CHAPTER - 6
CONCLUSION

Historically, India has identified with Francophone West African countries in their anti-colonial struggles. However, with the independence of these countries, the rallying point between the two regions i.e. support to liberation struggles come to an end. Since independence, India has had cordial relations with these countries. Foreign policy of independent India had political goals to achieve, which meant that economic issues were at the back seat in the 1960s. Thus, the driving force for Indian economic initiatives in Africa during mid 60s was political. However, India acknowledged their developmental concerns and extended support and assistance to these countries. Thus with its ideological commitment to NAM and Afro-Asian resurgence and based on its relative economic strength, India kept on pursuing her economic goals in this region. However in the 1960s, the call for south-south cooperation could not become popular in Francophone West Africa, because of the prevalent belief that massive injection of capital from France and other developed countries to this region would lead to their economic development. Even during the 1970s, the Indian government's talk of south-south cooperation could not get encouraging response from this region. This happened as their hope for France aided development had not completely shattered. France had close socio-economic and military ties with Francophone West African states and more than half of France's foreign aid flowed to these states. Under cold war conditions, political
issues again took precedence over economic ones and Indian government's emphasis on south-south cooperation in trade, technical and education and other matters did not yield required dividends.

Thus, the south-south cooperation, which was pursued by India from the early 1960s, did not find favour with these countries until the 1980s due to this optimism that France and other developed countries would help them to boost their economy. This is no longer the case as they have realized that development of south lies in the hands of south. In today's globalised world this is the framework in which developing countries like India and Francophone West African states could pursue their journey of growth and development to its logical end.

In the light of the above developments and changing realities of world economic relations the following trends and observations in the relations between India and Francophone West Africa are significant to be taken note of:

Firstly, the change in inner dynamics and composition of the polity and economy of India as well as Francophone West African countries is favourable and conducive for enhanced economic cooperation between the two regions. Francophone West Africa, after decades of ruinous conflicts and economic stagnation, is about to turn the corner. Democracy is now blooming in these countries in the wave of multi-party elections sweeping across the continent of Africa in the 1990s. Some of the violent conflicts appear to be ending. They are
now looking for the solutions for their problems of governance, economic development and conflict resolution. Further, India and almost all the countries of Francophone West Africa have implemented economic liberalisation in their respective economies. The detail analysis of the polity and economy of India and these countries have been done in the second chapter of this thesis.

Secondly, French language is widely used in the Francophone West African countries in different spheres like government administration, business communication and technical standards. Indians consider it as a constraint as they use English in their communication. Indian businessmen felt this problem in approaching the market of the Francophone West African countries. However, use of French language should not be a major handicap. One has to remember that though other Asian countries like China, South Korea and Japan have faced the same problem but they have overcome this disadvantage and able to reach a dominating position in this French speaking market. India can take lesson from China to deal this problem. Language problem can be overcome with the help of software available for quick translation of business correspondence between English and French or other prominent African Languages. Thus, before 1990s, differences in language and culture of India and Francophone West African countries have prevented any significant development in cooperation between them. But in the era of globalisation and information technology this is no longer the issue in the strengthen cooperation between the two regions.
Thirdly, before 1990s, France maintained in Francophone West Africa region considerable degree of influence through a combination of cultural, linguistic and economic cooperation. The close linkage between them was due close economic relations and military cooperation arrangements. France was depended to a reasonable extent on Africa for its raw materials, while the continent constituted one of its principal export markets. There was also the creation of the Franc zone, which till today allows African member states financial association with France. The CFA Franc guaranteed by France is still the currency of international transactions. Beyond this the economic linkage was consummated by the extent of trade relations. France alone accounted for about 60 percent of the external trade of these countries and this was further complemented by a vast programme of economic and technical assistance. Thus, the neo-classical structure, which bonded these countries economically and strategically with France, was among the major constraints on India’s economic relations with these countries. However, in the 1990s due to rapidly changing global environment, the relationship between France and Francophone West Africa is also changing. The strong bond between France and Francophone West Africa is loosening. France no longer has such a high profile interest in Africa and it is now looking to Eastern Europe and other parts of world to serve its interest. Thus, the earlier monopoly of France and French MNCs over Francophone West African countries and over their external relations is no longer the case. In the changed world scenario, Francophone West African
countries are fast integrating with the other economies of the world and this augurs well for a beneficial partnership between India and these countries.

Fourthly, there is comprehensive shift and changes in the foreign policy of India and these countries from the earlier decades of 1970s and 1980s in the 1990s. This is well reflected from the increasing level of bilateral interactions, visits and agreements between both the regions in recent years. The 1990s have witnessed the rise of economic thrust in India’s foreign policy. The Ministry of External Affairs has emphasized in its Annual Reports that, “in the future, new relationships based on concrete economic, technological and educational cooperation will assume enhanced significance”. As a result, India foreign policy has been increasingly driven towards finding export markets, attracting foreign capital and know-how. However, the big leap in Indian thinking occurred some time ago when it stopped seeing these countries in terms of the old third world agenda of decolonisation and non-alignment. Issues such as disarmament and non-alignment that had brought the two regions together have taken a backseat in this era of globalisation. Thus, these countries had remained the unexplored part of India’s economic strategy. However, India has finally begun to acknowledge that African countries are a part of its extended neighbourhood. This was at the heart of the “Focus Africa” programme and “Team-9” initiative launched by India in 2004. The government of India, in the year 2001-2002, introduced the “Focus Africa” plan, to strengthen India’s
relations with these countries in the areas of trade, investment, and technology transfer and energy security. Thus, India's search for new sources of energy and political influence has washed up the remote shores of West Africa where New Delhi's foreign policy reach has been notable for its absence. Considering the potential that this region offers and insignificant presence of India in that market, the 'Team-9 initiative' is being launched by India on 1st March 2004. The 'Team-9 initiative' is expected to diversify sources of India's energy security. The endeavour was to put these countries and India together in an economic cooperation framework. Under the newly launched move India signed MOUs with West African states of Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea- Bissau, Mali and Senegal to evolve a mechanism of cooperation under the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (Team-9). Describing Team-9 as a “wonderful concept”, Senegalese Foreign Minister Cheikh Tidiani Gadio said India and West Africa had opened a “new path” to take the cooperation between them to a higher level. Thus, India's Team-9 initiative point to a renewed focus on the region, which offers a huge strategic potential. The Government of India provided concessional credit facilities (LoC) of US$ 500 million for financial assistance for the various projects and schemes identified for implementation under this regional cooperation mechanism. The Government of India also offered access to training resources in India and facilitate deputation of Indian scientists, technologists and other experts. The Exim Bank has also decided to extend the line of credit to
the tune of $2.2 billion to Senegal along with other African countries as part of India's recent commitment to promote and encourage trade with them. It also extended LoC of US$ 100 million to Ivory Coast in May 2004. Armed with this attractive armour Indian exporters can confidently approach the Francophone West African importers to source from India. This would further galvanize India's economic cooperation with Francophone West Africa.

Exim Bank has also taken up equity in West African Development Bank (BOAD), headquartered in Lome, capital of Togo in West Africa, which operates in eight French speaking African countries. Exim Bank of India is the first non-African and non-European bank to be admitted as a shareholder of BOAD. Accordingly, EXIM Bank gave $10 million credit and $1 million towards equity of the West African Development Bank (WADB).

This region has become an important source of hydrocarbons for the world and India in the recent years. A lot of the new proven reserves of oil and gas have been found in the Gulf of Guinea in the Western part of the continent. In the coming decades, India along with China is going to become the largest consumer and importer of petroleum products. Energy diplomacy therefore will be part of its foreign policy. American oil companies are making beeline to the region and Chinese oil companies are already in Africa. India does not want to be left behind. India's ONGC Videsh has made one of its biggest foreign investments, about $750 million in a Sudanese hydrocarbon venture and another is in pipeline in Ivory Coast.
The recent Indian efforts were about plugging a huge gap in India’s strategy of intensifying political and economic contact in this region. In terms of multilateral diplomacy, these countries have always been important. They form a very important voting bloc in global forums. India is seeking their support in its candidature for permanent membership of UN Security Council, in WTO and other international organizations. Foreign Minister of Senegal Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio during his meeting with the External Affairs Minister Shri K. Natwar Singh in Jakarta in Asian-African Summit on 22 April 2005 said that Senegal fully supported India’s bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council and that the democratisation of the UN could not be delayed any further. Burkina Faso has also extended its support for India’s candidature in UN Security Council.

The policy shift is also echoed across Francophone West African countries as most of the economies are going through economic reforms and liberalisation. They are looking for partnerships to ameliorate their economic misery and regarding this have sought India’s help. The new image of India in the 1990s, that is of a leader in information technology (IT) industry, biotechnology and telecommunications has attracted these countries to India. Francophone West African states need appropriate technology, equipments and machinery at low cost and other assistance for their economic development and for this India could be viable partner for these countries. To deal with the problem of economic marginalisation and the flow of investment in Africa, a new plan called the New
Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), was launched in 2002. Here the Africans are searching for partnerships in development with the promise of protecting democracy and human rights. They have been engaging the Europeans, Americans, Japanese and the Chinese on this issue and have also approached the Indians. In July 2002, a conference on India and NEPAD was held in New Delhi that brought representatives of Indian industry and financial institutions and their partners in Africa together. The conference addressed, among other issues, the question of improving utilisation of the lines of credit extended by India to many countries in Africa. Recently, the government has proposed US $ 200 mn lines of credit for projects under NEPAD through the Exim-Bank.

Thus, both India and Francophone West African countries need each other due to their own developmental needs and concerns. As the U.S., Europe and China step up their diplomatic activism in African countries, India cannot afford to stay away from a friendly and inviting economic space next door. India needs to develop a more sustained political effort if it wants to stay at the front in an area of great strategic significance. A sense of common cause and a shared future is an unbreakable link between India and Francophone West African countries which will extend to facing the new and emerging challenges confronting them in the new millennium.

Fifthly, on the cultural front the interaction between both the regions is comparatively at a low level probably due to absence of sizeable Indian Diaspora in these countries. However, Indian cinema and
dances are popular in some of these countries. *Indophilie* understood as the love for Indian music, dance and films is more than merely superficial in Senegal. *Indophiles* love Indian culture because it makes them think of their own. The Wolof, Sereer or Fulani, all feel their language is ‘very similar’ to Hindi. Some Indophiles, especially anchormen presenting Indophile radio programs, even state they speak Hindi fluently. Moreover, here again people probably recognise their own culture in Bollywood dance and music. Analysing this Senegalese *Indophilie* it is learnt that it has its origin in the massive import and immense success of Bollywood films. The first Bollywood films appeared in Senegalese cinemas around the 1950s and were an immense success. They soon became much more popular than Arabic films and were shown daily in most of the urban cinemas. Bollywood films became more and more popular, and were imported massively in the 1970s. They soon outnumbered and surpassed Arabic films. All urban cinemas showed at least one Bollywood film every day. People always said that as a child they watched lots of Bollywood. Due to the arrival of TV and home videos, lots of cinemas have been closed now, though the remaining ones still show Bollywood. For many Indophiles the passion for Indian dance and music came through the films. From the sixties onwards, Indophiles started organising themselves. The first association *Les amis de l’Inde*—(Friends of India) was established around 1966-68. Most of the associations concentrated on Bollywood dance and music. As more and more associations were created, the need emerged to have an Indian Cultural Centre as back-up structure
to spread Indian culture more systematically. Fruitful contacts with the Indian embassy and the Ministry of Culture soon revealed the need for a federal organisation covering all the different Indophile groups in Senegal. This is how the UNAIS emerged in 2003, as a first step towards a future Indian Cultural Centre. UNAIS, Union Nationale des Indouphiles au Senegal (National Union of Senegalese Indophiles) groups over twenty associations of India-lovers throughout Senegal and organising activities, soirées indous (Hindu evenings) and rehearsals. Hindu programs were broadcast almost every day on different radio stations. The anchormen often have their own association in the form of a fan club. Hindi Bollywood blockbusters are also very popular among cinema audiences in Burkina Faso. Although, a proper assessment of this aspect is not available, the entertainment industry could help in furthering the cultural contacts between the two regions.

Sixthly, trends in trade show that there is an increase in the level of trade between both the regions in the 1990s in comparison to earlier decades. Francophone West Africa region is already emerging as one of India's important trade partners. Bilateral trade has jumped around nine times from about Rs. 24.94 crore in 1976-77 to Rs. 223.41 crore in 1990-91 and again around six times from Rs. 395.18 crore in 1991-92 to Rs. 2252.82 crore in 2000-01. It is evident from the analysis in chapter four of this thesis, that trade between India and Francophone West Africa has increased by almost 900 percent over the last ten years from Rs. 223.41 crore in 1990-91 to Rs. 2252.82 crore in 2000-
Further it is worthwhile to note that two of the economies, Senegal and Ivory Coast, which are comparatively more developed than other economies of the Francophone West Africa region, have an edge in trade relations with India. Ivory Coast with the import of the value of Rs. 149.93 crores and with the export of the value of Rs. 422.39 crores has been the largest trading partner of India from this region in 1999-2000. However, Senegal with the export of the value of Rs. 834.36 crores and with the import of the value of Rs. 248.53 crores emerged as the leading trading partner of India from this region in 2002-03. Thus, it can be stated that the overall trend in trade between India and these states augurs well for the development of India's trade with Francophone African region.

Seventhly, the production cooperation between India and these countries is not at par with the immense potential that they hold for such cooperation in various sectors. Francophone West African states hold a lot of scope for Indian investment in various sectors of their economies, which is discussed at length in chapter five of this thesis. Relatively a poor country in the region, Burkina Faso, is pursuing its case for developmental cooperation with India which has resulted in agricultural cooperation and other forms of technical cooperation between the two countries. India is assisting Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ivory Coast and other countries of Francophone West Africa through grant assistance and technological cooperation programme in various sector of their economy. India is not looking at Francophone West Africa as merely a market but a region in which India could contribute
significantly to economic modernisation in terms of industrialisation and building capacities across the spectrum. With the expansion of information technology India is well placed to provide IT services and increasing number of goods to large areas in this region. Over the past decades, India is providing technical assistance to these countries. Many representatives of these countries were being provided training every year under the Indian Technical and economic cooperation programme.

Eightly, multilateral forums such as NAM, G-77 and G-15 have been playing important role in the promotion of economic cooperation between India and these countries over the years. These forums are useful in strengthening the regional and international cooperation among the member countries, which also indirectly promotes the bilateral economic cooperation. Francophone West Africa is moving towards economic integration through a number of regional and sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS. India is trying to strengthen institutional linkages with these regional and sub-regional groups in the Francophone West Africa in recognition of the trend towards regional and global economic integration. The regional cooperative movements have emerged as an effective response to encounter the challenges of globalisation all over the world. Subsequently, the role of the dominant regional powers such as India, in promoting cooperative movements increases at the regional levels. Thus, through the consolidation of cooperation between them at regional level, they will be better equipped to face the challenges of globalisation.
Thus, it is observed that the economic partnership between India and Francophone West African countries has steadily expanded in the 1990s. The present analysis suggests that both India and these countries are likely to benefit significantly from the comprehensive economic cooperation as they have large economic potential in sizable number of sectors. Therefore, economic cooperation in the framework of South-South Cooperation and in the larger framework of globalisation could be the most enduring approach for attaining steady growth in their economies. India and several countries of Francophone West Africa have benefited from liberalisation and regional cooperation but the magnitude differs from one country to another. Moreover, economic indicators of India and a number of these countries are strong, which is in fact, conducive for a meaningful economic cooperation initiative between them. For exploiting fuller economic potential, there is need of broad economic partnership between India and these countries by using various approaches simultaneously such as bilateralism, regionalism and multilateral processes. There is also a need for integrating monetary and financial issues in expanding trade and economic cooperation between them. Thus, a positive policy initiative is needed for expanding the economic cooperation between India and Francophone West African countries.

Finally, two countries of the Francophone West African region, Senegal and Ivory Coast have substantial trade relations and other economic cooperation. Burkina Faso is also emerging as a potential
Economic partner of India from this region. Thus, if Senegal, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso with all the factors associated with Francophone Africa have well-built relations with India why can't other countries of the region. India's trade and economic cooperation with Senegal, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso could be taken as a general trend of India's trade and economic cooperation with the Francophone West African states. Thus, it can be stated that overall trend in trade and economic cooperation between India and these states augurs well for the development of India's trade and economic cooperation with Francophone African region as whole. However, Francophone West African states have smaller percentage in overall Indo-African trade. They are economically better and also accessible. They are a potential market for Indian goods and an enhanced trade with this region will increase overall Indo-African trade.

Thus, in short it can be stated that India, since its independence, has been working in the direction of promoting and strengthening South-South Cooperation. Francophone West African countries are also fully convinced that economic cooperation among the developing countries offers them greater scope for advancement towards the goal of sustained economic growth. The economic reforms and liberalization in India and Francophone West African countries has in turn stimulated trade and economic exchanges between them. Besides, business opportunities in joint ventures, technology transfer, marketing and trade have increased the potential for south-south cooperation manifold. 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 provide ample scope for enhanced economic cooperation with India. They hold immense opportunities of mutually beneficial economic collaborations and strategic co-operation with each other in the changing global environment. Therefore, there is a case for forging special relationship with Francophone West African countries thereby paving the way for greater co-operation with the most other Francophone African countries.

In the twenty-first century when India and the Francophone West countries are charting a new course in their relations with the rest of the world, a new partnership between them will go a long way in their socio-economic development and in further strengthening the ties. However, this new partnership should not be restricted at the government-to-government level and efforts should be made to rope in the business, industry, academia, cultural organizations and most importantly, the civil society as a genuine partnership should not be uni-dimensional and restricted to state-to-state relations. Instead, it should be multi-dimensional, covering political, economic and cultural affairs. The relations between countries can become sustainable only if they are independent to include people-to-people relations and if the institutions of civil society are also encouraged to establish independent ties between themselves.