of countries. In recent years, the nuclear tests, which India carried out in May 1998, was a watershed. The world did not take it kindly and showed concerned about it. India was subjected to economic sanctions. Ultimately world was convince that India had no malafide intensions in carrying out these nuclear tests. India has not compromise on its nuclear and missile programme.38

India has emerged today as a key global player. There are today large number of Indians in information technology and other fields who are

37 High Commission of India, n. 33.
38 Sinha, n. 31.
making investments in the European Union. There are technologies, which India can transfer to other countries given its strength in knowledge industry. It is being increasingly recognized that India has excellent technology with this respect, which India commands, it should be possible for India to be of greater help for the developing world and stand shoulder to shoulder with the developed nations. One important strength apart from IT and knowledge industry which India has acquired over the last decade or so, is the emergence of the Indian Diaspora and the political influence they enjoy in various countries. However this factor is absent in the relations with Francophone West African states.39

The promotion of a more equitable equation between the developed and the developing world in the political, economic and technological domains, finding an adequate response to doctrines diluting the principles of sovereignty and seeking to establish the right to intervene, promotion of multi-polarity and most importantly reform of the security council are some of the challenges facing Indian foreign policy.

The other aspect of Indian foreign policy currently is the phenomenon of regionalism. In order to establish a multi-polar world, smaller countries in the world are getting together and evolving themselves not merely into economic groups but also acquiring a political personality. It is India’s policy to promote a strong regional cooperative

39 *Foreign Policy statement* by Shri Kanwal Sibal, Foreign Secretary, Government of India on 23 January 2003 at Geneva Forum, (Online web) URL: [http://meaindia.nic.in](http://meaindia.nic.in)
group and to promote friendly relations with all groups of countries, which have organized themselves regionally. The African union is a recent phenomenon, which seeks to bring together nations of the African continent. India is trying to forge relations with the African groups and has evolved a policy to deal with these regional groups. In this effort, economic diplomacy will be India's principal tool. India is trying to evolve free trade arrangements with Africa. Trade and South-South cooperation will continue to play a very important role in India's policy framework. India is not merely looking at investments from other regions and countries, developed or developing. It is also in a position to contribute them. There is considerable potential for economic and commercial cooperation, for promoting small-scale industries in Africa with technological support from India.

3.3.1 India's Africa Policy

India extended moral and material support to the African liberation movements in their struggle for freedom and to realize their human and political rights. India's abhorrence for all forms of discrimination, support to African liberation movements and independent countries of that continent lies rooted in the strong historical and emotional links that binds India to Africa. India attaches special significance to her relations with Africa. She has had close political relations with the

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40 Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, *Focus Africa* (New Delhi, 2003), (Online web) URL: http://meaindia.nic.in
countries of Africa and is in the process of concretizing that close relationship into mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

India has continued to intensify efforts to convert this historic goodwill existing in African countries for her into mutually beneficial economic, technical and cultural cooperation. Despite severe constraints of resources on both sides, India’s efforts are bearing fruit. Building on almost five decades of close political support and provision of technical assistance India is now moving towards closer economic and trade relations with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in true spirit of South-South Cooperation. Thus, India continued with its policy of strengthening the on-going process of multifaceted cooperation with the countries of the African region.\(^4\)

The continent of Africa has occupied a special place in the national political consciousness of India over the last five decades. India’s relations with the countries of Africa acquired a new dimension with strong emphasis on strengthening trade and economic exchanges and a renewed focus on South-South Cooperation. India has welcomed the opportunities emerging from the wide-ranging political and economic changes taking place throughout the continent of Africa which when viewed in conjunction with India’s own changing profile, provide a functional framework for a new and purposeful engagement between India and the countries of Africa in the common endeavour to exploit for mutual benefit the complementarities of their skills and resources.

India attaches priority to sustaining and rejuvenating its close and privileged relations with Africa. Thus, India has always attached special significance to her relations with Africa and is continuing to build a strong economic relationship with countries there.  

India’s diplomatic vision extends beyond the (natural) ethnic affinities to embrace the interests of Africa as a whole, particularly in the priority area of economic progress and development. Such an economic congruence is facilitated by a broad agreement between India and the countries of Africa on their vision of a new world order characterized by peace, justice and equity, and fully responsive to the needs and interests of the developing world. Thus, The government of India continued its policy of consolidating the gains of almost five decades of close ties of friendship with the countries in the sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the countries in this region are currently engaged in the simultaneous processes of economic reform and political democratization. These processes, being in line with India’s own national priorities, have strengthened its capacity to identify itself with the aspirations of the people of Africa and to engage with them in a constructive programme of mutually beneficial cooperation. There has been, and still is, significant movement in terms of people between India and Africa. A large number of students from Africa have studied in Indian technical and other institutions.

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42 Government of India, n. 16, p. 49.
43 Government of India, n. 26, p. 52
44 Government of India, n. 28, p. 47.
In continuation of its Africa policy, India has also made efforts to strengthen political understanding and expand economic cooperation with the countries of West Africa.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, India's recent opening to the countries of West Africa has consolidated with the progress in bilateral relations with the countries like Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo.\textsuperscript{46} A wide-ranging political dialogue with several key countries in the region also displays a considerable degree of understanding of India's security interests.\textsuperscript{47} Given their membership of several multilateral fora such as G-15, G-77, NAM and their common endeavour to set up a just and equitable world order, the renewed contact at the highest political level underlined the need for strategic consultations between them.

The countries of Francophone West Africa are now receiving greater attention in India's foreign policy consideration with the establishment of a high-level inter-ministerial coordination board for the sub-region.\textsuperscript{48} For a variety of reasons, these countries are important for Indian foreign policy consideration.

(1) At the level of diplomacy, cultivation of friendly relations to gain support in various international fora for policies, vital to India's national interest, is important for India's foreign policy.

(2) Economically, Francophone West Africa provides vast scope for mutually beneficial trade and commercial linkages in the spirit of South-South cooperation. The imperatives of India's liberalized and

\textsuperscript{45} Government of India, n. 19, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{46} For detail see, Government of India, n. 20, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{47} Government of India, n. 26, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{48} Government of India, n. 19, p. 51.
globalize economy makes it necessary that third world countries and their markets are more seriously explored. The need for expanded export market and the challenge of the developed and industrialized economies should induce India to develop closer ties with these countries.

(3) India has a stake in NAM, G-77, G-15 and also Africa etc. It has also interest in WTO and restructuring UN*, which needs partnership and cooperation with Africa. Thus, the quality and depth of Indo-Francophone West Africa bilateral relations assume even greater significance and a broader canvas of empathy and support.

It is need of the hour that diplomatic relations should be strengthening and to engage the civil society at large in fortifying and deepening bilateral relations with these countries. There is also a need to install an independent foreign policy planning forum. However, India has no media presence in Francophone West African region. But it is evident now that India is giving as much importance to Francophone West Africa as was expected.

In changed world scenario and due to recently liberalized and globalize economy, Indian foreign policy gives much importance to Western countries and developed nations. However, the new feature of India’s foreign policy during the 1990s was its emphasis on friendly relations with African states. An integrated programme “Focus: Africa” was launched from the year 2002-2003 with a view to significantly

* India is a legitimate aspirant for a permanent seat in the security council of the UN.
enhance India’s trade with the Sub-Saharan African region. The main objective of it to increase interactions between the two regions by identifying the areas of bilateral trade and investment. The Focus: Africa programme focuses on Sub-Saharan African region with added emphasis on seven major trading partners of the region viz. Nigeria, South Africa, Mauritius, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Ghana. With a view to further enhance India’s trade with Africa the scope of this Programme was further extended with effect from 1st April 2003 to all the other countries of the Sub-Saharan African region, where India has Diplomatic Missions. The programme in effect, covers the entire African continent. Under this programme, the Government of India extends assistance to exporters, Export Promotion Councils, etc. to visit these countries, organise trade fairs and invite African trade delegations to visit India. The initiatives taken under this Programme have received an encouraging response from the Indian exporting community. It is likely to further boost bilateral trade in the coming years.

After “Focus Africa" India is now turning to West Africa so far neglected in Indian Foreign Policy considerations. The emphasis of Indian foreign policy has been shifted to forge beneficial economic relations with these states. Indian foreign policy makers are looking forward to identify common areas of understanding and mutual benefits in the fields of economy, politics and strategy. India’s policy makers are conscious that friendship with this large bloc of African

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49 Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 2 March 2004.
countries will be of considerable value in the future. Thus, with the focus on West African region, the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India has appointed a Joint Secretary for West African region.

3.4 Foreign Policy perspective of Francophone West African states

In external relations Francophone West African states since their independence sought to establish diplomatic relations with every major political and economic bloc in the world. They have maintained close links with the Western World while emphasizing its ties with the developing world. Their domestic imperatives of providing a better life for all, sustainable development and poverty alleviation have become the focus of economic diplomacy in recent years. Their foreign policy is mainly driven by economic imperatives. A major foreign policy aim is to restore their investment attractiveness to the West and to open up credit facilities with the IMF and World Bank. Indeed, given their dependence on Western markets for investment and trade-essential for domestic economic revival, it is important for them to forge closer links with Western countries. Thus, they have put their own interests first competing, as it must, for Western technology, investment and trade with a host of rival claimants. They have strived to enhance their economic links with west especially France. They remain economically very close to France. France has been most supportive to these countries and has also been generous in its commitment to their
economic development. Although they believe that their future is closely linked to the development of the South-South concept, they dare not to ignore certain realities that France, US and other G-7 countries are essential for their economic well-being and they constitute the undeniable economic power base of the world today. However, they have also shown concern at the uneven impact of globalization on the developing economies and agreed to coordinate their efforts with other developing nations for the development of south-south cooperation. Almost all of them are member of third world fora like NAM, G-77, and G-15. Thus, It's confusing to talk of south-south cooperation and the need for full-cooperation with the north in the same breath. There is a contradiction in these countries establishing a strong relationship with third world countries while maintaining its strong ties with the West, particularly France. It is indeed quite a difficult proposition to pursue South-South networking while simultaneously drawing on North-South relations.

Meanwhile, these countries have now emphasized to develop strong link with India and the potential for mutually beneficial cooperation. They can coordinate and work with Indian economic policy makers to decide which methods are most suitable to cope with the pressure of liberalization and globalization. The new developing partnership between India and these countries reflects their similar worldview and potential for substantial economic cooperation between them. With each passing year, the ties between them are getting stronger, wider and deeper. They are conscious of the fact that any joint action,
position, views and partnership they share have wider implications. A strong and positive partnership between India and them is necessary for the growth and development of the region, self-collectivity and south-south cooperation. Almost all the Francophone West African countries have expressed support for India's claim for the permanent membership of the Security Council and their stand against internationalization of the Kashmir issue, which they want to see, settled under Simla agreement.50

Senegal pursues a balanced foreign policy based on its traditional ties with Western democracies. Political stability and active involvement in numerous international organizations and conferences have made Senegal a respected leader in the Third World. Senegal is among one of the most active and influential Black African countries on the international scene. Senegal is a member of the UN, OIC, OAU-AU, NAM, G-15 and ECOWAS, among others. Since independence Senegal has developed ties with representatives of every major political and economic bloc in the world, while Senegalese diplomats have played prominent roles in various regional and international organizations. It has also participated in many international peacekeeping operations in the past.

Although not formally aligned to any bloc of nations, Senegal has pursued a pro-western foreign policy. Senegal remains economically and militarily very close to France. France is the main donor country and it maintains an army garrison and a naval unit in Senegal on a

50 Government of India, n. 19, p. 57.
permanent basis. Even after over four decades of independence France remains the corner stone of Senegal's external relations. The French connection is deeply rooted in Senegalese history. French political, economic and cultural institutions were implanted in Senegal as far back as the seventeenth century and have left cultural and emotional bands that are not easily broken. Its special relationship with France during the Senghor era (1960-80) was reinforced by Senghor's long stay and personal loyalty to France and its acceptance of most of the premises of Gaullist foreign policy. Like the French, Senghor opposed the domination of world politics by two major superpowers. It regarded France as the natural leader of an independent Europe and a champion of third world interests and saw an alliance between Europe and Africa as the best hope for providing a 'Third force' to counteract super power domination. With the emergence of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Senghor's vision of a "Third Force" expanded to include the oil producing nations of the Middle-East. While still in office, Senghor worked closely with France to promote a "trilogue" among Europe, Africa and the Middle-East. Senghor was also one of the chief exponents of a loose common wealth of French-speaking nations-la francophonie joined together by common cultural and linguistic bonds.51 Thus Senegal has made its presence felt particularly in three concentric circles, namely African, Islamic and Third world politics. Although France no longer monopolizes Senegalese foreign trade and

aid as it did at independence, it yet remains Senegal’s principal trading partner and most important source of financial and technical assistance. Thus economic dependence on France is another crucial factor underlying Senegal’s close ties with France.

Next to the French connection, Senegal’s inter-African foreign policy is worth noting. Senegal’s inter-African diplomacy revolves around the promotion of stable and prosperous relationships with its immediate neighbours-Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia. A firm commitment to African unity and integration constitutes an important theme of Senegalese foreign policy. Senegal was a founding member of the organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. Leopold Senghor favoured the gradual build up of African unity through regional blocs, and it is interesting to note that the Abuja Treaty of 1991 creating the African Economic Community (AEC) adopted this idea providing for the economic integration at the level of regional groupings such as ECOWAS first. Since 1975, it has been a member of the ECOWAS. The Franc zone, which links Senegal with 13 other African states using CFA franc, still continues. Through the West African Economic and Monetary Union, Senegal hopes to become the outlet and base for a much larger area of West Africa, as it was in the colonial era. Most recently in 2001-2002, the African Union (AU), which replaces the OAU calling for greater African unity, has been embraced by Senegal. Senegal was among the first African nations to sign and ratify the constitutive Act of the African Union, which came into force on 26 May 2001. President Abdoulaye Wade has strongly
supported the idea insisting that Senegal's constitution provides for the possibility of the country's surrendering its sovereignty to a continental African body. President Wade's new well-known OMEGA plan (2001) for the development of Africa is to be viewed in this context. The plan advocates the unity of Africa to face the challenges posed by globalization.\textsuperscript{52}

The promotion of links with the Arab world and other Muslim countries constitutes another important theme of Senegalese foreign policy interests. Building upon Senegal's heritage as a Muslim nation at the crossroads of North and Sub-Saharan Africa, both the Senghor and Diouf administrations have sought to make Senegal a pivotal link between these two worlds, with Diouf taking a particularly active role as witnessed by his attendance and subsequent chairmanship of the Islamic Conference.\textsuperscript{53} As a member of the 54 members Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Senegal has intensified its ties with the Muslim world. Thus, the promotion of a moderate brand of Islam through increased interaction with the Islamic world constitutes an important guiding principle of Senegalese foreign policy.\textsuperscript{54}

With regard to the Third World, Senegal has been one of the most outspoken black African nations demanding a revision of the third world's economic relations with the industrialized countries. Senegalese leaders have rightly blamed the deterioration of the terms of trade between third world economies exporting raw materials and importing

\textsuperscript{52} ibid, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{54} ibid, p. 494.
manufactured goods and capital from the developed countries as a major obstacle to their development. Senegal was one of the prime movers of the 1967 Algiers conference, which prepared the way for the strong stand taken by the “Group of 77” at the 1968 UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD held in New Delhi. It was co-sponsored by Senegal and India. The Third World demands eventually became the basis for the NIEO requested by the third world in 1974 through the United Nations. In promoting the NIEO, Senegal has called for dialogue, criticizing vituperation and direct confrontation with the richer nations as ineffective. In dealing with Asia, Senegal has taken great pains to maintain good relations with the communist countries such as the People’s Republic of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Kampuchea. It also astutely avoided taking sides in disputes involving contending Asian countries such as India and Pakistan. Its ties with Asian communist nations gave credibility to Senegal’s claim to non-aligned status despite its clear preference for the West.\footnote{Mathews, n. 51, p. 158-59.}

Senegal enjoys an excellent relationship with India. The government of Senegal is known and respected for its able diplomats and has often been supportive of India especially in the United Nations.\footnote{Embassy of India, Senegal- Country Commercial Guide, (Dakar), p. 7.} It is through the non-aligned and other third world movements that Senegal and India have come closer. Senegal has identical views with India on a number of international issues particularly relating to third
world development and liberation. Their cooperation in the UNCTAD, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the United Nations, the “Group of 77” and other international forums is well documented. At the second UNCTAD conference held in New Delhi in 1968, Senegal and India co-sponsored a resolution which enabled the “Group of 77” to take a strong stand on Third World development. Anti-colonialism and support for liberation struggles in Southern Africa and elsewhere were among the common principles of both the countries foreign policies. Both the countries supported the struggle for the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) through the United Nations in the 1970s and 1980s. Turning dependency theory on its head, Senegal is pulling away from the ‘periphery’ of the French ‘core’ and building a relationship with another ‘periphery’ of the World economy, India. So pleased are the Senegalese with their new found India connections that they want other West African countries to turn to Delhi for the technology and investment they once sourced from Paris. Senegal has also extended its support to India’s candidature in the election to various UN bodies. It has always supported a dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. It maintains that Kashmir is a bilateral issue, which should be resolved through dialogue between the two countries involved.\textsuperscript{57} The Abdoulaye Wade Government of Senegal has expressed its desire to further strengthen Indo-Senegalese political and economic relations.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{57} Times of India (New Delhi), 1 March 2004.

\textsuperscript{58} Government of India, n. 29, p. 51.
Cote d’Ivoire’s foreign policy was consistently pro-western. Ivory Coast maintained extensive economic and military ties with France, even though this meant bearing the neo-colonialist label. It has maintained perhaps the closest links of any of the African states with the former metropole. And for good measure, it insisted that France maintain a battalion of marines near Abidjan to buttress its own military. Diplomatic relations with the United States were also warm. For instance, Ivory Coast was Sub-Saharan Africa’s staunchest supporter of the United States in the United Nations. Matching the strength of its support for the west was Ivory Coast distrust of the Soviet Union. Ivory coast did not establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union until 1967, severed them in early 1969 amid accusations of Soviet subversion, and did not reestablish them until 1986, as part of Houphouet-Biogny’s quest for international stature.\textsuperscript{59}It has been dogmatically anti-communist, taking issue with and attempting to undermine any African states that flirted with the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s, while facilitating French military and economic activities and Western influence more generally in Africa. It has openly welcome ECOWAS in contrast to the OAU holding in reserve the ‘Francophone’ associations in which it wields the effective power.\textsuperscript{60}

In its foreign affairs, Ivory Coast either befriended or attempted to isolate its immediate neighbours. Recognizing that the ‘oasis never

\textsuperscript{59}US State Department, Library of Congress, Country Profile- Ivory Coast (Online: web) URL: https://dart.columbia.edu/library/IvoryCoast

encroaches upon the desert', Houphouet-Boigny sought mutually beneficial ties with Ivory Coast’s neighbours despite ideological differences. Ivory Coast’s fundamental objective was to promote economic development at home by promising peace and security within West Africa. However, Houphouet-Boigny broke with most other African leaders by attempting to establish a dialogue with South Africa and in 1986, by re-establishing diplomatic relations, which has been broken following the October 1973 war with Israel. 61

Ivory Coast is a country, which is primarily involved in developing its economy rapidly and also eager to contribute to the development of the third world. Thus it has now emphasized to develop strong link with India.

Since its independence in 1960, Burkina Faso has maintained friendly relations with India. Both countries share in common their adherence to non-alignment, their belief in the value of democracy and justice, their commitment to south-south cooperation for developing countries. 62 However it was only in 1990s that economic and commercial cooperation between both the countries started.

During Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao visit to Burkina Faso in November 1995, India received emphatic commitment of support for its bid for a security council seat by Burkina Faso and reiteration by this country that the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan should be resolved within the framework of the Simla agreement.

61 US State Department, n. 59.
62 Embassy of Burkina Faso, n. 17, p. 8.
But even more important gain from India’s point of view was a tacit commitment on the part of government of Burkina Faso to henceforth promote New Delhi’s interests in several neighbouring Francophone countries where Burkina Faso’s President Compaore through ethnic ties wields considerable influence.63

3.5 Areas of Cooperation

While considering India-Francophone West Africa relations, four major areas of interaction can be identified, namely, decolonization, non-alignment, south-south cooperation and the challenges posed by the new emerging post-cold war world order and globalization. In past the Indo-African relations was dominated by political and decolonization issues. However, with the end of political decolonization in Africa, economic issues have come to assume greater prominence and importance. Thus, the main issue now is how India and Francophone West African countries could support each other more solidly in their common struggle for economic liberation and social well being of their people. India has been making efforts to enlarge areas of economic cooperation with other developing countries particularly in Africa, which started with the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) launched in 1964. India and countries of Africa have been close allies in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. They now can be partners in the new struggle against global economic apartheid brought about by the uncontrolled

63 Times of India (New Delhi), 6 November 1995.
globalization and liberalization. In this regard India and Francophone West African countries need to anchor their role in international affairs in the 21st century based on commitment to fundamental principles aimed at promoting economic and social well being of the people of the south. The crucial question is how India and these countries can fruitfully work together in achieving economic and social development and ensures freedom from poverty and illiteracy of their people. They have identified several areas and issues, which deserve solidarity among the developing world.

3.5.1 Peacekeeping

India could assist Francophone West African countries in maintaining peace and security in the region. India has in the past experience of peacekeeping and peace building in Africa under the UN flag. Indian participation in peacekeeping activities flows from its commitment to the United Nations. India has contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security through participation in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Indian peacekeepers were present in Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sierra-Leone and Congo to name a few in the last decade. Indian peacekeepers presence in Africa indicates its commitment to support any process aimed at bringing peace and development to the continent of Africa. India has consistently supported UN's peacekeeping activities in Africa. Indian troops have taken part in some of the most risky operations, including those in Egypt, Congo, Somalia and Rwanda. Over the years, India provided a
cumulative total of 50,000 troops to 29 UN peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Emergency Force in Sinai was one of the earliest UN peacekeeping operations in which Indian troops participated. Over 11 years, India provided more than 12,000 troops to UN operations. India demonstrated its capacity to sustain large troop commitments over a prolonged period. The UN operation in the Congo marked a watershed in the evolution of the UN peacekeeping activities. This was the first UN operation where peace enforcement was authorised. Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives in discharging the mandate given by the United Nations. There have been other important milestones in the evolution of UN peacekeeping. The United Nations also played a crucial role in Namibia’s transition from a colony to a sovereign, independent country. For decades, India was part of the diplomatic efforts, which went into this process. Once the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was established to supervise elections and pave the way for achieving Namibia’s independence, India provided troops as well as a Force Commander. India has also demonstrated its capacity to provide an integrated force comprising land, sea and air elements to UN peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. The Indian contingent also provided humanitarian assistance. It is significant that there were the smallest number of casualties of the Somali people in the area of operation of the Indian contingent. However, peacekeeping activities must be seen as part of a broader UN

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64 Inaugural Address by Smt. Vasundhara Raje, Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India in International Seminar on UN Peacekeeping on 17-19 March 1999 in New Delhi.
framework. Development must remain central to UN's agenda. Only a world free of hunger and want would be free of strife. Purely military solutions cannot bring enduring peace.65

India is keenly watching the conflict resolution experiments in Francophone West African region. The Treaty of Lagos, establishing ECOWAS, was signed in May 1975 by 15 states, with the object of promoting trade, co-operation and self-reliance in West Africa. The treaty also formally assigned the Community with the responsibility of preventing and settling regional conflicts. The ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is the peacekeeping arm of ECOWAS. ECOWAS is seeking international support to enable it train and equip the 15 battalions of troops pledged by member states as standby units for its peacekeeping force, ECOMOG. The training of the composite units will facilitate their effectiveness in peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and other missions for which they could be deployed.66

Thus, India could assist Francophone West African countries in their endeavor and they could be partners in collective efforts for maintaining and upholding international peace and security.

3.5.2 Restructuring of the United Nations

India and the countries of Francophone West Africa share a common objective in building a just and equitable world order with a strong focus on developmental issues. There is broad agreement between

65 Concluding address by Shri Brajesh Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and National Security Advisor, Government of India in International Seminar on UN Peacekeeping on 19 March 1999 in New Delhi.
them on the need for a restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations. Thus, this is an important issue where India-Francophone West Africa cooperation can play vital role for the reform and the restructuring of the United Nations and its security council. It should truly reflect the diversity of our universe and ensure equity among the nations in the exercise of power within the system of international relations in general and the Security Council in particular. Further, they need to carefully analyze the trends that seem to be developing at the United Nations. Some countries are trying to restructure the UN, targeting its agencies that serve poor nations interests and most UN bodies involved in development are either to be dismantled or shrunk. This needs to be resisted. The role of UNCTAD, UNIDO, ECOSOC, UNECA etc. are particularly important at a time when development aid is on the decline and debt-ridden developing countries, particularly in Africa, are struggling for survival. May be India and these countries should give support to an idea of building a more representative forum that can provide leadership in economic, social and environmental fields, an economic security council of the UN (ESC).67

3.5.3 Strengthening of South-South Cooperation

Having realized that structural linkages with the industrially advanced countries of the North stand as the chief obstacle to their own economic development, the countries of the south have come to

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increasingly recognize the need for closer cooperation among themselves. India and Francophone West African countries together can play a crucial role in this respect. India and African countries together constitute the most vital segment of the developing world. The imperatives of south-south cooperation makes it necessary that India-Francophone West Africa cooperation is strengthened and deepened. Increased exchanges between India and Francophone West African countries would help to diversify the pattern of their economic linkages, strengthen multilateral approaches and increase their bargaining leverage with the North, particularly in the present age of globalization. India and Francophone West African countries could be partners in the on-going battle to overcome poverty and under development.

3.5.4 Revitalizing the Non-Aligned Movement

Revitalizing the Non-Aligned Movement is yet another area in which Indo-Francophone West African countries cooperation can play a constructive role. It is important that NAM must generate new, relevant agenda items to place on the tables of multilateral fora, such as the WTO etc around the world. There is a joint commitment between India and the countries of Francophone West Africa to strengthen the Non-Aligned Movement as the ideal vehicle for advancing the collective interests of the developing countries. India has identified with the problems and challenges before Francophone West Africa out of a sense of common cause and a shared future. This
is an unbreakable link, which will extend to facing the new and emerging challenges now confronting the developing world.\textsuperscript{68}

\textbf{3.5.5 Protection of Environment, Prohibition of Nuclear Proliferation, Arms-control, Drug-trafficking and Terrorism}

There can be no development without peace and security and no security without economic development and a policy promoting human rights and civil society. Security, peace and human rights form a three-pronged approach in building a common future. Commitment to the protection of environment, prohibition of nuclear proliferation, arms-control, drug trafficking, terrorism, etc. are fundamental. India and Francophone West African countries can cooperate in this area.

\textbf{3.5.6 Strengthening of Regional and Inter-Regional Cooperation}

Strengthening of regional and inter-regional cooperation is vital to counter pervasive globalization. India and Francophone West African countries have to take cognizance of the increasing importance of regional economic blocs.

Tackling the debt problem is another issue on which Indo-Francophone West African countries cooperation can play a useful role. More than twenty Africa countries have debt burdens-regarded by the World Bank as unsustainable. Thus, India-Francophone West African countries collaboration and cooperation in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century must endeavour to face crucial challenges facing the third world countries, particularly in regard to bringing about functioning

\textsuperscript{68} Government of India, n. 25, p. 63.
democracy, stimulating growth in the economy, developing a strong human rights culture and meeting the socio-economic needs of their citizens.

3.6 Cultural Relations

India continued to intensify efforts to convert the historic goodwill existing in African countries for her into mutually beneficial economic, technical and cultural cooperation. Despite severe constraints of resources on both sides, India’s efforts are bearing fruit. Nearly 10,000 African students are studying in India on various government of India scholarship scheme and on self-financing basis. A large number of Indian scientific and technical experts are also working in Africa.69 The fiftieth anniversary year of India’s independence was commemorated throughout Africa through a series of events including dance and music performances, photograph exhibitions, seminars, fashion shows, sports events, food festivals etc. These events helped to recall the historic solidarity between India and the countries of Africa and to reinforce the traditional bonds of amity and fellow feeling between their peoples.70

The governments of India and Senegal had signed a cultural agreement on 21 May 1974 to promote cultural cooperation between the two countries in the realms of literature, arts, science, technology and education.71 In accordance with this cultural agreement and

70 Government of India, n. 25, p. 62.
considering the vital role of cultural cooperation in strengthening relations between the two countries, both the governments have agreed to further intensify and encourage the cooperation in the field of Arts & Culture, Anthropology, Archeology, Media, Library, Fine Arts, Exhibitions, Museum, Cultural Education in Schools Youth & Sports and Exchange of Experts.

The Revolutionary Educational Centre, Conakri, the capital of Guinea, which is the oldest and biggest school in Conakri, was renamed after Mahatma Gandhi on January 1, 1977. In a letter to the Indian Ambassador in Conakri, the president of the Council of Administration of the School, which had over 1700 students on its rolls that time, informed the Ambassador that the Council has been very happy to rename the school after Mahatma Gandhi whom he described as one of the greatest historic figures of our time and champion of the independence not only of India but also of the whole of Asia and Africa.72

Further, the Minister of State for External Affairs of India, Mr. Samarendra Kundu inaugurated a six-day festival of African films on 3 December 1977 at New Delhi. Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Senegal, Somalia and Zambia participated in the festival. The festival was organised by Indian Centre for Africa.73

A cultural agreement with Burkina Faso was also signed in 1984.74

Further, 50 pictorial books on Art, Architecture, Handicrafts, and

74 Embassy of Burkina Faso, n. 17, P. 10.
Culture were sent for display in Burkina Faso on the occasion of “Information on India Day”. (See, Appendix-4 F)

Although the presence of Indian Community in Francophone West Africa is negligible but they can provide important cultural and familial links between India and Francophone West African countries. There is about 500 Indians in Benin, 250 in Cote d'Ivoire and 63 in Senegal. (See, Appendix-7)

Thus, the cultural cooperation between India and Francophone West Africa is at low level due to several historical reasons. However, considering the vital role of cultural cooperation in strengthening relations between them, it is need of the hour to encourage such cooperation.

3.7 Impact of globalization on Indo-Francophone West African countries relations

The main feature of the world economy over the last decade has been rapid globalization. This has led to increasing concentration of income, resources and wealth among people, corporations and countries to the detriment of the developing countries. Inequality within and between countries has greatly increased. Here one would do well to be worry of the negative impact of globalization.

India and Francophone West African countries together constitute the vital segment of the developing world. The imperatives of South-South cooperation make it necessary that India-Francophone West Africa cooperation is strengthened and deepened. Increased exchanges
between them as well as other developing countries would help to
diversify the pattern of their economic linkages, strengthen
multilateral approaches and increase their bargaining leverage with
the North, particularly in the present age of globalization.

India and Francophone West African countries could also co-ordinate
their policies to resist extra-territorial legislation being sought to be
imposed on developing countries, particularly the social clause. They
need to strengthen consultative and collaboration mechanisms with
each other in trade and development agencies such as the WTO and
UNCTAD.

Thus, India and Francophone West African countries could become
partners in the on-going battle to overcome poverty and
underdevelopment in the present era of globalization.

3.8 Conclusion

Traditionally, India and Francophone West African states have close
and cordial relations but political, diplomatic and cultural relations
along with commercial relations have not grown commensurately due
to several reasons. However, more than the number of missions
established or visits exchanged, it was the pattern of relationship
established during these years, which calls for attention. India’s
relations with Francophone West African countries reflect the mutual
trust and confidence between them. With a significant thrust for
mutually beneficial economic collaborations in the era of globalization,
the relations between them are definitely on the upswing.
India and Francophone West African states are conscious of the fact that a strong and positive partnership between them is necessary to safeguard their joint interest in economic, social and cultural development and in international co-operation. In the changing world scenario, new challenges and opportunities are emerging due to globalization and liberalization and thus it is the time for starting a more concrete and meaningful relationship between India and Francophone West African states.