

UNIT 13 INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

Structure

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Historical backdrop to India-Africa Relations
 - 13.2.1 Gandhi's Role in South Africa
 - 13.2.2 Concern for Worldwide Liberation
 - 13.2.3 Fortifying Humanitarian Considerations: 1947-64
 - 13.2.4 Non-Aligned Movement and India-Africa Relations
- 13.3 India-Africa Economic Cooperation in the New Millennium
 - 13.3.1 India's trade with Africa
 - 13.3.2 India's imports from Africa
- 13.4 India-South Africa Relations
 - 13.4.1 Areas of Cooperation
 - 13.4.1.1 Economic Cooperation
 - 13.4.1.2 Defence Cooperation
 - 13.4.2 Exchange of Visits
 - 13.4.3 Training in Peacekeeping Operations
 - 13.4.4 Cooperation in the Indian Ocean
 - 13.4.5 Areas of Discord
- 13.5 Summary
- 13.6 Exercises

13.1 INTRODUCTION

People of India have always felt certain sympathy for Africa, for the dreams and aspirations of its peoples, respect for the often forgotten fact that Africa is a cradle of human civilisation, a desire to participate in all of Africa's struggles—against colonialism, *apartheid*, against poverty and disease. Both India and the countries of Africa have a shared historical experience, both have had common goals and visions, both have fought for noble common causes, have suffered for similar aims, and both have triumphed over similar odds. Both India and Africa have now embarked together upon a journey towards economic emancipation. In the international arena both India and Africa have common interest in building a new world order which will be more responsive to the aspirations of the developing countries.

The continent of Africa, embracing one fifth of the world's land area, encompassing fifty-four independent nations and sustaining a population of about 510 million, has for many decades been a pre-eminent concern of India's foreign policy. Africa is also home to quite a few expatriate Indians.

Africa, which accounts for nearly half the membership of the Non-Aligned Movement and one-third of the United Nations, with vast human and natural resources and enormous economic potential, occupies a prominent place in India's foreign policy and diplomacy, more particularly in the context of South-South cooperation. India-Africa cooperation at various levels dates back to centuries. Africa being a close neighbour across the Indian Ocean attracted Indian settlers

even before the Christian era. Over the last few decades, India and Africa have been close allies in the struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination and have been privileged partners in the growth and evolution of the Non- Aligned Movement.

The two regions have undergone similar kind of socio-political and economic transformations, including the liberalisation of their economies. As members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, G-15 and the newly formed Indian Ocean Rim initiative, India and Africa share common views on most international issues. The regions share a common commitment to the ideals of peace, non-alignment and economic justice.

13.2 HISTORICAL BACKDROP TO INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

India's relations with the countries of Africa, going back to the *Vedic* period, are evidenced by a parallelism between the Egyptian thought and *Vedic* ideology embodied in the scriptures. Both Egyptians and Hindus adopted the *varnashrama* system (the division of the castes on the principle of nature of works) on more or less the same basis, of learned (*Brahmins*), warriors, traders and agriculturists. Even the religious symbols found on the shores of the Ganges and Nile are similar. In both countries, the lotus flower symbolises the sun. Symbols of the immortality of the soul are also found in both countries.

Regular trade relations existed between India and Egypt in the eighth century BC. During the second century BC Abyssinian and Somali traders took from India ebony, cotton goods and silk cloth in which Egyptian *mummies* were wrapped. During AD 100 Christianity came to North Africa. During AD 1503-08 cotton goods and silk products were exported from ports of Gujarat and Bengal to Berber and Ethiopia.

In 1657, Emperor Aurangzeb of India received an emissary sent by the King of Abyssinia. During 1692-93 there was considerable increase in Ethiopia's trade with India. In 1860 the Indian government made owning or trading in slaves a penal offence. Indian indentured labourers were brought to Natal sugar plantations. In 1880 the telegraphic line between India and Zanzibar was completed. In 1882, the Indian navy undertook submarine operations for the removal of obstructions in the Suez Canal.

In April 1893, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi reached South Africa to represent a client in commercial transaction but on being subjected to racial indignities, decided to remain to defend the rights of his compatriots. Gandhi took up the cause of Natal Indians and founded the Natal Indian Congress. In 1895, building of Kenya-Uganda Railway began. Inauguration of the railways encouraged the immigration of "passenger" Indians who fanned out as shopkeepers and construction workers.

In 1906, Gandhi led *Satyagraha* or passive resistance campaign against the press laws in Transvaal. In 1907, Gandhi launched his passive resistance campaign in order to halt the erosion of the rights of Indians in South Africa. In 1909, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, then president of the Indian National Congress, organised a South African Passive Resistance Relief Fund. In 1912, Gokhale undertook a personal tour of investigation in South Africa. During this period, the agency for recruitment of indentured labour in Bombay was terminated. In 1914, the Gandhi-Smuts

agreement was concluded.

In 1926, the South African National Congress and the INC held a round table conference. This conference resulted in the Cape Town Agreement, which recognised Indians as potentially equal citizens. In 1932, Kunwar Maharaj Singh was appointed as the agent of the Government of India in South Africa.

Independent India's Africa policy could be traced back to the beginning of the recruitment of Indian indentured labour for the whites-owned mines and plantations in South Africa. For the sake of convenience it can be divided in four phases as follows:

- 1) Gandhi's Role in South Africa
- 2) Concern for Worldwide Liberation
- 3) Fortifying Humanitarian Considerations: 1947-64
- 4) Non-Alignment Movement and India-Africa Relations

13.2.1 Gandhi's Role in South Africa

The first indentured labour from India arrived in Natal in 1860, and that marked the beginning of an extensive Indian settlement in the interior region of the southern and eastern seaboard of Africa. Indians went under the immigration arrangements designed under various agreements between the British colonial government of India and the colonial administration of the British southern and eastern African colonies. The restrictions imposed on the Indian immigration and the social system that developed on racial lines soon emerged as a highly contentious issue.

By the time Gandhi arrived in South Africa in 1893, simmering discontent and resentment was widespread among the Indian immigrants there. He soon experienced the humiliating discrimination himself and sensed the need for organised protest. Soon, thereafter, Gandhi assumed the leadership of the Indians' struggle for equality. Meanwhile, he founded a newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, and systematically corresponded with sympathetic leaders both in Britain and India for the redress of grievances of Indians in South Africa. During his visit to India in 1901, Gandhi addressed the Indian National Congress, Indian Chamber of Commerce and other interested organisations to rouse Indian sympathy for their brethren in South Africa. In 1907, he successfully demonstrated that the British Government had turned a deaf ear to their protests though blatant racial discrimination prevailed in South Africa.

It was such a situation that gave birth to Gandhi's heroic *Satyagraha* movement and he carried out the movement in South Africa for six years (1907-13) and demonstrated that it could be a powerful weapon for use by the oppressed peoples of the world who were initially non-entities, politically subjugated and economically insignificant. This period therefore could be viewed as the first phase in the evolution of India's policy towards Africa. By then, India had awakened to the plight of its nationals abroad not only in South Africa but also in East Africa.

13.2.2 Concern for Worldwide Liberation

The second phase of relations between India and Africa belongs to the period 1914-47. Whereas in the earlier period the Indian interest in Africa was mainly concerned with the problems of the

Indians in Africa—a purely nationalistic concern—the next phase was marked by wider considerations. The worldwide “liberation” factor since then guided the course of freedom struggle.

The Indian agitation for equality in East Africa was intensified after the First World War. The East Africa Indian National Congress was formed in 1918. The Indians of East Africa soon realised, under the guidance of Indian leadership, that they too must underscore the significance of “native” interests and native welfare. Srinivasa Sastri, a member of the British Indian Legislative Council, at the instance of C.F. Andrews – a British missionary and educator, and Gandhi, impressed upon the Indian community that India was not interested in having a colony in German East Africa; that India stood for freedom of all the people of the world; that, what the Indians in East Africa demanded should be related to equality of status of all races before law.

Meanwhile, ties between India and Africa were strengthened by the same nationalist upsurge. After 1915, Gandhi had emerged as a symbol of liberation of oppressed peoples everywhere in the world and especially of those in Africa. He was as much a Mahatma to the Africans as to Indians. As early as 1919, he was described as “Gandhi the Great of the whole of Africa”. In later years, many African leaders visited him to seek his guidance and inspiration.

13.2.3 Fortifying Humanitarian Considerations, 1947-64

In 1927, Nehru attended the Brussels Congress of Oppressed Peoples where he met nationalist leaders from several other countries. That year the Indian National Congress, for the first time, passed a resolution that categorically denounced the retention of colonies. In 1929, Nehru urged the Congress to have a comprehensive foreign policy. “India could ignore the rest of the world only at its own peril,” he declared. He further argued that the freedom of other oppressed people of the world depended to a degree on India’s gaining independence. In the 1936 session of the Indian National Congress he declared: “We are fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved.”

By the time of India’s independence in 1947, India’s relations with Africa were thus related to two dominant factors. Beginning with the Indian leaders’ concern for the welfare of Indians in South and East Africa [1860-1914] and Gandhi’s and Sastri’s thinking on issues like African paramountcy, Nehru was alive to such issues and added to these was his sincere concern for the total liberation of Africa.

Independent India’s direct interest in African affairs could thus be traced as far back as 1948. Apasaheb Pant – India’s Commissioner General in Kenya and representative to the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa in 1948—expressed in no uncertain terms India’s deep concern for African liberation and its call on the Indian community to make no mistake in joining the Africans in their freedom struggle. In 1952, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution on South Africa. In the first resolution it called for the removal of all remaining forms of colonialism from Asia and Africa; and in the second, it called on Indians in Africa to underscore African interests, and went on to urge on both communities to cooperate in non-violence.

In 1953, the Congress again denounced colonialism in all its forms and spoke of Satyagraha as a major means to seek social equality and end of apartheid system in South Africa. The Central African Federation, which was formed in 1953, was denounced as a new form of colonialism. The *Mau Mau* Movement in Kenya was recognised as a liberation struggle, although India

pleaded for the use of non-violent means in the struggle. The Indian government also welcomed self-government in Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Ghana).

Thus, the Indian National Congress demonstrated a definite “humanitarian” interest in Africa. It was far different from the earlier nationalistic outlook. It was again during these years that the Nehru Government neatly laid out the postulates of India’s Africa policy, and worked out the modalities of its role in the Africans’ struggle for independence. India denounced all forms of colonialism, including the one as pronounced under Britain’s “multiracial” Federation in Central Africa.

At the same time, India turned its attention to country specific relations with the emerging nation-states of Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanganyika, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. In 1956, in the wake of the Suez crisis when many Indians were in favour of India’s withdrawal from the Commonwealth, Nehru argued that, from within the Commonwealth, India could better serve the cause of the newly emerging African nations. In 1960, Nehru, while addressing the AICC again urged the Indians in Africa to refrain from exploiting “the people of the soil.”

13.2.4 Non-Aligned Movement and India-Africa Relations

The emergence of Non-Aligned Movement during the post-World War II period became an important factor in bringing India and the countries of Africa closer. The first Afro-Asian Conference, popularly known as Bandung Conference (1955), which laid the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement, made Nehru and Nasser intimate friends. Later President Tito of Yugoslavia joined them and then supported by Sukarno and Kwame Nkrumah, they paved the way for the first NAM summit in Belgrade. Prior to Bandung, Nehru had stated in the first Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1947:

Asia stretches out her hand in friendship to Europe and America as well as to suffering brethren in Africa. We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa. The freedom that we envisage is not to be confined to this nation or that or to a particular people but must spread out over the whole human race.

India in the first Non-Aligned summit welcomed the liberation movements of several African colonies but frankly discouraged the Afro-Asian military action against colonialism. India continued to persuade France to grant freedom to Algeria, and Britain to Cyprus. India criticised Portugal for its indifference towards the freedom of its dependent peoples.

The remarks made by Prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in the second NAM conference in Cairo in September 1964, attracted all African leaders. Claspng his hand at the airport, Nasser requested Lal Bahadur Shastri to keep in touch. At the third NAM conference, held at Lusaka in 1970, prime minister Mrs. Gandhi was given a red carpet welcome. Breaking protocol, president Kaunda came to the airport to receive the Indian prime minister, who was elected one of the six vice-chairpersons of the movement. Extending India’s support to the brave freedom fighters of Africa, the Indian prime minister said:

We can feel the vibrations of the struggle against the minority government in Zimbabwe, against the apartheid policies of the racist regime in South Africa and the national movements in Namibia and Guinea Bissau. These freedom fighters are engaged in the same battle as we were engaged only recently. They are sacrificing their lives for the

same principles that we hold dear.

The role-played by India in Algiers, Colombo and Havana NAM conferences brought African countries closer to it. During India's Chairmanship of NAM, special attention was drawn to the situation in Africa, particularly towards apartheid in South Africa. Efforts were also made to help the freedom fighters of Namibia. The visit of the Indian prime minister as Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Tanzania in May 1986 was welcomed as a timely gesture of solidarity with the front line states and support for their relentless struggle against apartheid regime.

13.3 INDIA-AFRICA ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Africa occupies an important position in India's trade. According to the IMF (Direction of Trade), India's trade with Africa was US\$4.1 billion in 1997, representing a growth of more than four times over the 1990 figure of US\$999 million. The balance of trade is not in favour of India because of large import of crude oil, especially from Nigeria. There was an increase in Africa's share in India's exports from 2.59 per cent in 1991 to 4.45 per cent in 1996. Africa's share in India's imports increased from 4.66 per cent in 1991 to 6.94 per cent in 1997. The India Africa trade figures are given as under:

Year	India's Total Exports US\$mn	India's Exports to Africa US\$mn	Africa's Share in India's Exports %	India's Total Imports US mn	India's Imports from Africa US\$mn	Africa's Share in India's imports %
1991	17873	463	2.59	19509	910	4.66
1992	18500	616	3.33	23227	1417	6.1
1993	20259	607	3	21225	1241	5.85
1994	24196	801	3.31	25477	1254	4.92
1995	30537	1338	4.38	34484	1576	4.57
1996	32325	1440	4.45	36055	2503	6.94
1997	33289	1452	4.36	38911	2615	6.72

Source: IMF, Direction of Trade, Year Book 1998.

In Africa, India's exports are mainly to South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan, Ghana, Uganda, Libya, Mozambique and Zambia, and India's imports are mainly from Nigeria, South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Zambia, Tanzania, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Libya, Zaire and Guinea Bissau. South Africa has emerged as a major source of and destination for India's imports/exports. After resuming economic linkages with South Africa in 1993, there was a tremendous increase in the bilateral trade. India-South Africa trade rose from a mere US \$1.70 million in 1992-93 to US \$866 million in 1997-98, which has now crossed US \$2 billion.

13.3.1 India's trade with Africa

- Drugs, pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals
- Engineering goods
- Transport equipment and vehicles
- Project goods
- Machinery and instruments
- Small and medium scale industrial machinery
- Plastic and linoleum products
- Wheat
- Consultancy services
- Cotton manufacturing
- Chemicals and allied products
- Iron and steel manufactures
- Tobacco, spices and tea
- Non-basmati rice
- Cotton yarn, fabrics
- Rubber manufactured products
- Jute manufactures

13.3.2 India's Imports from Africa

- Hides and skins
- Leather
- Petroleum crude
- Pearls, precious and semi-precious stones
- Dyeing, tanning, and colouring materials
- Wood and wood products
- Raw cotton
- Iron ore
- Primary steel, pig-iron based items
- Non-ferrous metals
- Organic and non-organic chemicals
- Fertilizers (crude)
- Cashew nuts

13.4 INDIA-SOUTH AFRICA RELATIONS

The overwhelming election victory in June 1999 of South Africa ruling African National Congress

(ANC) and the exit of Nelson Mandela from domestic politics has brought to power Thabo Mbeki as the president. In the post-apartheid era President Nelson Mandela and subsequently president Thabo Mbeki have emphasised on the historic bonds of friendship with India and the potential for mutually beneficial cooperation. They have time and again appreciated India's role in the anti-apartheid struggle and expressed gratitude that India came to their aid in the words of president Mandela, "when the rest of the world stood by or gave succour to our oppressors". As a step towards cementing these ties the two countries signed a strategic partnership agreement in 1997. Both South Africa and India, in their dialogue over the last six years have shown concern at the uneven impact of globalisation on the developing economies and agreed to coordinate their efforts for the development of South-South cooperation.

13.4.1 Areas of Cooperation

The present day relations between the two countries derive their sustenance from the strategic partnership agreement signed between the two countries in 1997. The words "strategic partnership" to define the relationship between India and South Africa were first used by the then deputy president Mbeki during his visit to India in 1996. It was during president Nelson Mandela's visit to India in March 1997, that a declaration was made at the historic Red Fort in New Delhi for the launch of a strategic partnership between the two countries. This basically involves enhancing bilateral cooperation and collaborating in the international fora.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in November 1993, India and South Africa have signed around 15 agreements/MoUs (Memorandum of Understanding) on various spheres including economic, defence and cultural cooperation. Around 10 agreements/MoUs were under consideration in 2003. A joint commission was set up between the two countries in January 1995. Its first meeting was held in Pretoria (July 1995), co-chaired by the minister of state for external affairs, Salman Khurshid and South African deputy foreign minister Aziz Pahad. The second meeting was held in New Delhi (December 1996) co-chaired by external affairs minister, I.K. Gujral and Aziz Pahad. The third meeting was held in Pretoria on December 4-5, 1998. It was co-chaired by Ms Vasundhara Raje, minister of state for external affairs and Aziz Pahad. The joint session consists of five committees: political, economic, trade and technical cooperation, education and culture, health and science and technology.

13.4.1.1 Economic Cooperation

The reasons for developing economic ties with South Africa are many. South Africa is technologically and economically one of the most advanced countries in sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa's economy is nearly four times as large as the eleven members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) combined. It is therefore in a position to set up joint ventures and provide technological and technical know-how to the Indian companies in areas of its specialisation such as coal mining technology, refurbished power equipment and mining machinery etc. South Africa is also seen as a springboard to cater to the markets of the nearby African countries such as Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and the Indian Ocean States. It is also seen as a transit point to Latin American countries and could open up possibilities to enter the markets of Latin America.

In the economic sphere the total trade between India and South Africa has risen by leaps and bounds in the last few years. India is the seventh largest investor in South Africa. From US \$ 575.6 million in 1995-96 to about US\$ 2.5 billion in 2000, it is expected to reach the 4 billion

mark by the end of 2003. South Africa has shown interest in the exchange of expertise in developing small scale and cottage industries. The main items exported from India are textiles, leather hides, skins, chemicals, machinery and equipment, and vegetable products. Major imports from South Africa are—base metal and products, chemicals, wood pulp and paper and mineral products.

The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has also signed MoUs for future cooperation with the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) in 1994, with the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFOC) a predominantly black chamber as well as the Afrikaanse Handles Institute (AHI) - predominantly Afrikaner Chamber in 1996. A number of Indian companies viz. NSIC, EEPC, TEXPROCIL, CII, TATA, UB Group, DCM, SRF, Liberty Shoes, Ranbaxy, Torrent Pharmaceuticals, Thapar Group, Shriram Industrial Enterprises and a host of other small companies have already opened their offices in South Africa. While the Exim Bank and the State Bank of India have opened their offices in Johannesburg, Bank of Baroda has done so in Durban.

13.4.1.2 Defence Cooperation

There is a significant potential for defence trade and joint ventures between India and South Africa. South Africa has, over the years, built a strong defence industrial base with the emphasis on land systems and aerospace; the naval sector is minor with no military ships built since 1987. South Africa is the only major arms manufacturer and exporter on the continent.

In defence cooperation a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of defence equipment was signed between the two countries during South African deputy president Thabo Mbeki’s visit to India in December 1996. At the time of prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral’s visit in October 1997, the South African defence minister Joe Modise announced that the two nations would “enhance and intensify defence cooperation”, with South Africa offering a whole range of military hardware to India. Specifically, the agreement was to supply ammunition for the 155 mm Bofors guns as well as avionics and night vision equipment. In 1998 Gen. Ved Prakash Malik, India’s Chief of Army Staff announced that India had bought 90 Casspir mine protected armoured personnel carriers from South Africa Reumech OMC. South Africa supplied 155-mm gun

<p>There has been keen interest shown by both sides towards maritime cooperation. An exchange of visits of naval ships between the two countries has taken place. INS Gomati and INS Kukhr visited South Africa in December 1994. SAS Drakensberg paid a courtesy call to Bombay in March 1995. India was a key participant in Exercise Blue Crane with South Africa and other SADC countries. This exercise took place at the SA Army Battle School Training Area in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa from 7 - 30 September, 1999. It consisted of six stages involving approximately 4000 members from the SADC countries of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The other participants such as military observers were approximately 500 in number. Exercise Blue Crane was one of the largest peace support operations ever undertaken. It was of particular significance to Southern African countries wishing to evaluate their combined peace support capability.</p>						
<p>13.4.2</p>	<p>Exchange of Visits</p>					

Ties between the two countries were strengthened by a number of visits exchanged by dignitaries

at all levels. At the highest level, the former prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral visited South Africa in October 1997. It was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to South Africa. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has visited South Africa twice—once during the Non Aligned Summit in 1998 and the second time during the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in November 1999. In June 1999, Shri Jaswant Singh, the then external affairs minister visited South Africa. Similarly President Mandela visited India twice, in 1995 and again in 1997. The South African vice president visited India in December 1996. There have also been a number of ministerial level visits exchanged between the two countries.

13.4.3 Training in Peacekeeping Operations

In the last six years South Africa has been under lot of pressure from the Western countries and other African countries to share the responsibilities of peacekeeping in the continent. This was primarily under the rubric of “African solutions for African problems”. The idea of participating in the UN peacekeeping operations was a thoroughly debated issue in South Africa. It was only in October 1998 that the South African Cabinet approved the white paper on peacekeeping where the rules of South African participation in the international peace keeping missions were established. The South African National Defence Force was going through a process of transformation and integration, a task that got completed by the end of 1998. It is in the latter field where India could assist the South Africans.

India has been involved in a number of peacekeeping operations during the 50 years of its independence mainly in Africa. These include ONUC, MONUC (Congo), UNTAG (Namibia), ONUMOZ (Mozambique), UNITAF, UNOSOM II (Somalia), UNAMIR (Rwanda), UNOMIL (Liberia), UNAVEM, MONUA (Angola), and the most recent UN Mission in Sierra Leone. In the post-Cold War era, the burden of UN peacekeeping has fallen on the developing countries. The Indian contributions in terms of numbers rank first in the world today and are spread in three continents.

13.4.4 Cooperation in the Indian Ocean

The Mbeki Government has renewed its interest in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC). India and South Africa, along with Australia, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore and Kenya are founder members of the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative. The IOR-ARC was formally launched in Mauritius in March 1997. Both India and South Africa have played a leading role in the formation of the organisation. In fact the concept of an IOR-ARC was first seriously mooted in November 1993 by Pik Botha, the then South African Foreign Minister, during his visit to New Delhi. He identified the IOR as an area of great mutual importance to both South Africa and India. In January 1995 during a visit to New Delhi, president Nelson Mandela put forward the proposal to form the Indian Ocean trading alliance that was enthusiastically received. During president Mandela’s government the two countries had held extensive bilateral discussions on the proposed charter and objectives of the organisation. Both India and South Africa were in general agreement that security issues should be kept out of the scope of the IOR-ARC.

13.4.5 Areas of Discord

In the post-apartheid era the joint initiatives taken by the respective governments have set the bilateral relations on a sound footing. One of the persistent problems in the relationship is the

nuclear issue. South Africa is the world's first state to have voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons. It is also party to a host of nuclear arms control regimes including the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). They would like India to be a party to these treaties too. India is not ready to sign the treaties in their current format as it finds them discriminatory.

South Africa's nuclear policy in the post-apartheid era has emerged as a constant irritant in the relations between the two countries. India had hoped that the inauguration of President Mandela's government in South Africa would give a fillip to its effort towards achieving universal nuclear disarmament. The African National Congress (ANC) in the past had been quite vocal in its support to nuclear disarmament. It "shared the commitment of the United Nations to general and complete disarmament under effective international control as resolved by the General Assembly at the special session on disarmament in 1978". In recent years however, there has been a dilution in the stance of South Africa and it has drifted more towards the Western approach towards nuclear arms control. This was quite visible during the negotiations of the 1995 NPT Review Conference and the CTBT. After facing years of destabilisation the establishment of the ANC government had brought forth an era of peace and stability in southern Africa, therefore, the continuance of the nuclear weapons programme and not signing the NPT and the CTBT could have given the wrong signals.

The good news is that against the backdrop of the Indian nuclear tests, South Africa has enhanced the efforts towards global nuclear disarmament. In the last two years it has been part of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), which originally consisted of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden. The NAC had responded to nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998 by calling for a new approach to non-proliferation and disarmament. In their joint declaration (in June 1998) the members of the NAC put forward a new agenda in an effort to rejuvenate the deadlocked talks at Conference on Disarmament (CD).

India and the other members of the G-21 have in the past called for the establishment in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to start negotiations on a phased programme with the eventual aim of eliminating nuclear weapons within a time bound framework. South Africa, while appreciating India's position, does not agree with its time bound programme of nuclear disarmament. They appear to favour a step-by-step approach (incremental) without a firm time frame being defined. However, after the Pokharan nuclear tests in May 1998 India has moved away from its time bound position as propounded in former Prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's Plan for Nuclear Disarmament, tabled at the UN in 1986. Although India still favours the phased process of disarmament, it has dropped the emphasis of it being bound to a certain time frame. Thus it appears that India and South Africa have an almost similar position on this issue and apparently are on the same side at the CD.

13.5 SUMMARY

From the above discussion it is apparent that India and Africa are important potential partners. And that has been the case since time immemorial. Over a period of time the quantum of cultural, political, strategic and commercial exchanges and the volume of trade between India and Africa have grown. Both regions have been engaged in a wide variety of mutually beneficial programmes in the past.

It is noteworthy that the main tenets of India's Foreign Policy as well as India's Africa Policy were further reinforced by India's emphasis on "non-alignment" as its major foreign policy precept and as an instrument of collective self-reliance. From that period, Afro-Asian countries have been united in a common foreign policy based on "Panchsheel" doctrine (non aggression, non-interference, recognition of sovereignty and integrity of a country, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence).

Nevertheless, compared to our considerable mutual strength in human and natural resources, the realistic levels of bilateral trade and economic cooperation does not reflect the real potential. This needs to be explored further. India and Africa can derive greater mutual benefits by working together, sharing resources and technology at a far more economic rate as compared to the developed world.

In the new millennium, many avenues remain to be explored by the peoples of these two continents for cooperation, apart from diplomatic channels, at a people-to-people level, such as in trade, joint ventures, consultancy in agricultural development, joint struggle against fundamentalism, terrorism, and HIV - AIDS. India and the countries of Africa can do a lot in the field of information technology for mutual benefit. The new millennium should afford both India and the countries of Africa a better prospect for South-South cooperation.

13.6 EXERCISES

1. Explain Mahatma Gandhi's role in the freedom movement of South Africa.
2. What is Africa's contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement?
3. What are the areas of cooperation and discord in the India-South Africa relations?
4. Explain the role of India and South Africa in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation.
5. Describe India's trade with the African continent.