

The Evolving India Perspective and Initiatives in Indo Pacific Regions in 21st Century: A Comprehensive Analysis

Mr. Mayank Singh

Scholar, Political Science, Maharaja Surajmal Brij University ,Bharatpur

Abstract

There are Core Doctrines & Strategic Frameworks The Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) was Launched at the 2019 East Asia Summit with seven pillars: maritime security, ecology, disaster preparedness, trade connectivity, scientific cooperation, capacity building, and resource sharing .India invited partners like Japan, Australia, ASEAN states, UK, and France into IPOI .

KEYWORDS: SEA, ASEAN, EAS, EA, IO, SAGAR, MAHASAGAR, UN, US, QUAD

INTRODUCTON

The term Indo-Pacific was first coined and conceptualized by German geopolitician [Karl Haushofer](#) in the 1920s, though his vision differed significantly from the term's contemporary usage. Haushofer, recognizing the [demographic](#) and economic importance of the region, imagined an Indo-Pacific region where Japan, China, and India, liberated from colonial domination, would align themselves with Germany in a struggle against the imperialist forces of the United Kingdom, United States, and western Europe.

Historical Evolution of India's Perspective Look East Policy (1991–2014)

was mainly initial emphasis on Southeast Asia and economic ties .Then Act East Policy (2014 onwards) come with more proactive, strategic, and outcome-oriented outreach with asean. In 2015, SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) doctrine formally launched, articulating leadership in maritime inclusivity across the Indian Ocean .

There are Core Doctrines & Strategic Frameworks The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) was Launched at the 2019 East Asia Summit with seven pillars: maritime security, ecology, disaster preparedness, trade connectivity, scientific cooperation, capacity building, and resource sharing .India invited partners like Japan, Australia, ASEAN states, UK, and France into IPOI . The Multilateral Institutions & Partnerships include QUAD (India–US–Japan–Australia): joint naval exercises (Malabar), supply-chain resilience, rare-earth diversification, and maritime domain awareness (IP-MDA) .

IORA, BIMSTEC, IONS, CSC: India's leadership in regional security, blue economy, connectivity and counter-terrorism frameworks . Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR): launched December 2018 to support regional Maritime Domain Awareness via international liaison officers and secure information sharing .

India launched its Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) in 2019 initiative, which seeks to enhance maritime security, promote sustainable development, and foster cooperation among Indian Ocean littoral states. With a focus on connectivity and trade, these efforts are precursors to India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

India launched MAHASAGAR (2025) India has been increasingly refining its maritime policies to increase its dominance over the region. During his latest trip to Mauritius, Prime Minister Narendra Modi outlined that the MAHASAGAR initiative seeks to expand India's influence in the Global South by encouraging trade, security cooperation, and sustainable development. Announced in Mauritius, MAHASAGAR—Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions—expands SAGAR's reach across the broader Indo-Pacific through sustainable development, trade, and strategic cooperation.

There is India–Japan collaboration which we can understand by Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), Act-East Forum, port and connectivity projects in Northeast India, Bay of Bengal corridor, IMT-GT and digital/semi-conductor partnerships. Joint green-port development and transforming Andaman & Nicobar as “smart islands” under maritime cooperation with Japan. In Maritime Strategy & Security Posture of India, the Naval modernization: INS Vikrant (2022), submarine procurement, deterrence focus, piracy operations, counter-trafficking and regional first responses (e.g. Gulf of Aden, Operation Crimson Barracuda).

Information and Domain Awareness: IFC-IOR, IP-MDA with US partnership, radar exports, training and logistics across IOR and East Africa. Double Fish Hook strategy: Eastern hook: Andaman & Nicobar to Diego Garcia. Western hook: Duqm (Oman), Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar plus cooperation with France to balance China's “String of Pearls”.

The Economic Connectivity, Supply Chains initiatives includes Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI): India–Japan–Australia trilateral launched 2021 to reduce Chinese dependency and promote sustainable Indo-Pacific manufacturing. Infrastructure & connectivity: SagarMala, Bharatmala, IMT-GT corridor, Mekong-Ganga cooperation and Quick Impact Projects in Southeast Asia emphasizing roads, ports, skills, and SMEs. Soft-power engagement in Pacific Islands: health and SME support, solarisation, yoga and IT hub development.

There are Some Challenges & Strategic Opportunities

The Limitations: India's resource constraints and competing priorities and balancing autonomy vs alignment with US or Quad partners. There are several challenges related to Indo-Pacific region like territorial disputes including disputes related to South China Sea and East China Sea, the regional power competition the growing influence of China challenging traditional dominance of US and its allies. The other economic challenges like uneven economic development, trade imbalances and increasing debt levels.

The non-traditional security threats include transnational crime, terrorism and cyber attack. These threats require coordinated regional responses and cooperation between government security forces and civil society actors.

The main opportunities are Rising European engagement e.g., Brussels-Mumbai corridor, leveraging innovations, building alternatives to Chinese dominance in rare-earths and semiconductors, expanding India's funding of green energy and defense manufacturing with the US.

Conclusion

This paper examines India's evolving strategic outlook and policy initiatives toward the Indo-Pacific during the 21st century. It explores framework doctrines (Look East → Act East → SAGAR/IPOI/MAHASAGAR), multilateral engagement, maritime capabilities, economic connectivity, and India's positioning in regional rule-based governance.

India's evolution from a "Look East" economic actor to a strategic Indo-Pacific one reflects its ambition to uphold a rules-based, inclusive maritime order rooted in sovereignty and cooperation. With doctrinal innovation (SAGAR → IPOI → MAHASAGAR), institutional leadership, maritime capabilities, and multilateral engagement, India is emerging as a credible net security provider and connectivity hub. Nonetheless, realizing its vision depends on sustained strategic investment, balancing great-power partnerships, and overcoming internal limitations. India proactively engaging in minilateral platform like quad and while also emphasizing asean .

References

1. MEA Report 2024
2. The Great Game in Indo-Pacific: A Pivot to India Editor: Air Marshal Anil Chopra .
3. Understanding India's Security Orientation towards Southeast and East Asia aditi malhotra volume 8 2022.
4. New Great Game in the Indo Pacific Rediscovering India's Pragmatism by Bawa Singh Aslam Khan Parvaiz Ahmad Thoker and Mansoor Ahmad Lone , aslam khan 2022.
5. Samudra Manthan Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific.
6. India indo –pacific policy by indresh kumar 2024.
7. Indo pacific strategic and geopolitical relevance by imankalyan lahiri , ajitha menon.