The maritime vision of independent India, according to first Naval Plan Papers of 1948, was appraised commensurating with India's Maritime interests and the need to protect merchant shipping and trade. The Maritime strategy of a nation, is defined as the overall approach of a country to the oceans around it, with the aim of synergizing all aspects, related to maritime activities to maximize national gains. A maritime strategy thus would have economic, political, military, technological and commercial interests and will equally be influenced by its grand strategy.\footnote{Freedom To Use The Sea: Maritime Military Strategy of India, Integrated Headquarters Ministry Of Defence (Navy), New Delhi. 2007. p-3.}
India's maritime strategy therefore defines its role in maritime area of interest outlining the national maritime objectives like any other country. In execution of this role it provides the protective framework for the use of oceans in all such above aspects for the national benefit. While drawing close connection between India’s maritime ambitions and its destiny as a great power, Sh. Pranab Mukherjee, as Foreign Minister had commented, ‘after nearly a millennia of inward and landward focus, we are once again turning our gaze outwards and seawards which is the natural direction of view for a nation seeking to re-establish itself, not simply as a continental power, but even more so as a maritime power, and consequently as one that is of significance on the world stage.’

India is singularly blessed in terms of maritime geography having unimpeded excess to the Indian Ocean, besides gainfully located island groups in the east and west permitting forward maritime deployment. Wherein, it allows such geographical advantages to India by adopting an oceanic approach to its strategy then coastal, it also places much greater demands on maritime security agencies to protect our maritime interests.

Going by overall defence dictates, India do not harbour any extra territorial ambition, besides aiming to safeguard its vital national interests. As such, within the framework of approaches to national defence, the primary maritime interest is to ensure national security,

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3 Ibid.
safeguarding from internal threats and external interference in order that the vital tasks of fostering economic growth and undertaking developmental activities can take place in a secure environment, underpinning freedom to use sea for a national interest under all circumstances.\(^4\)

While commenting on the maritime domain, a former Secretary in the Indian Foreign Ministry had stated that, ‘If India aspires to be a great power, then the only direction in which India’s strategic influence can spread is across the seas. In every other direction there are formidable constraints.’\(^5\) Arguing further it was observed, ‘New Delhi regards the Indian Ocean as its backyard and deem 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. This is what the United States set out to do in North America and the western Hemisphere at an early stage in America’s “rise to power”.’\(^6\)

The post cold war period had seen the intensified arm race getting gradually intensified in the Indian Ocean region fuelled by the interaction of super power rivalry with internecine regional rivalry.\(^7\) At the same time, steady growth of weapons transferred from the US and erstwhile

\(^1\) Foreword by Adm. Sureesh Mehta CONS to India’s Maritime Military Strategy, 2007.p-iii
\(^2\) Sikri, Rajiv, Challenges and Strategy: Rethinking India’s Foreign Policy. Sage Publications, New Delhi, p- 250.
\(^3\) Berlin, Donald L., opcit. p-60.
Soviet Union to the regional states during 70s and 80s had compelled the littoral states taking initiative of demilitarization of the Indian Ocean.\(^8\)

The ‘zone of peace’ initiative as it was generally understood meant pacification to provide regional security and stability for the welfare and prosperity of the littoral nations. It further ensured that neither of non-littoral states in future would seek nor have permanent naval forces stationed in the Indian Ocean nor military bases in the region.\(^9\) In other words, it included the prohibition of power rivalry incl. all forms of militarization.

During the post cold war scenario, the United States had emerged as the singular power in a seemingly unchallenged unipolar world. Its preeminence in the political, economic, technological and military areas is dominatially quite evident. On the other hand, a resurgent China chooses for multi-polarity along with other powers. Further, the emergence of Russia from erstwhile Soviet Russia and Central Asian Republic (CAR), has the potential for major realignment of the global security order whose configuration is yet to be shaped up. At the same time, events related to the various Gulf Wars, the wars in Bosnia and in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown an ascendancy of military involvement of extraneous powers in littoral countries to contain what they visualized as a conflict situation. Such interventions in all the above cases have been


carried out from the sea, and made possible by the use of superior sea power.

Earlier in 1967 the erstwhile Soviet Union included for the first time in its strategic publication of Military Strategy, South and South East Asia as Soviet sphere of interest and their search for new facilities along the shores of the Indian Ocean. Subsequently, in March 1968, the Soviet flotilla visited several ports in India, Sri-lanka, Iraq, Somalia and South Yemen. Keeping in view, the growing Soviet naval activity in the Indian Ocean, the US navy decided to develop Diego Garcia as a base. In order to further expand Diego Garcia, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the then foreign Secretary of USA, visited India to participate in such arrangement. Rejection by India to such expansion however made the Britishers their ally in extension of facilities in Diego Garcia.10

Upto the beginning of seventies, the land oriented strategy11 had dominated the Indian defence perspective under the dual fear of Chinese


11 India’s land oriented Defence Strategy has been influenced by different factors: India’s Northern bias, the historical impact of Central Asia and attacks from land frontiers in the past. Before India could realize the importance of the sea, British established control over India. British India did not encourage the formation of a strong naval power because firstly the Royal Navy was strong enough to protect their interest in India and elsewhere and it could have been best served by organizing land forces; and secondly, the British having realized the importance of sea power for the defence and economic survival of India, did not encourage the development of any sea oriented aptitude as it might some time challenge their own sea power. See Sidhu K.S, *The Role of Navy in India’s Defence*, New Delhi, 1983, p-72-90.
or Joint Sino-Pakistan invasion over Himalayas, Punjab and north-east frontiers. At the same time, the building of modern Indian navy inflicting heavy financial burden did not permit the Indian Government to build up an adequately strong navy. However, geopolitical compulsions caused by the British withdrawal followed by the emergence of small and weak sovereign states incl., the entry of big power rivalry in the Indian Ocean became some of the significant factors which made it essential for India, to defend its long coast line, islands and oceanic interests.

In furtherance of this aim, Panikkar had recommended that the Indian Navy must in the first place develop her training institutions for all types of naval warfare, as without an adequate supply of trained personnel no navy big or small can be created. Secondly, to constitute the effectiveness of the navy it must acquire acquisition of various set of warships. The next step he suggested was the development of merchant navy to provide necessary reserves of the skills and vessels which could be converted in times of war. At the same time, Panikkar also asked for the development

\[^{12}\] Report from the 'Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs on the Indian Ocean Region', Canberra, 1972, p-30.

\[^{13}\] Sidhu, K.S. opcit., p- 72.

of ship building industry since a country for its large dependence on outside nation cannot be a naval power.15

In his book, ‘India And The Indian Ocean; An Essay On The Influence Of Sea Power On Indian History’ (1945), Panikkar argued again on Mahan’s writings of 1890, about the influence of Sea Power in history and blue water thinking of Indian sailors. Later, a contemporary thinker on maritime affairs Keshav Vaidya in his book on ‘The Naval Defence of India’ (1949) acknowledged that India’s strategic needs be met by developing an invincible navy which would defend not only her coast, but distant sea frontiers stretched far and wide in all directions.16 But, indeed it was the continental mind set of the Indian political leadership which neglected the sea and allowed navy to languish.

15 Since the beginning of the 20th century, ship building industry in India has been on a declining scale and the current rated capacity of country’s shipbuilding yards is minuscule vis-à-vis world’s capacity. As per the research carried out by i-maritime Consultancy the order book of the Indian shipyards progress in Indian shipbuilding industry was hovering around Rs 1,500 crore in 2002, has reached a value close to Rs 13,700 crore by September 2006, with nine times increase in just four years. The Indian shipbuilding, which was totally domestic till late 90’s has become export oriented. ABG Shipyard was the first to build and export a newsprint carrier for a Norwegian client in 2000 establishing India’s competitiveness in building and delivering ships of the international standards. Today six years down, out of the 199 ships on the orderbook, close to 124 are for exports. See http://www.imaritime.com/knowledge-center/shipyard.php. Accessed on 14 April 2011.

16 Vaidya, Keshav, The Naval Defence of India, Thacker, Bombay, 1949, pp- 9,29
Further, termed as a distant cousin to the other defence services, Indian Navy though had opened its war account with Portuguese on Goa liberation, its actual employment was seen only during the liberation of East Pakistan into Bangladesh. In his book ‘No Way but Surrender’ Vice Admiral Krishnan had stated that, ‘Our ships were in fairly bad ways as they had to do considerable amount of steaming at high speeds in connection with the operations off Ceylon in response to that Government’s appeal for help. To get them all operation in the time available would need an all out effort’. 17

In this regard, the allocation of forces to the western and eastern naval command was on the basis of capabilities and limitations of the ships, submarines and aircraft which made the war for Indian Navy an eventual success. 18 Moreover, the concept of war was straightforward and offensive in its approach by attacking Karachi and alluring Pakistan fleet to battle and to cut off the sea lines of communication between the West and East Pakistan. 19 The aim was to destroy the communication lines of the enemy’s maritime forces to conduct their military operations. In addition to that each merchant ship was rigorously identified, boarded and checked. If the ship identified as of Pakistani origin then it was captured and taken as a war prize. The operational plans of the Indian naval commands were crystal clear. It demonstrated the attack from the sea on

18 Hiranandani, G.M., opcit p-64.
19 Ibid. p-64.
Chittagong harbour; destruction of enemy forces and shipping off the ports and on the seas with a support of ground forces; offensive action on enemy’s critical infrastructure; blockade of East Bengal ports to all nation ships and maintaining security of our own ports and bases incl., Andaman and Nicobar islands. It was observed that for the first time India considered Indian Ocean as its own, which personified the development of maritime interests. This war versus Pakistan revealed that India was the clear maritime power among the South Asian countries.20

Later, the 1973 oil crisis, the 1986 monsoon failure and the beginning of the erstwhile Soviet Union’s economic restructuring resulted further the expansion of India’s maritime security strategic interest. Consequently, security and stability of the Indian Ocean region became the foremost interest of India and her navy. While Indian leaders could agree that an expansive strategy was required the actual nature of India’s maritime strategy remained though contentious. The ‘Sea Denial’ strategy which was later advocated as blue water strategy was developed in terms of expanding our maritime interests and capabilities in the Indian Ocean, without forcing the litigious powers like US and China to contain India.21

The Iran- Iraq and the US-Iraq Gulf wars added an additional concern as the United States sought to secure its access in the oil producing Middle East countries. India also became more cautious of the rising and expanding economic and military power of China and its interests in the

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20 Chaudhury, Rahul Roy, *Sea Power and India’s Security*, Brassey’s 1995, p-77
21 Rahn, Daniel, *Unlocking India’s Maritime Strategy*, Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, California, December 2006 p- 14
IOR. The Indian maritime strategy during 80’s therefore continued to expand and turned towards a bottom-up strategy.\textsuperscript{22} The UN Convention of the Laws of the Sea in 1982 further extended opportunity to the Indian navy to expand its reach with the addition of newly demarcated areas such as Exclusive Economic Zone for the protection of India’s offshore resources.

The security environment in the neighbourhood surrounding the Indian Ocean region is far from satisfactory. However, according to Admiral Sureesh Mehta, former Chief of Naval Staff, “fortunately, armed conflicts are rare occurrence, and to ensure that they remain so during the long years of peace, the Indian Navy needs to project power; catalyze partnership; build trust and create interoperability and when required use convincing power to achieve national aims.”\textsuperscript{23} He further opined that our strategy recognizes that the sea lines of communication passing through our region are critical for our economic growth and to the world community. On the other hand, nations in neighbourhood as well those depending on the Indian Ocean for their trade and energy supplies expect that Indian Navy will ensure a measure of stability and tranquility on our shores. Ensuring good order at sea is therefore a legitimate duty of the Indian Navy.\textsuperscript{24}

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\textsuperscript{24} Ibid
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Further, echoing with Alfred Mahan’s advocacy and stress, the sea particularly the Pacific Ocean serve as the domain of the United States, largely envisioned by its geopolitics and geo-economics. Currently, all that needs to be changed is by translating Pacific Ocean for the Indian Ocean and bring out India’s naval setting as claimed by Mahan’s element of sea powers showing continuing potency for Indian horizon. In fact, India’s grand strategy involves ‘Mahanian visions’ for its place in the Indian Ocean, which calls for blue water navy.  

The Maritime strategy unlike any other purpose is idiosyncratic, said Jack McCaffrie. Navies are fundamentally and significantly different and unique. Elaborating further, he opined, ‘Navies have always been noted for their versatility and, in particular, their utility in situation short of conflict. This versatility comes from the characteristics of reach (including sustainability), adaptability (including the capacity to threaten and apply force in a finely graduated way), and acceptability (in that warships are diplomatic instruments unlike any other kind of armed forces….’

The Indian navy for far too long has pursued an excessively narrow interpretation of the role of navies in regional and international security. Stating wryly the Rear Admiral K Raja Menon, ‘Regional power is a lot


like sex appeal; no matter how often India admires itself in the mirror, it isn’t a regional power until outside powers recognize it as such. Complimenting the Indian Navy’s contribution in securing sea lines of communication, the US Defence Secretary in his address to the National Defence College, emphasized US shared interest with India in the security and stability of the Persian Gulf region- a befitting testimonial to the Indian Navy’s approach of securing SLOC through cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

In this regard, the initiative taken in the 90s of cooperation and collaboration not only helped confronting affectively the threats of piracy and terrorism, but also helpful in the evolution of perspectives, various perceptions, sensitivities and national interests of the affected states. Understanding the role of navy in the 90s, it may be important to review the circumstances in which the navy was required to operate especially with regard to the increased presence of other navies in the region. Significant to mention here, is the increased Indian cooperation with the navies of the United States and Western Europe engaged in major exercises which also expanded to include other nations.

As admitted by Dean Acheson, the former US Secretary of State that during the nineteenth century, the United States relied on Britain the then superpower to develop its sphere of influence in the Western hemisphere

to enforce Monroe Doctrine until United States was sufficiently strong to
do so itself.28 Similarly in order to build its national power India has all
good reasons to cooperate with United States and the other extra regional
navies as long as they recognize India’s leading regional role in the
Indian Ocean. As per the noted Diplomat Shashi Tharoor, ‘India is
probably the most important country for the future of the world.29

The early 90s also marked the presence of Indian Ocean not only from an
economic, but also a military point of view. The region is abound with the
presence of several navies along with Indian Navy as a significant force
with an expanded sphere of operations. The United States with a base at
Diego Garcia, its naval operations in East Asia and its demonstrative skill
of interfering in West Asia and South Asian politics emulates of Britain
role in the Indian Ocean. Subsequently, the vacuum created by the
Britishers made Americans the dominant player in the region.

The erstwhile Soviet Union too manoeuvred for bases and refuelling
facilities in the North West Quadrant30 of the Indian Ocean. The other
powers like France also possessed important areas in the form of some

28 Acheson, Dean G., A Democrat Looks at His Party, Harper & Brothers, New York,
1955, p-64.
30 The identified bases were Aden, Berbera and Umm Qasr(Iraq). See- Namboodiri,
House, New Delhi, 1982, p-59.
critically positioned islands such as the Reunion\textsuperscript{31}, Djibouti\textsuperscript{32} and Mayotte\textsuperscript{33}. Earlier Comoros group\textsuperscript{34}, Diego Suarez\textsuperscript{35}, Malagasy (now Madagascar)\textsuperscript{36} were also under French dominance. The Japanese, the Chinese, Australians and other naval power of concern while realizing the strategic significance of Indian Ocean showed their interest in the region. The Symbolism and Status of controlling waters of Indian Ocean was inherently giving competition and rivalry to the navies of all colours vied with each other for presence and control.

However, since the mid-1990s India has been working to develop a “Blue Water Navy’ with an expansion in naval capabilities to expand its influence throughout the Indian Ocean. According to Indian Navy’s

\textsuperscript{31} Lies in the Centre of the Western region of the Indian Ocean, France has maintained an airfield and radio station on the island. ibid. p-44.
\textsuperscript{32} The French base is of immense strategic importance and the most tempting military prize. Situated at the head of Gulf of Aden, entrance to the Red Sea, across the Bal-el- Mandeb Strait, and South west tip of the Arabian Sea, it can easily monitor the movement in the sea from Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. Ibid, p-45
\textsuperscript{33} The Mayotte island has a strategic importance in the Mozambique Channel comprising of an airfield and Meteorological station and a naval facility. Ibid, p-40.
\textsuperscript{34} The Comoros Archipelago comprises numerous coral and granite islands and islets scattered on the northern approaches to the Mozambique Channel between the East African coast and northern Malagasy( Madagascar), and clustered into four major islands groups- Grand Comoro, Anjouan, Moheli and Mayotte. Ibid, p-34.
\textsuperscript{35} The French had a naval at Diego Suarez in the northern tip of Madagascar then Malagasy which was vacated in 1975, ibid, p-37.
\textsuperscript{36} Malagasy now Madagascar, a former French Colony, attained full independence in 1960 but under the 1960 defence agreement, France had the right to maintain a naval base and other military facilities there. Ibid,p-42.
Maritime Doctrine 2004, ‘Control of the choke points’ could be useful as a bargaining chip in the international power game, where the currency of military power remains a stark reality. In conjunction India is also reinforcing security relationships with other states of Indian Ocean in order to restrict China’s rapid development in the region. The String of Pearl Strategy of China in terms of generating signal intelligence facilities, construction of several commercial port and naval access rights in various littoral states of Indian Ocean is posing a serious security concerns to India. Yet major shortcomings and challenges remain in front of India in terms of perceived requirements and sufficient resources to confront the growing strategic challenge.

In total India grew to be accepted as the regional dominant player, but her action and policies drew resentment from its South Asian neighbours and

37 The Indian Navy has given particular focus to the Choke Points at entrances to the Oceans around Southern Africa (Including Mozambique Channel), the Arabian Peninsula (including the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb) and the straits connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans through the Indonesian archipelago (the Malacca, Sunda and Lombok straits). See Brewster David, ‘An Indian Sphere of Influence in the Indian Ocean’ Security Challenge, Vol. 6, No.3 Spring 2010. p-3


39 According to reports, China is building port at Gwadar in Pakistan and Communication facilities in Burma’s Coco Islands in the Andaman Sea which is claimed to have Chinese signals intelligence facilities. China has also been developing several commercial ports facilities with the naval access rights in the countries like Burma, Bangladesh and Srilanka. See: Chellaney, Brahma, ‘Assessing India’s Reaction to China’s Peaceful Development Doctrine, NBR Analysis, Vol. 18, No. 5 April 2008.
would require further development of its maritime strategy. However, constrained by its lack of resources to confront unexpected realities in the ocean, India has a sense of claustrophobia and an apprehension that it is at the receiving end of events in the vital areas. Even if India decides to launch counter measures, it may find itself under the present situation. While there is no doubt that India is facing technological, economic and military constraints, but its policy in fact is a subtle synthesis of pragmatism and principles deep rooted in the policy of peaceful coexistence and non-alignment.

Stating further on Indian Naval Diplomacy, former Chief of Western Naval Command, Vice-Admiral Madanjit Singh in 2004 said, ‘the last few years, we have been showing our presence in most parts of the Indian Ocean and beyond. We are also doing bilateral exercises with many other navies... the navy has had a larger role in diplomacy and will continue to do so.’ Given the backdrop, the Indian Navy has been on a continuous spree in holding joint and multi lateral exercises with Japan, PLA-Navy, Sri-lanka, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines, New Zealand, Vietnam and the United States of America. Besides building ties with countries in the region to expand its reach in the Indian Ocean, India’s navy in fact after 2004 Tsunami had played an international role deploying warships to help devastated Srilanka and

40 Chellaney, Brahma, op cit.
42 Ibid., p- 196
43 Interview with Vice Admiral Madanjit Singh, Force, New Delhi, November 2004.
Indonesia in its bid to project itself as a regional power with off shore military strength.44

Expliciting more on maritime strategy Admiral Arun Prakash, former Naval Chief had said on December 2005, ‘India aspires to certain position in the world and so we must have a navy commensurate to our needs.’45

In terms of defining strategic intention former Admiral Sureesh Mehta had said, ‘we want our navy to operate in waters far away from home. Our ships have to be placed at distant places… which could only raise nation’s prestige; thereby conceptualizing blue water navy.46

Analysing India’s Maritime Military Strategy 2007, it brought out in its strategy the enabling deterrence, that every naval activity undertake during peace should rightly contribute in some measures to preparedness for a possible future conflict. As such the most important task of the Indian Navy in time of peace is to prepare for combat to enhance conventional deterrence against potential aggressor.47 The forward presence is thus the enabling element of conventional deterrence intended to - demonstrative of India’s regional stability; familiarization of operational environment overseas; keeping surveillance and promoting interoperability amongst the friendly nations.48

46 Indian Navy Will Reach Far Beyond Indian Waters, India Daily, November 1, 2006.
47 India’s Maritime Military Strategy, opcit. p-80.
48 Ibid, p-81.
Further, as stated by Donald Winter, Secretary of the US navy in 2008 that ‘United States welcomed India in taking up the responsibility to ensure security in this part of the world.’\textsuperscript{49} Over the last decade or more United States has been actively encouraging India’s strategic ambitions and its naval presence in the northeast Indian Ocean. The development of Andaman naval base of India near the Malacca Strait is also balancing the growing supremacy of China beyond its own waters, thus favours the United States.\textsuperscript{50} Looking at the present status, thinking and perception of the United States towards the Indian Ocean is well be compared with the Britain’s strategy\textsuperscript{51} of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when its naval supremacy was challenged by the growth of German naval power.

The later incident of 26/11 had added a new dimension of invasion by non state actors breaching India’s oceanic front where the naval role was largely missing. Interestingly, however, underlining the importance of Indian Navy, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee the then External Affairs Minister had expressed in June 2007 in his speech on International Relations and


\textsuperscript{51} In response to the growing German naval power Britain forged partnership with emerging naval powers like the United Staes in the Western hemisphere and Japan in the Pacific, allowing them a measure of regional hegemony, while itself concentrated its resources in the North Atlantic against Germany. See Holmes et al, \textit{Indian Naval Strategy in the Twenty First Century}, Ch-3.
Maritime Affairs- Strategic Imperatives, that within the larger maritime canvas it is country’s maritime power that becomes the enabling instrument which also allows other components of maritime power being exercised. Indian Navy thereby was looked upon as a versatile and effective instrument of our foreign policy.52

The Indian maritime vision for the first quarter of the 21st Century must look at the arc from the Persian Gulf to the Strait of Malacca as a legitimate area of interest.53 Later, the 2009 Maritime Doctrine of Indian Navy further distinguished between the ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ areas of maritime interests. The Primary area defined as the traditional India’s maritime zones, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the Cape of Good Hope and the Mozambique Channel; while the Secondary areas of maritime interest are far more significant includes the South China Sea, areas of West Pacific Ocean and the friendly littoral countries located herein along with ‘other areas of national interest based on consideration of Diaspora and overseas investments’54, with no further elaboration of the specified areas of interests.

The Annual Report of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs- March 2010 has no mention of the Indian navy’s extended areas of maritime interest and its new focus on the elaborated areas outside Indian Ocean. The

53Indian Maritime Doctrine 2004, opcit p-56
Annual Report of Ministry of Defence 2010 however do acknowledge India as a ‘maritime as well as a continental entity’\footnote{Annual Report 2009-2010, Ministry of Defence, April 2010, p-2.} but remains silent over the maritime doctrine. While there is clear aspitration in New Delhi to develop an expanded Indian Strategic Space, it is not clear what this might mean in practice. Till now the Indian Navy has taken a cooperative approach in developing security relationship.\footnote{Brewster, David, opcit p-16} The regular involvement of Indian Navy with Southeast Asia is largely institutionalized with an extensive and regular form of naval and maritime cooperation. These include joint training, a multinational gathering of warships, joint bilateral naval exercises, coordinated and joint patrols.

In West Asia and the Gulf the anti-piracy operations, maritime policing and anti-terrorism functions off the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden, incl. bilateral naval exercises are keeping India occupied on the sea front.\footnote{Chaudhury, Rahul Roy, ‘Maritime Ambitions and Maritime Security’ paper presented on 5th Berlin Conference on Asian Security (BCAS), Berlin September 30-October 1, 2010.} India is often perceived as a benign power and not a would be hegemon in contrast with other external powers such as the United States and China. While India is not in a position to exert significant power through military predominance or ideological means, it may be able to do so as a provider of public goods.\footnote{Brewster, David, opcit p-16}
As per the 2009 Joint Security Declaration of Australia and India cooperation in the areas of maritime policing, disaster management and anti terrorism will bring good prospects for closer security relationships in the coming years. According to 2009 Defence White Papers of Australia, ‘As India extends its reach and influence into areas of shared strategic interests, we will need to strengthen our defence relationship and our understanding of Indian Strategic Thinking’.59

With a particular focus on the maritime choke points India has developed good strategic security relationships with many littoral countries of the Indian Ocean. In the Southwest, India has a long standing and close political, economical and security association with these countries.60 As the India-Mauritius, bilateral relationship and security relations are described by the former Mauritian Prime Minister as ‘umbilical and sacred’ and ‘intense’61 respectively, the current President Anerood Jugnauth describes them as ‘blood relations.’62

60 Brewster David, opcit, pp-7-8
Under the 1974 Defence Agreement between India and Mauritius, India has transferred patrol boats and helicopters to Mauritius and also providing training to Mauritian personnel and officers for the Mauritian National Coast Guard and Police Helicopter Squadron. Since 2003, Indian Navy is providing maritime security to the Mauritius through periodic patrols over its waters including the anti piracy functions in 2010. See: Indian Ships to Patrol Seychelles, Mauritius,’ Deccan Chronicle, November 24, 2009.
The countries in and around the Mozambique Channel are also looking towards India as a benign regional protector as Indian Navy is assisting them in various maritime operations. In the early 2010, Indian Navy has assisted Seychelles under the 2003 Defence Cooperation Agreement in the anti piracy maritime operations in the EEZ of Seychelles. Also in 2005, Indian government in order to restrict Chinese assistance to Seychelles has gifted patrol vessels to them.\textsuperscript{63} In July 2007, the Indian Navy opened an electronic monitoring facility with a grant of limited berthing rights for Indian naval vessels in the Northern Madagascar.\textsuperscript{64} In 2006 India and Mozambique entered a defence cooperation agreement that envisages joint maritime patrol, supply of military equipment, training and technology transfer in repairing and assembling military vehicles, aircrafts and ships.\textsuperscript{65} Since 2001, India has been conducting annual exercises with French Navy and under the Trilateral Security Dialogue of ‘IBSA’ sponsored the trilateral naval exercises in 2008 and 2010 off the Cape of Good Hope.\textsuperscript{66}

India has also developed maritime security relations with Oman and Qatar which has been furthered by naval training and joint naval exercises. Since 2008, Indian navy has been playing active role in anti piracy operations off the coast of Qatar and Somalia.\textsuperscript{67} Indian Navy by and large has been able to support the countries of the Indian Ocean

\textsuperscript{63} Ramachandran, Sudha, ‘ India’s Quiet Sea Power’ \textit{Asia Times}, August 2, 2007.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Brewster, David, op cit, p- 9
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid, p-9
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid , p-11
Region whether against the attempted coup by the Srilankan mercenaries in Maldives or as a natural security provider to Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. As the defence cooperation of India with the Southeast Asian countries has been developing the strategic challenges for India has also grown up. Firstly the security of the Choke Points like the Strait of Malacca which is the key trade route between East Asia and Europe and the strategic energy supply route from Middle East to East Asia. Secondly the growing influence of Chinese Navy. Although Indian navy regularly exercises and trains with Southeast Asian navies, but the relation of Chinese navy with the Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Horn of Africa, Seychelles, Maldives, Sri-lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh are certainly of concern to Delhi. Nonetheless, the Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean has been countered by the trilateral naval exercise held in April 2007 with US, and Japan in the Pacific Coast; quadrilateral exercise held in September 2007 with US, Australia, Japan, Singapore in the bay of

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68 With the end of the cold war India has renewed its political, economic and security relations with Singapore. Singapore sees India as natural security provider and the balancing factor of the growing influence of extra regional powers like China, USA and Japan in the region. Since 1993 there has been an extensive security dialogues, joint exercises, intelligence sharing, security cooperation and annual bilateral naval exercises between the two countries with the development of an Indian Naval presence in the Changi base of Singapore. While Indonesia for the last two decades has been helping India to further its economic and political links with the ASEAN states. Moreover under the Defence Cooperation Agreement 2001, India and Indonesia have coordinated biannual naval patrols at the Six Degree Channel. See: Brewster, David, ‘ India’s Security partnership with Singapore’, The Pacific Review, Vol. 22, No. 5 December 2009, pp- 597-618. Also See : Mohan, C. Raja, ‘ India’s Geopolitics and Southeast Asian Security’ Southeast Asian Affairs 2008, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008, p-53.
Bengal and for the first time the annual Malabar series of exercises with the US navy held off the Japan.69

Though the Maritime Doctrine of 2004, perceived China’s encirclement strategy against India, the 2009 doctrine has no mention of the Chinese advancements but only consider South China Sea as a ‘secondary’ maritime area of interest for the Indian navy. As commented by Admiral Arun Prakash, ‘The appropriate counter to China’s encirclement of India is to build our own relations, particularly in our neighbourhood, on the basis of our national interests and magnanimity towards smaller neighbourhood’.70

Till today India has been able to develop or in the developing stage of building cooperative security relationships with small states at or near the key points of entry into the Indian Ocean. In order to execute India’s foreign policy objectives in the IOR the country has to maintain the perception of benign and non-hegemonic power to achieve the status of major power in the region. As stated by Holmes, Indian Navy could play three basic roles; first a ‘free rider’ navy where United States play a dominant role and Indian navy can provide maritime policing and do humanitarian functions, second, ‘a constable’ navy which tactfully and sparingly intervene in advancement of the common interests of littoral states of South Asia.; and third, ‘a strong man’ navy which sought to

establish a hegemony and can show its deployment beyond the Indian Ocean.

According to Cohen, ‘Spheres of influence are essential to the preservation of national and regional expression… the alternative is either a monolithic world system or utter chaos’.71 As stated by India’s Foreign Secretary during his address on ‘Maritime Dimensions of India’s Foreign Policy’ at National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi that, ‘our ability to shape our maritime security environment will require the development of a credible naval presence with adequate assets commensurate with our defence and security interests as well as those required to discharge the role and responsibility expected of India by the international community.’72 As India’s strategic focus expands beyond the Indian Ocean its challenges do expand which can be countered either by building up sufficient and capable force structure or by cooperation with other states.

The chequered history of India’s maritime behaviour has been full of tidal character. Even though sea realisation and its complementary naval dimension got into effect, consequent to 1971 war, its strategic aspect took another more than three decades to mature. India being a dominant power in the Indian ocean with third largest ocean in its name, somehow

72 Address on ‘Maritime Dimensions of India’s Foreign Policy’ by Foreign Secretary, Strategic Digest, Volume 41 Number 8, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, August 2011, p- 793
fails to acknowledge its presence and the importance attached to it. The various maritime strategies evolved by India from time to time not only lacked consistencies but also garbled in their steady approach. The absence of robust maritime strategy has given way to countries to build up their strategic ambitions in and around Indian ocean detrimental to India’s interest. There is a need to have maritime strategy and grand strategy overlooking India’s security challenges as well issues of non security concerns independent of forces outside India, with vested interests. It will not only make navy an efficient instrument of power, but also help her reaching closure to its goal of becoming an effective maritime power.