

The Role of Western Powers in Indian Ocean Region and The Growing Insecurity

Abstract

Indian ocean is the only ocean in the world named after a country. This ocean has been an important geostrategic location since the past. It was believed that whoever controls this ocean will control the whole world later. Today the insecurity in the Indian ocean is increasing day by day. India has placed itself on a path to achieve, potentially, the regional influence in the Indian Ocean to which it has aspired. A strong and influential India will mean a more multi-polar world, possessing the power to control its transport networks, its territorial sea areas and prove its presence. Nonetheless, as China increasingly regards India not Japan as its main Asian rival, India's rise in the Indian Ocean also will be disturbing. The need of hour in Indian ocean today is its transport policy, development of its resources, capital investment in this region, support of developed countries here and undoubtedly India's full-fledged initiatives in this matter.

Shyam S. Khinchi

UGC Teacher
Research Fellow,
Department of Geography
Govt. College, Ajmer,
Rajasthan

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Introduction

India considers Indian Ocean as its backyard and deems it both natural and desirable that India function as, eventually, the leader and the predominant influence in this region the world's only region and ocean named after a single state. The insecurity in the Indian ocean is increasing day by day. This was also emphasized in the most recent *Annual Report* of India's Defence Ministry, which noted that India is strategically located vis-à-vis both continental Asia as well as the Indian Ocean Region.

From New Delhi's perspective, key security considerations include the accessibility of the Indian Ocean to the fleets of the world's most powerful states; the large Islamic populations on the shores of the ocean and in its hinterland; the oil wealth of the Persian Gulf; the proliferation of conventional military power and nuclear weapons among the region's states; the importance of key straits for India's maritime security; and the historical tendency of continental Asian peoples or powers (the Indo-Aryans, the Mongols, Russia) to spill periodically out of Inner Asia in the direction of the Indian Ocean.

Sunita Pachouri

Department of Geography,
Govt. College, Ajmer
Rajasthan

Monika Kannan

Department of Geography,
Sophia Girls' College,
Ajmer, Rajasthan



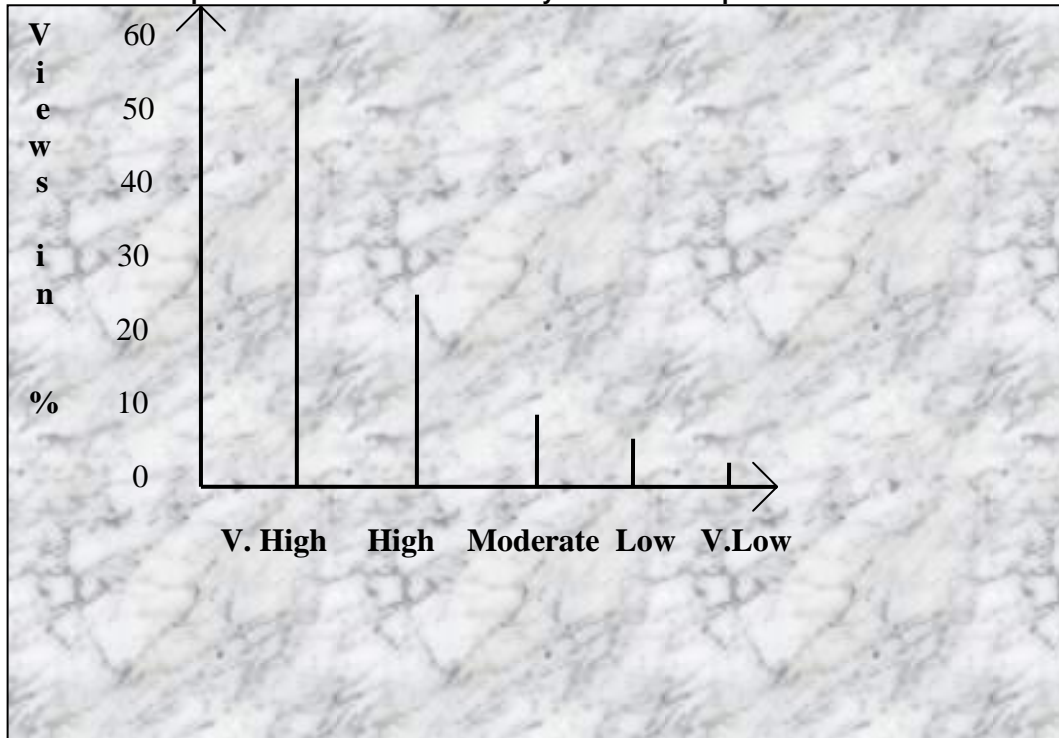
Map 1 : Map of Indian Ocean

Today India has placed itself on a path to achieve, potentially, the regional influence in the Indian Ocean to which it has aspired. To this end, New Delhi has raised its profile and strengthened its position in a variety of nations on the littoral, especially Iran, Sri Lanka, Burma, Singapore, Thailand, and most of the ocean's small island nations. India also has become a more palpable presence in key maritime zones,

particularly the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. Of equal or greater importance, India's links with the most important external actors in the Indian Ocean are with the United States, Japan, Israel, and France also have been strengthened.

These are significant achievements, and they derive from India's growing economic clout and from a surer hand visible today in Indian diplomacy.

Figure: 1 Whomsoever controls the Indian ocean will control the passage between the Atlantic and pacific ocean in the 21st century. Relevance in present times.



The growing insecurity of the region was studied on a scale reading Very High-5, High-4, Moderate-3, Low-2, Very Low-1. On a sample of 100, the mean value is 4.52, the standard deviation came up to 4.54 and coefficient a s .99 (Reference to Table 1).

The research indicates that there is a possibility of relationship between increasing power of United States in the region and increasing uncertainty of Indian ocean. Karl Pearson's correlation was applied between the two variables 1 and 2 in Table 1.

Table: 1 Comparative analysis

	N	Mean	Correlation
Us A World Power	100	3.59	0.63
Uncertainty In The Indian Ocean	100	4.52	

There should be restrictions on the passage of vessels carrying nuclear or other hazardous cargoes through the Malacca strait from Europe to Japan is proved correct here, as these illegal passages not only increase the weapon potential of the regions around but also lead to heavy trafficking and pollution of the sea. In the expansive view of many

Indians, India's security perimeter should extend from the Strait of Malacca to the Strait of Hormuz and from the coast of Africa to the western shores of Australia. For some Indians, the emphasis is on the northern Indian Ocean, but for others the realm includes even the "Indian Ocean" coast of Antarctica.

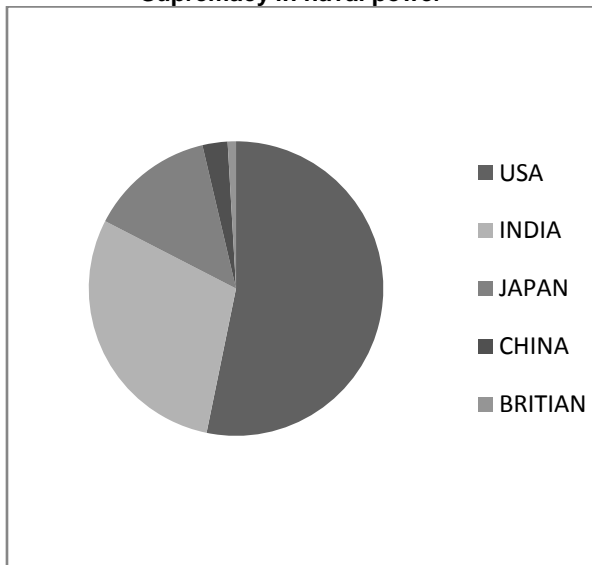
Study during direct oral interviews taken emphasizes the fact that a very important motive for India in the Indian Ocean is energy. Some Indian security analysts foresee energy security as India's primary strategic concern in the next twenty-five years and believe it must place itself on a virtual wartime footing to address it. This motive calls for the need that India should be free to place non-economic installations, such as submarine detection devices in the EEZ of foreign state which do not interfere in the coastal enjoyment of its EEZ rights emphasizing that India must protect its offshore oil and gas fields, ongoing deep-sea oil drilling projects in its vast exclusive economic zone, and an extensive infrastructure of shore and offshore oil and gas wells, pumping stations and telemetry posts, ports and pipeline grids, and refineries.

That will have a transforming effect in the Indian Ocean basin and eventually the world. In the region, the rise of India naval power(Figure showing the present maritime power status of the world in Fig 1) will play a key role in the gradual integration of the various lands and peoples of this basin. Whether in the Arabian Sea or the Bay of Bengal, this trend while still nascent is already evident. The long-term result will be a more prosperous and globally more influential region. India's rise in the Indian Ocean also will have important implications for the West and China. Perhaps most significantly, New Delhi's ascent suggests strongly that the ongoing reordering of the asymmetric relationship between the West and Asia will be centered as much in the Indian Ocean as in East Asia. It was in the Indian Ocean, moreover, that the effects of Western power first made themselves manifest in the centuries after 1500.

On one hand, it would therefore not be surprising if it were here that the Western tide first receded. On the other, India's role will for a long time to come be no longer in opposition to the United States but in cooperation with it. Moreover, its rise will be welcomed by the United States and other Western states to the extent that it counteracts the challenge posed by China, the world's other salient rising power again proving the hypothesis no:4 correct. Seen from Beijing, the rise of India in the Indian Ocean will be an opportunity but, even more, a challenge.

A strong and influential India will mean a more multi-polar world, and this is consistent with Chinese interests. Nonetheless, as China increasingly regards India not Japan as its main Asian rival, India's rise in the Indian Ocean also will be disturbing. As has been the case with virtually all great powers, an India that has consolidated power in its own region will be tempted to exercise power farther a field, including East Asia.

Figure 1
Supremacy in naval power

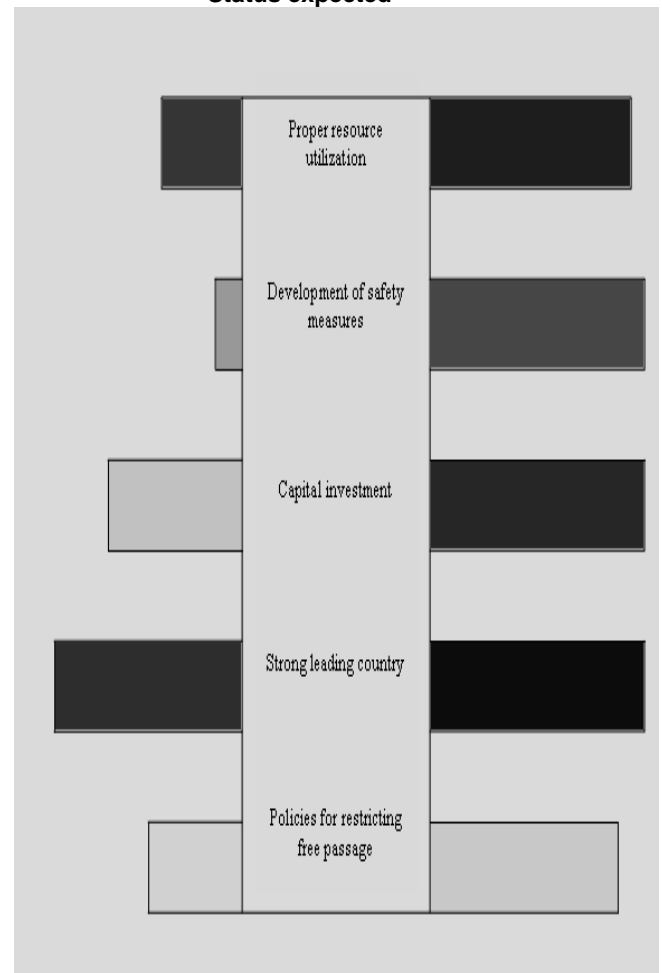


Conclusion

Despite being much poorer than China, India has produced dozens of world-class companies like Infosys, Ranbaxy and Reliance. India has a real and deep private sector (unlike China's many state-owned and state-funded companies), a clean, well-regulated financial system and the sturdy rule of law. Another example is that every year Japan awards the coveted Deming Prizes for managerial innovation, and over the last four years, they have been awarded more often to Indian companies than to firms from any other country, including Japan.

The need of hour in Indian ocean (Figure 2) today is its transport policy, development of its resources, capital investment in this region, support of developed countries here and undoubtedly India's full-fledged initiatives in this matter. According to the researcher, when the above variables were examined on a sample of 100 people through questionnaires ,the mean came 2.46,standard deviation as 2.25 and the coefficient as .91.(Reference to Table 1, Figure 1).

Figure 2
Need of hour in Indian ocean Present status
Status expected



While India and some a few of the other littoral states appear to be on a path of sustained economic progress, most of the region is characterized by high levels of poverty. The Indian

Ocean region suffers from a high level of international and internal conflict and is a key venue for international piracy. It also is the locus of some 70% of the world's natural disasters. The regional strategic environment is volatile and dangerous. In addition to some of the conditions enumerated above, recent developments in Iraq and Afghanistan now pose additional challenges of violence, terrorism, and instability across the entire Indian Ocean region. Military power, including weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, is looming larger in the region.

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