

Maritime Security of India: Capabilities and Challenges

Jofin Joy¹

Abstract

This article provides a brief outlook of the Indian maritime security capabilities and challenges. Maritime security is one of the significant issues in the present world order. India is a country surrounded by three side water bodies and this geographical feature increases the need of marine security. The different areas from which ships and maritime operations need protection include terrorism, piracy, robbery, illegal trafficking of goods and people, illegal fishing, and pollution. International organizations and several states including India have framed number of strategies and initiatives for bettering sea security. The main objective of this paper is to analyze role of maritime security in maximization of power. It also examines the strengths and shortcomings of Indian maritime security.

Keywords: India, Maritime Security, Traditional and Non-Traditional Threats, Terrorism and United Nations.

Introduction

As we know, 70 percent of the earth's surface is covered by an ocean filled with water. Oceans have been the gateway of many explorers, invaders, and traders like Marco Polo, Vasco Da Gama, and Faxian, etc., giving them prospects to discover new lands and continents thereby bringing the world closer. The history of famous empires like Romans, Egyptians, and Persians reflects the ancient history of growth. In the Indian context, being surrounded by the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean on three sides riveted the sub-continent right amid trade routes till now used by man. Even in lands, the great Harappa civilization and the growth of its society developed on the shores of the Sindhu (Indus) River. Indian history is filled with the exploits of different kingdoms with their naval forces. Chola's largest naval force and the strategic relevance of the oceanic waterways and navies are well discussed in Kautilya's Arthashastra. So, India's maritime relations started a long ago with great significance. The state's national policies, changes in the economy, and also the manipulations and variations in international politics influence the

¹ Jofin Joy is a student of MA in Political Science at Madras Christian College, Chennai, India.

security concerns among the states, and at the same time, it increases complexities in the Security of the countries.

Oceans are the place of opportunities and are related to the daily life of many people and are part of the security concerns of a country (Bueger, 2015). The maritime security domain covers a large area including energy security, seaborne trade, crude oil, and liquefied hydrocarbon imports, fishing and shipping, export of refined products, offshore developments economic partnership across the world. In terms of Indian security, it spans some features like India's trade and energy security, deep-sea mining areas development, and the scientific and research station in Antarctica which are all dependent on its Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs). 'It ensures maintaining freedom of navigation and strengthening international legal regime at sea. Because every country has the right to navigate its trade through oceans as well as the development of the economy and maintain its security through the sea. Indian is always trying to keep a good relationship with neighboring countries and with foreign countries too. Technically how the world can keep its peaceful coexistence through maritime security, it's simple like the good connection and the Coordination between different countries' navies with the powerful agreements and treaties to counter common threats. Military capability alone will not solve maritime security challenges; there must be a collective and coordinated effort across multiple sectors. Nonetheless, naval forces have an important role to play in maritime security (Chaudhury, 2000). The international maritime community should consider focusing on key regions where maritime security is weak or absent and working in close partnership with regional organizations to help build local capacity for maritime security.

Significance of Maritime Security

Maritime security is one of the major concern and challenge for coastal countries biggest challenges of a country, Sea is an important factor for a country for different kinds of trade relations and other factors. The naval forces make strong policies and actions to secure maritime with their equipment and force. The performance of oceanic security takes both information and alertness and is fundamental for improving security agreements without calling back the ideal progression of international business (India, 2021). It classifies issues in the maritime domain comprising national security, marine environment, economic development, and human security. Besides the

world's oceans, it also deals with regional seas, territorial waters, rivers, and ports. Maritime security is a focused field in the marine sector, it looks after the security threats from both internal and external, these including different kinds of problems for different strategies. Since the 9/11, attack there's been an expanded spotlight on guarding the marine area against psychological warfare and other comparative assaults, both in port and adrift. Since the marine area is so massive measure of products entering the nation is hard to screen, all insurances conceivable to limiting hurtful double-dealing is basic. At the same time, the nation's always trying to make many policies and strategies to increase marine security at the international level. It has strong capabilities in terms of power and peacekeeping in that particular area. The United Nations also has an important role in maritime security with peacekeeping at the international level with the cooperation of states. India is a country surrounded by three side water bodies and this geographical feature increases the need for marine security. The vast economic resources of India, dependency for livelihood, security from the hijacking of merchant ships indicates the need for marine security.

India's Maritime Capabilities

Each nation tries to increase its defense capability to address the security problems that arise from air, sea, and land. In the maritime security dimension, the capability of naval forces and coastal security becomes crucial to prevent unexpected threats. To conduct maritime military operations for defending future threats (Christian Bueger, 2020). Shaping a favorable maritime environment for the country is also part of the defense mechanism of the country. The policy to develop maritime force levels and maintain the capability for meeting India's maritime security requirements also holds the feature of ocean security.

Indian Ocean is an important area for trade, transportation and the sea wealth in terms of fishing and other activities, so the active presence of India in three sides of the sea locations represents its interest in maritime sector. It shows emergence of India as one of the dominant maritime powers in the world. India has implemented several initiatives to increase which maritime security such as:

- Financial aid for air force in Bangladesh by India.
- The Construction of port in Myanmar for the exporting of weapon

- Joint patrol and training with the countries Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia
- Infrastructure facilities and cooperation with Australia
- Cooperation with islands and strategic ports at –Andaman Nicobar, Cocos(Australia), Diego Garcia (US), Reunion Island (France)
- Cooperation and patrolling facilities with Maldives and Sri Lanka
- Naval communication facilities permissions with Madagascar and Mauritius
- India have always a good connections Permission of using ports in Oman, cooperation with India's oil reserves with UAE, submarine training in Iran.

The above initiatives and programs explain India's increasing role in the sub- continent. These policies resulted in strengthening cooperative and friendly relations with its neighboring countries. It's also giving a proof of India's cooperative policies and good relationship with neighbor countries.

The three layers of Indian maritime security include Indian Navy, Indian Coast guard, and Coastal police (Malik, 2019). The coordination of these layers makes the Indian maritime security a powerful region. Indian Nodal agency is responsible for the entire arena of coastal and maritime security. If you are saying about Indian maritime security, we should mention the capabilities of the Indian navy. To ensure marine security Indian naval forces and coast guard plays an eminent role. The newly commissioned warships like Vikramadhitya and other submarines help the nation to build its status among world nations (PTI, 2016). The role of submarines is very effective because they can find out enemy attacks immediately. Some of these are, INS Arihant, INS Shishumar, INS Sindhughosh, etc... are always protection of Indian maritime security. Indian Navy has the most powerful commando team known as Marine Commando's 'MARCOS' one of the most effective special unit in the sea operations and missions.

India is also observer member in the Indian Ocean commission, which led to Ocean cooperation which countries like is helpful for building an ocean co-operation with nations like Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles.

India along with private companies jointly developing warships to increase India's maritime security, like Mahindra Defense system limited (MDS) and Seagull Maritime security etc., construction in private yards is also one of the beneficiary parts of Indian maritime security concerns.

Challenges and threats

Even though it has taken several initiatives and collaborated with regional and international players to increase security, India is facing several maritime security challenges. Generally, there are four different types of challenges:

- Military
- Economic
- Political
- Environmental

Military challenges include conventional, asymmetrical, terrorist activities. Economic factors include trade routes, smuggling, living and long-living resources (Sam Bateman, 2011). Political factors include marking territories, exploitation of resources, resource management. Environmental factors adding environmental changes, hurricanes, tsunami, and oil chemical spillovers. Piracy, armed robbery, and the intent and methodologies of the attackers are well established across several geographical locations. Moreover, Terrorism is a hardcore threat to Maritime security, it's containing some factors like attacking the ships and crew or passengers to serve a political aim. Historically several incidents against shipping and made a variety of methodologies at the disposal of terrorist organizations.

Example- Since the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai-Unlike 26/11, when terrorists had used the sea route to enter Mumbai and stage attacks on land targets, the plan this time around was to deploy trained jihadi divers to target an Indian or coastal facility, but unfortunately that plan was collapsed. Hijacking of naval vessels, hostages, attacking ports, attacking coastal installations, attacks against civilians on warships are major threats from the terrorist activity. Apart from the above challenges, Indian maritime security also faces the below security threats.

Climate Change and Water Pollution: Climate change is always a problem to maritime security, it may make challenges to the proper working of machines and unpredictable situations in the security, unclear aims are making problems in naval systems. The water pollution affecting the life mechanisms in the ocean will seriously affect the fisherman and other coastal problems at the seashore.

Safe Passage of Merchant ship: Either international conflict or civil war can present risk to ships or crew, this risk will depend on the nature of the conflict.

Cyber-attacks: Ships are increasingly using relay digitization, integration and automation, which calls cyber risk management on board with the help of information technology (IT) and operational technology (OT).

Offshore facilities including Oil rig: Extraction of the oils and the facilities which carrying to the ships and the protection of that etc...

China's increasing influences in the region: China is always trying to increase its power in the world with different types of policies and investments, which is also providing military and economic cooperation with its affiliated countries making some security problems to Indian security (Jindal, 2017). 'One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR) and 'String of pearls policy' are the strategic policy of China, which also has powerful ideas of the development of trade and other cunning policy of power upgrading against India. The string of pearls policy describes China as a plan to make creating military ports in nations like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar its challenge towards maritime security of India. Its cooperation's and investments in India's neighborhood countries also India looking seriously.

ISPS Code: International ship and port facility security (ISPS) code associated 2002 SOLAS amendments were developed in response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and perceived risk to ships and the danger of ships being used for terrorist purpose.

Recommendations to Maritime Security

Enforcing section- 4 guidance: covered under section -4- should identify and account for the risk for the ship from other maritime security issues, so the CSO and master should follow the relevant

guidance and latest updates from their flag states, insurance national and regional authorities, military forces (Upadhyaya, 2017).

Company and Masters planning: Company Security Officer (CSO), Ship Security Officer (SSO) and Master considers threats may be encountered during the voyage.

Ship Protection Measures: ¹Increased watches and denial of access are likely to be useful in mitigating from some threats. Ship and other systems always should be in working conditions and access for the transportation and defending for initial emergency threats.

Maritime cooperation: It's an important policy that every state should follow, because international threats cannot be defended by one country, (Sudhakar, 1996) it needs cooperative measures and working by a group of countries' powers. That's why some countries are doing joint patrol and training, it will helpful for increasing the influence and will be updated for security measures and the treaties which making on conferences will increase and making a peaceful environment for maritime security.

- Operational Logistics
- Self-Reliance and Indigenization
- Updated technologies

Joint Exercise: Need of joint naval exercises including Indian navy and coast guard for effective co-ordination in Ocean security

Creating Awareness: Creating awareness among civil population like fishing community for reporting strange incidents in oceans

Technology: Importing and implementing most modern technology for predicting and preventing enemy attacks in oceans.

These mentioned things are helpful for the improvement of strategies and cooperation with countries and development of Indian maritime security. Fisherman can be used for spy works for getting important information to coastal guards. Secondly, every state should increase security and tighten the borders to prevent illegal trespassing of sea boarders.

Conclusion

India is one of the prominent developing countries in the world, its diverse character and strong democratic features are well known in the world. Maritime security is one of the important parts of India's defense system. The Indian navy, coastal guard, and the coastal police are coordinately working for the protection of maritime security in India. India's warships and submarines are being the golden shield for the Indian navy. The Indian government is very careful and spending money on its defense sector especially for the navy, it's developing facilities and using updated technologies and well-disciplined naval systems making the Indian navy powerful defense mechanisms and showing its strong presence at the three seashores of India. Strong weapons and high-quality ships and a positive environment also help Indian maritime security as an important region in the world. National interest and policies and the decisions which are taken at the international level also influence the maritime security of India. But a country should be aware of its future threats and emergencies from its immediate neighbors and as well as from the international level also. China's increasing policies and movements are also one of them. In this study, the researcher wanted to analyze the capabilities and the challenges faced by Indian maritime security and provide some recommendations for countering the threats.

References

- Bueger, C. (2015). What is maritime security? *Marine Policy*, 53, (C), 159-164
- Chaudhury, R. R. (2000). *India's Maritime Security*. New Delhi: IDSA and Knowledge World.
- Bueger C., Edmunds T., McCabe R. (2021) *Maritime Security, Capacity Building, and the Western Indian Ocean*. In: Bueger C., Edmunds T., McCabe R. (eds) *Capacity Building for Maritime Security*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-50064-1_1
- Farook Ali, K. (2016). *China's Naval Expansion and Asia's Response* Germany: GRIN Verlag.
<https://www.grin.com/document/316208>
- Fernando, S. (2020). *Comprehensive Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Challenges and Opportunities*. India: General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka.
- IAS, D. (2020). *India's Maritime Security Strategy*. New Delhi: Drishti Publications.

-
- India, Times of. (2021). Explained: What's maritime security. New Delhi: The Times of India.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/explained-whats-maritime-security/articleshow/85175697.cms>
- Jindal, S. (2017). India Should Develop Its Naval Power in View of Growing Potential Security Concerns Connected to China's Non-Transparent Intentions in the Indian Ocean Region. Australia.
- Malik, A. K. (2019). Indian Ocean and Maritime Security. UK: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Malik, A. K., Patel, B. N. (2019). Indian Ocean and Maritime Security - Bimal Patel: Indian Ocean and Maritime Security. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group.
- PTI. (2016). India emphasises on maritime security in Indian Ocean region. GURGAON: The Hindu.
- R, D. S. (2014). Maritime Security of India: The Coastal Security Challenges and Policy Options. India: Vij Books India Private Limited.
- Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. (2014). Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific: Perspectives from China, India, and the United States. (2014). United States.
- Singh, K. R. (2012). Coastal Security: Maritime Dimensions of India's Homeland Security. India: Vij Books India Private Limited.
- Suri, G. (2016). India's Maritime Security Concerns and the Indian Ocean Region. *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, 11(3), 238–252. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45341959>
- Sam Bateman & Anthony Bergin (2011) New challenges for maritime security in the Indian Ocean – an Australian perspective, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 7:1, 117-125, DOI: 10.1080/19480881.2011.587335
- Sudhakar, M., & Kumar, B. V. (1996). A new international order on oceans – Indian perspective. *Current Science*, 71(6), 432–438. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24099532>
- Upadhyaya, S. (2017). A case for a pan-Indian Ocean information grid for improved maritime domain awareness. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 13, 335 - 354.