



AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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**TITLE: ROLE OF INDIAN DIASPORA IN FRANCOPHONE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN REGION:
IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES FOR INDIA**

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ABSTRACT: European powers in order to control sea lanes had firmly worked on acquiring military significance over the Western Indian Ocean region during colonial era. Reunion, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles and Mauritius have remained French colonies or were occupied by France for certain period of time. Francophone Indian Ocean islands are unique owing to their proximity with French culture and traditions but these island states also find commonality with third world developing countries such as India. India has had close connections with these because of the presence of a strong Indian Diaspora. Both India and Francophone Western Indian Ocean countries share experiences of a group of countries which are trying to adjust to the developmental strategies and economic policies of the contemporary changing world economy.

Post cold war era has seen significant changes in India's Francophone Africa policy. Means of bilateral relations vary from business and study tours from Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Federation of Indian Exports Organisations (FIEO), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industries in India (ASSOCHAM) to diplomats, policy makers, senior experts and other governmental representatives. The launch of Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (TEAM-9) showcase major Indian Foreign Policy perspective. Considering the presence of vast natural resources and the numeric strength in United Nations, India can utilize the presence and influence of Indian Diaspora in Francophone Western Indian Ocean countries.

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