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India's Role in the Indo-Pacific Region Strategic, Economic, and Security Perspective

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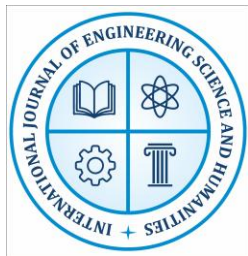
ABSTRACT

The Indo-Pacific has become a key region impacting modern-day global politics, economic integration, and maritime security. This study is based on the qualitative design that is entirely based on secondary data, so the strategic, economic and security importance of India in the Indo Pacific region is analyzed. The analysis is based on peer-reviewed literature, policy documents and government publications and reports from recognised international institutions, primarily published since 2015. The results reveal that India's central geography, growing diplomatic activities and its vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules based Indo Pacific render its strategic significance. The study also highlights the increasing contribution of India in the field of regional connectivity, economic cooperation, resilient supply chain, maritime security and defence cooperation. But some obstacles, such as geopolitical competition, the evolving security threats and implementation challenges have not dampened India's ability to flex its muscles in the region through a balanced diplomacy and strategic autonomy. Overall, the study suggests that India's multifaceted engagement positions it as a key player in promoting stability and sustainable development and cooperative regional governance in the Indo-Pacific region.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific, India, Strategic Autonomy, Maritime Security, Regional Connectivity, Defence Cooperation, Economic Engagement, Geopolitics, Regional Stability, Foreign Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Indo-Pacific is today one of the most important geopolitical and geo-economic areas of the twenty first century, representing an integrated maritime region between the Indian and Pacific Oceans including some of the world's most rapidly growing economies, busiest sea lanes and some of the most strategically important waters. The area is a significant part of the world for trade, shipping, energy routing and economic activity, and a hub of international political and economic concerns. The Indo-Pacific is currently the region of strategic competition, economic integration, technological innovation and maritime security, as the global balance of power slowly moves towards Asia. India within this changing regional architecture also has a unique and irreplaceable role due to its geography, size, economic prowess, naval power and growing diplomatic presence. Owing to its geographical location in the Indian Ocean, India has a natural



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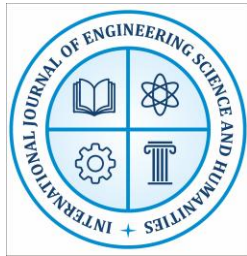
role as a 'connective hub' for east-west connectivity and a potential to shape regional connectivity, stability and multilateral cooperation (Pant & Joshi, 2019).

The Indo-Pacific is not just a geographical redefinition but more a reflection of the changing geopolitical realities. The previous strategic frameworks concentrated primarily on the Asia-Pacific region; but with the rise of maritime interdependence, China's influence in the region and the importance of the Indian Ocean, policymakers have opted for the wider Indo-Pacific construct. In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented India's vision for the region – a free, open, inclusive, rules-based Indo-Pacific based on international law, freedom of navigation, territorial integrity and ASEAN centrality. This vision is in line with the India's traditional foreign policy priorities and expands the Act East Policy in a comprehensive regional strategy that incorporates diplomacy, maritime security, trade, connectivity and sustainable development (Medcalf, 2020).

India's strategic posture in the Indo Pacific has been on the rise in the last decade in keeping with the vast changes in the security architecture of the region. India's proactive maritime stance is driven by the rise of extra-regional powers, escalating seas disputes, competition for key sea lanes, naval modernization and worries about unilateral attempts to change the regional status quo. Instead of engaging in traditional alliance politics, India has been advocating and seeking strategic autonomy while also consolidating the relationship with its strategic partners like the United States, Japan, Australia, France, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam. This has included the revival of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), more frequent naval exercises, including Malabar, and more frequent defence cooperation agreements, which are all part of India's new security strategy that has relied on "cooperation without military alliances" (Brewster, 2018).

The Indo-Pacific is huge economic opportunity for India, in addition to strategic considerations. Indian Ocean and adjoining maritime routes are also vital for Indian economic interest and over 50 per cent of international trade and almost all of Indian energy imports pass through these routes. In addition to the physical connectivity, India's vision on regional connectivity also encompasses digital connectivity, resilient supply chains, blue economy, clean energy transition and sustainable maritime governance. India's efforts to foster inclusive economic development and regional resilience to new challenges are reflected in its initiatives like SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative, and enhanced cooperation with ASEAN (Mohan, 2015).

Security is an important aspect of India's Indo Pacific strategy which includes traditional and non-traditional threats. Maritime territorial issues, naval rivalry, piracy, terrorism, illicit trafficking and strategic competition between great powers are among the traditional security challenges. At the same time, issues such as climate change, humanitarian crisis, illegal fishing, cyber security, MDO and disaster relief are now part of regional security governance. India has



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been active in building capacities of Indian Ocean island states in disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, information sharing, and coastal security, indicating a newfound appreciation for comprehensive maritime security, which goes beyond the traditional defense readiness (Scott, 2019).

Indo-Pacific is an inclusive strategy and not exclusive for India. India's regional vision promotes cooperative security, respect for sovereignty, peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for international law, and development cooperation – in contrast to strategic competition driven strategies. This will help India to interact with various stakeholders in a constructive manner while maintaining its strategic autonomy. The focus on dialogue, economic integration, and regional prosperity also sets India's policy apart from blocs, with the emphasis on achieving stability rather than confrontation.

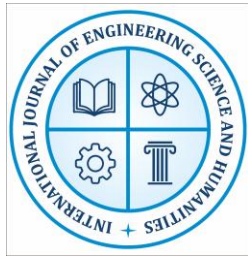
2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Over the last decade, the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific has grown significantly in light of the changing geopolitical landscape, economic interdependence, and maritime security concerns. In the past, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean were studied separately as strategic theatres but the globalisation, global supply chains, and the focus of global trade on maritime lines have strengthened the notion of the Indo Pacific as one unit of geopolitical space. This change has tempted regional and extra-regional powers to reshaped their foreign and security policies to protect their national interests and to participate in the regional stability. The Indian Ocean is also a key water body in the Indo-Pacific region, and India's strategic location at its centre offers a natural advantage to influence commercial shipping traffic, energy security and maritime governance in the wider Indo-Pacific region (Heiduk & Wacker, 2020).

India's Indo-Pacific involvement has grown in line with its important changing foreign policy stance. The shift of the Look East Policy to the Act East Policy and the increased focus on maritime diplomacy signal India's intent to enhance political, economic and security cooperation across the region. At the same time, the geopolitical rivalry for dominance among the major powers, especially regarding freedom of navigation, maritime territorial claims and regional connectivity projects have strengthened India's position as a balancing and stabilising force. India's membership of regional organizations and strategic consultations highlight its efforts to foster a rules-based, inclusive regional architecture while maintaining strategic autonomy in its regional relations (Rej, 2022).

Table 1. Evolution of India's Indo-Pacific Policy Framework

Policy/Initiative	Year	Primary Focus	Regional Significance
Act East Policy	2014	Political and economic engagement with East and Southeast Asia	Strengthened regional diplomacy and connectivity



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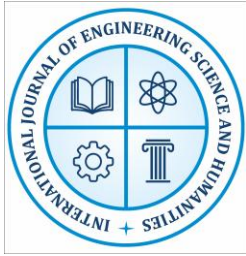
SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)	2015	Maritime security and regional cooperation	Enhanced India's maritime leadership
Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)	2019	Sustainable maritime governance	Promoted collaborative regional development
Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)	2020	Diversified supply chains	Improved regional economic resilience
Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (Participation)	2022	Economic cooperation and resilient trade	Expanded India's regional economic engagement

Table 2. Selected Quantitative Indicators Demonstrating the Importance of the Indo-Pacific

Indicator	Approximate Value
Share of global population	Approximately 65%
Share of global GDP	Approximately 60%
Share of global maritime trade	Approximately 60%
Global container traffic passing through the Indian Ocean	Approximately 50%
India's merchandise trade transported by sea	Approximately 95% (by volume)
India's crude oil imports transported by sea	Over 85%

Source: Compiled from publicly available data published by the World Bank, UNCTAD, Ministry of External Affairs (India), and the Indian Navy.

Economic reasons have further bolstered India's Indo-Pacific involvement. Sea lines of communication are essential for energy imports, energy exports, commercial connectivity, and the region also houses some of India's key trading partners and investment destinations. Moreover, new challenges like resilient supply chains, cooperation in the digital world, sustainable infrastructure, blue economy development and maritime resource management have expanded the horizon of regional cooperation to non-traditional areas of trade. These enhancements have put the Indo-Pacific as a crucial part of India's long-term economic development and hope for India to become a one of the world's major economies (Hall, 2021).



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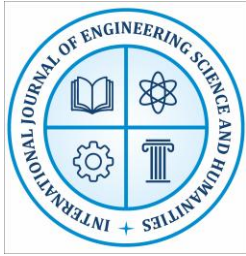
The security landscape of the region has also significantly changed with both traditional and non-traditional security challenges. The need of the hour is cooperative security mechanisms with the participation of multiple stakeholders, which are increasingly necessary in the face of maritime piracy, transnational terrorism, cyber threats, illegal fishing, humanitarian crises and climate induced disasters. India's evolving role in promoting peace, stability and secure maritime commons in the Indo-Pacific is manifested in its increasing naval capabilities, humanitarian assistance, maritime domain awareness, and defence cooperation. These changing strategic, economic, and security dynamics become the basis for analysing India's current contribution to one of the most important geopolitical regions of the world (Singh, 2021).

3. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

This study draws upon secondary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books, policy reports, government publications and reports by international organisations in order to examine the strategic, economic and security role of India in the Indo Pacific region. The study is centered on the developments that have influenced India's Indo-Pacific involvement in the recent era, especially after the rising prominence of Indo-Pacific in the field of international relations and the gradual evolution of India's regional policy. The research will be based on secondary data only and will aim to give an overview of the current situation of India's changing regional role by critically analysing the available literature in the form of academic publications and policy documents (Kaura, 2020). It includes strategic cooperation with major regional players such as its interaction with multilateral institutions, regional groupings, and maritime initiatives, which are all adding to the Indo-Pacific architecture. There is a special focus on India's foreign policy design, strategic autonomy, maritime diplomacy and naval engagements, and membership of the mechanisms that foster a rules-based regional order. India's economic role in the Indo Pacific region, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, connectivity, supply chain security, blue economy and sustainable maritime development, is also discussed, as economic security has become a central theme in geopolitical play in the region (Mukherjee, 2020). The security aspect of the study explores India's role in maritime security in the region, including aspects like freedom of navigation, protection of sea lines of communication, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime domain awareness, counter piracy cooperation, and addressing new non-traditional security challenges. The analysis takes into account the synergy between India's defence diplomacy and naval modernisation strategies in the broader regional context of maintaining peace and stability, ensuring maritime governance and navigating new strategic uncertainties (Mitra, 2023).

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Medcalf (2020) The Indo-Pacific is more than a geographic entity, states conceptualises it as a strategic system because of the growing interconnectedness between the Indian and Pacific



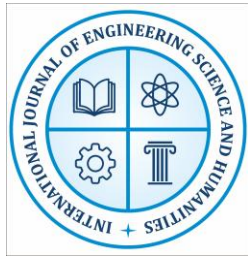
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Oceans inevitably transforming the geopolitics of the region. His analysis suggests that the Indo Pacific has come into existence due to the interdependence of maritime commerce, energy security, technology rivalry, and strategic clout of regional players. India's strategic importance is being enhanced by its geographical position in the Indian Ocean, which is at the heart of the Indian Ocean region and which enables India to impact on the security architecture of the larger Indian Ocean region, he argues. It is also important to note that Medcalf's analysis is saying that India's approach is different from the traditional alliance models as it is looking to maintain strategic autonomy and improve its partnership with countries that uphold a rules-based international order. The study emphasizes the significance of India's 'maritime diplomacy' as an integral element of India's foreign policy, especially in the context of freedom of navigation at sea, regional connectivity, and multilateral cooperation. His work offers the theoretical underpinnings of India's role as a key player in ensuring regional stable equilibrium, as well as in strategic competition between major powers (Medcalf, 2020).

Brewster (2018) Analysing the maritime strategy in the context of the Indo Pacific security scenario, it suggests that the Indian Ocean is at the heart of India's national security calculations. As India continues to rapidly modernize its navy, and increase its maritime partnerships and diplomatic engagements, it is moving away from the traditional continental strategic outlook to a comprehensive maritime outlook, he said. The authors suggest that India's involvement in these naval drills, defence pacts, and maritime capacity-building initiatives is designed to enhance its security in the region while upholding its longstanding commitment to strategic autonomy. Besides traditional military objectives, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, anti-piracy, and maritime domain awareness are also key components of India's maritime strategy, Brewster adds. His analysis demonstrates that India's security establishment is increasingly aware of India's symbiotic relationship between economic security and maritime security and that India is more of a net security provider in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific region.

Pant and Joshi (2019) Write a note on Indo Pacific policy of India in the changed scenario of Foreign Policy. They believe that the regional engagement has been growing at a higher pace under the new power realities in the international arena, especially in maritime Asia, in India's favour. Their study reveals that today the Act East Policy is a Indo-Pacific policy with all three elements – diplomacy, economy and defence. The authors emphasize that India's approach of issue-based partnership can be used to cooperate with a number of countries, without a commitment of an alliance. They also state that the push for an inclusive Indo Pacific has been India's effort to make sure that there is no “disco-ordinated” division in the region and ASEAN continues to be the main body of regional governance. They have found that India's participation in the institutions in the region is making it more effective in reaching out and is improving its ability to act together on matters of collective security and economic issues.



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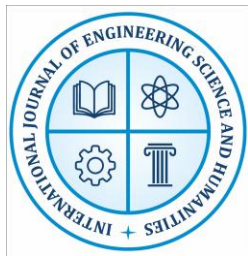
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Scott (2019) Briefly speaks about maritime diplomacy of India and increase in its engagement in regional security fora and naval cooperation. He thinks that Indian maritime engagement is now more comprehensive with traditional defence cooperation to environmental security, maritime governance, disaster response and capacity building of the smaller coastal and insular countries. This research underscores the importance of India's Naval diplomacy in promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation, noting the significance of joint exercises, port visits, intelligence sharing, and institutional visits. Moreover, India's maritime policies are focused on strengthening the international law principles concerning oceans, such as the freedom of navigation and peaceful settlement of disputes, Scott adds. His analysis suggests that India's increased role in the oceans is an effort not only to shape a stable regional order, but also to deal with geopolitical insecurities in the Indo Pacific region.

Mohan (2017) speaks about the strategic reconfiguration that India is undertaking in the current evolving Indo Pacific security landscape. With respect to foreign policy, India has increasingly realized that the sea is a means for India to exert its influence and involvement in the world. The research explores the reasons behind the new partnership between India and other nations, such as Japan, Australia, the USA and France, on the basis of common interest in maintaining regional peace, freedom of navigation and open seas. On Indo Pacific Mohan also argues that India's approach is different, as it is based on 'inclusive regionalism' and not confrontation, which means that India need not be confrontational and at the same time remain a cooperative partner. His writings reveal that India's evolving security policy offers it a chance to play a greater role in the world, but also calls attention to the new and subtle security challenges in the region.

Rajagopalan (2020) This paper will be an attempt to examine the responsibilities of India in the new security architecture of Indo-Pacific in terms of strategic partnership and institutional engagement. She believes India's involvement in a group like the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) does not mean that India's strategic autonomy is changing, it is just that regional dynamics are changing. It mentions that India has been keen on a foreign policy to safeguard its interests, but also been hesitant to strike military pacts with any bloc and has instead focused on on-ground security cooperation with other nations in the region. Rajagopalan also spoke about the importance of maritime capacity building and defence diplomacy and technology cooperation as an effective way to increase regional resilience. To remain a credible regional power, she says India needs flexibility in its diplomacy and needs to continue its strategic posture in the Indo Pacific.

Heiduk and Wacker (2020) Discuss how the Indo-Pacific is becoming a theatre of strategic rivalry and India's role in it. They believe that India has a unique and peculiar position as it has to look after its security in both the land and sea sectors and therefore, the foreign policy should be balanced in nature. The multiple directionality of Indian diplomacy is evident in its



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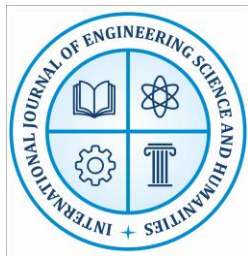
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cooperation with like-minded countries and interaction with a variety of regional actors, both of which are growing in India, their research shows. The authors also state that this Indo Pacific policy has helped in enhancing India's standing in the world as it is emphasizing upon rules based governance, maritime security and connectivity in Indo Pacific. They realize that India's strategic value will continue to increase in the background of increasing geopolitical rivalry in a geo-maritime matrix of Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Hall (2021) Highlights the economic aspect of Indo Pacific, regional integration and connectivity (RIC) and resilient supply chains. Today he thinks that economics and strategics are interwoven, particularly in places where maritime trade and production activities are of crucial importance. With India being a large market, a manufacturer, the digital economy and its investment relations, its increasing role is seen as crucial in the regional context. "Connectivity and infrastructure investments are part and parcel of India's involvement in the region, which is committed to sustainable regional development and not geopolitical competition," says Hall. His study also points to the necessity of diversifying Indian economy, effective logistic connectivity and technological cooperation for India's long term stay and contribution in the prosperity of the Indo Pacific region.

Jaishankar (2020) Indo Pacific is a region that has highlighted India's transformation of its foreign policy from 'continental concerns' to a broader 'maritime orientation'. He believes that the strategic thinking of India is now starting to bring to the fore the security, economic, technology & diplomacy relations between the Indian and Pacific oceans. His analysis indicates that the vision that India is projecting is one of an open, inclusive and rules based regional order, with no bloc politics and nurturing constructive partnerships. The study also suggests that Indian diplomacy shares the spirit of strategic autonomy which helps India to work with multiple powers without affecting its autonomy while making decisions. This makes it clear that the India's Indo Pacific policy is India's manifestation of dream to become a major player in the world, which will take part in the peace and stability of Indo Pacific region.

Singh (2021) Explains about the Indian maritime security policy and India's emerging navy and maritime diplomacy in the Indian Ocean Region. The study proposes that maritime security has shifted to a concept that goes beyond the traditional naval defence and has included humanitarian assistance, maritime surveillance, maritime disaster relief and protection of critical sea lanes of communication (SLOC). Singh notes that India is taking a holistic strategy to protect its national and regional interest by investing in maritime infrastructure, coastal security as well as naval modernization. The study concludes by saying that India's maritime prowess has a positive impact on India's security and help maintain stability in the broader Indo Pacific without coercion.



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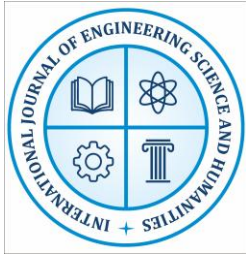
Rej (2022) The study aims to explore India's Indo Pacific policy with reference to Strategic autonomy and issue-based partnership. He believes that the India's enhanced engagement with Japan, Australia, France and USA is not about “alliance” but “pragmatic balancing”. The study contends that India's foreign policy is flexible and a multi-stakeholder one, and does not have a single strategic partner. But Rej argues that this would empower India to make a decisive decision in light of the geopolitical reality, while maintaining old principles of a sovereign decision. In the course of his analysis, he has highlighted how strategic autonomy is an intrinsic part of India's Indo-Pacific engagements, in the changing and nuanced security dynamics in the region.

Kaura (2020) Analyzes the Indo-Pacific vision of India and its diplomatic efforts and partnerships in the region. The study argues that the Indian presence is not only for geopolitical reasons but also the economic opportunities and maritime commitments. To promote connectivity, maritime cooperation, and institutional interaction, which have contributed to strengthening India's ties with Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean countries, Kaura notes. It also emphasizes the need for India's support to the centrality of the ASEAN and multilateral governance in the context of diminishing the strategic tensions and regional cooperation. Thus, the analysis in this manner provides a reinforcement to the concept of India's Indo Pacific policy which is focussed on stability and inclusive diplomacy for the long term future.

Mukherjee (2020) views the economic underpinnings of India's Indo-Pacific policy and how the prosperity of the region is becoming more and more dependent on safe and secure maritime trade and resilient economic networks. India's growing trade and investment activities with the Indo-Pacific countries have resulted in increasing emphasis on infrastructure connectivity, digital cooperation, and supply chain diversification, the study finds. Economic resilience forms a part of national security as it directly impacts disruption of maritime trade, which has a direct impact on industrial production and energy security and investment flows, Mukherjee had said. The work, thus, underscores the role of economic diplomacy as a key pillar in India's overall regional stability and sustainable development.

Basrur (2021) Examines the strategic significance of India, the dynamics of military strength, diplomacy and regional influence. He is of the opinion that India's Indo Pacific policy is a "mix of deterrence and diplomacy, and cautious balancing. India is not a country which is interested in confrontation but is interested in building defence readiness and dialogue through regional institutions, to maintain balance. Such balance helps India in meeting new security threats and guarantees a regional cooperation, Basrur says. His study focuses on the fine margins of national security and regional stability in India's strategic policy-making.

Paskal (2021) He talks about the emergence of Indo Pacific policies both by the regional and extra-regional powers and draws attention towards the ‘crucial role’ of India calling for a ‘Indo



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Pacific' framework, which includes India. Overall, the study finds that India's emphasis on maritime connectivity and cooperative security and disaster resilience distinguish it from narrowly competitive strategic models in the region. Paskal also points out that India's involvement with the island countries, regional organisations, and maritime activities boosts the collective capability to tackle traditional and non-traditional security threats. The research concludes that the impact of India's influence will more and more hinge on the capacity to turn strategic vision into action in the region through sustained diplomatic involvement.

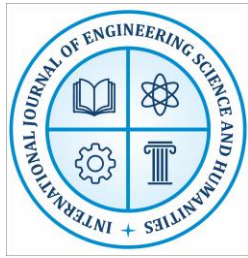
Heiduk (2020) analyzes the change from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific and argues that the vision of Asia-Pacific is just for India in the areas of economic cooperation, connectivity, multilateralism and maritime security. He says India's Indo Pacific policy goes beyond some other strategic policies, where the focus is on geopolitical competition, and ensures inclusive regional governance which is based on respect for international law and peaceful dispute settlement. The study also points to the fact that India's growing role in regional institutions and maritime organisations are a clear indication of its desire to contribute positively to the future regional order. This view highlights the growing importance of India as an active enabler, and its strategic, economic and diplomatic contributions as a key enabler of the security and continuity of the interconnected Indo-Pacific region.

5. RESEARCH GAP

The literature already reflects the fact that the Indo Pacific has emerged as a focal point of the present international relations and there are voluminous studies on the geopolitical dynamics, maritime security architecture, economic integration and the strategic rivalry between the big powers. Many of these studies focus on Indo-Pacific as a concept through the lens of the U.S., China, Japan or Australia, and Indo-Pacific is hardly a topic that is itself a theme, but one that is included in the regional security debate. This multi-faceted dimension of India's involvement – strategic, economic and security – is thus somewhat under-explored in the existing literature.

A number of scholars have been studying different aspects of Indo Pacific policy of India like Maritime diplomacy, Naval modernisation, Strategic partnership, Quadrilateral security dialogue and Act east policy. Likewise, other studies have concentrated on India's bilateral relations with other countries or how India has reacted to new challenges in the geopolitical sphere. However, little research explores these dimensions as a whole analytical lens and analyzes India-Strategic, Economic and Security (IES) contribution on the Indo-Pacific regional order. This is a piecemeal approach which does not really present a complete picture of India's rising regional role and policy objectives.

Another significant distinction involves the geopolitical and geo-economic environment which has undergone significant changes in recent years with respect to security of supply chains, maritime connectivity, technology cooperation, blue economy and non-traditional security

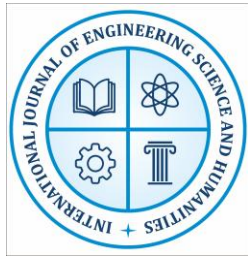


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threats. Much of the foregoing literature is earlier or considers these developments in isolation without assessing the overall impact on India's regional approach. Given this context, there is a need for new research work, which can incorporate the recent scholarly evidence and policy developments to provide a new assessment of Indian involvement in the Indo Pacific.

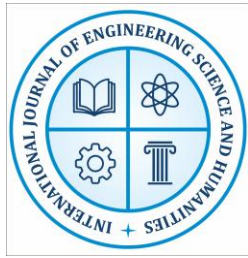
Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Methodology	Key Findings	Relevance to Present Study
Medcalf (2020)	Evolution of the Indo-Pacific concept and regional strategic order	Conceptual and policy analysis	Defined the Indo-Pacific as an integrated strategic system linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans and emphasised India's central maritime role.	Provides the theoretical foundation for analysing India's strategic position in the Indo-Pacific.
Brewster (2018)	India's maritime strategy and Indian Ocean security	Strategic policy analysis	Highlighted India's transition towards maritime security, naval modernisation, and regional cooperation.	Supports the analysis of India's maritime and defence strategy.
Pant & Joshi (2019)	India's Indo-Pacific foreign policy	Policy and geopolitical analysis	Demonstrated the evolution of the Act East Policy into a comprehensive Indo-Pacific strategy.	Explains India's diplomatic and strategic engagement in the region.
Scott (2019)	Maritime diplomacy and regional security	Qualitative strategic assessment	Examined India's expanding naval diplomacy, maritime governance, and security cooperation.	Contributes to understanding India's role in maritime security.
Mohan (2017)	Strategic transformation in the Indo-Pacific	Foreign policy analysis	Identified India's increasing emphasis on maritime power and strategic partnerships.	Provides insights into India's evolving strategic priorities.
Rajagopalan (2020)	India's security architecture and the Quad	Policy analysis	Argued that India's strategic partnerships complement rather	Explains India's balanced regional security approach.



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			than replace strategic autonomy.	
Heiduk & Wacker (2020)	Geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific	Comparative strategic analysis	Analysed India's multidirectional diplomacy amid growing regional competition.	Supports the discussion of India's geopolitical positioning.
Hall (2021)	Economic integration and supply chains	Economic and policy review	Highlighted resilient supply chains, connectivity, and economic security in the Indo-Pacific.	Forms the basis for analysing India's economic engagement.
Jaishankar (2020)	India's Indo-Pacific vision	Diplomatic and policy analysis	Emphasised an open, inclusive, and rules-based regional order supported by strategic autonomy.	Explains India's contemporary foreign policy vision.
Singh (2021)	Maritime security and naval capability	Security policy analysis	Examined India's role in maritime surveillance, disaster relief, and sea-lane protection.	Supports the security dimension of the study.
Rej (2022)	Strategic autonomy in the Indo-Pacific	Qualitative policy analysis	Demonstrated India's flexible partnership model while maintaining independent decision-making.	Helps explain India's diplomatic balancing strategy.
Kaura (2020)	Evolution of India's Indo-Pacific engagement	Policy and geopolitical analysis	Highlighted the importance of connectivity, diplomacy, and ASEAN engagement.	Supports the analysis of India's regional partnerships.
Mukherjee (2020)	Economic diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific	Secondary data analysis	Demonstrated the growing importance of trade, digital	Provides evidence for the economic perspective of the



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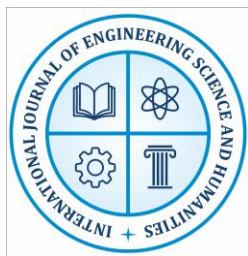
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			cooperation, and resilient supply chains.	research.
Basrur (2021)	Strategy, military capability, and diplomacy	Strategic affairs analysis	Argued that India combines deterrence with diplomatic engagement to maintain regional stability.	Supports the strategic perspective of the study.
Paskal (2021)	Indo-Pacific regional strategies	Comparative strategic analysis	Highlighted India's emphasis on maritime connectivity, resilience, and cooperative security.	Strengthens the discussion of India's regional influence.
Heiduk (2020)	India's Indo-Pacific regional framework	Policy and regional governance analysis	Explained India's commitment to inclusive regional governance, multilateralism, and international law.	Reinforces the analysis of India's comprehensive Indo-Pacific approach.

6. METHODOLOGY

This paper is of qualitative research methodology so only secondary data will be analysed regarding the role of India in the Indo Pacific region from three aspects – Strategic, Economic and Security aspects. Secondary research approach is applicable because it enables to analyse the existing literature and knowledge obtained from different scholars and policies and trends in the current geopolitical world without primary research. The analysis relies on data gathered from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, government publications, policy papers, reports of international organisations, defence and strategic think tanks and other trustworthy academic sources, mostly from 2015 onwards.

The method applied in this study is a systematic review and thematic analysis to extract, compare and synthesize the relevant information from the literature selected for the study. The information gathered was analysed critically and categorised into three major areas namely, strategic engagement, economic cooperation and regional security. Special emphasis was placed on the foreign policy efforts, maritime diplomacy, defence cooperation, regional connectivity, trade and commerce, maritime security and multilateral cooperation under the Indo Pacific paradigm in India. Only authentic and reliable sources which are well known for their academic credibility were included for the validity and reliability of the findings. Thematic synthesis of the



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literature selected gives an integrated understanding of India's changing regional role and helps in a balanced interpretation of the ongoing developments in the Indo Pacific region in the areas of strategic, economic, and security.

Table 3. India's Strategic Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific

Partner	Area of Cooperation	Strategic Importance
United States	Defence, technology, maritime security	Enhances strategic interoperability
Japan	Infrastructure, investment, connectivity	Supports regional development
Australia	Maritime exercises, Quad cooperation	Strengthens Indo-Pacific security
France	Naval cooperation, Indian Ocean security	Expands maritime collaboration
ASEAN	Trade, connectivity, diplomacy	Reinforces regional integration

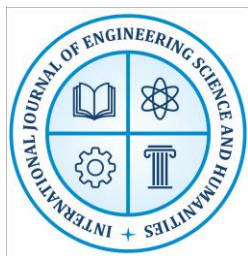
Table 4. Major Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific

Security Challenge	Impact on India	India's Response
Maritime disputes	Threat to regional stability	Diplomatic engagement and naval presence
Piracy	Disruption of maritime trade	Anti-piracy naval operations
Maritime terrorism	Risk to coastal security	Maritime surveillance and intelligence sharing
Illegal fishing	Economic and environmental losses	Regional maritime cooperation
Natural disasters	Humanitarian emergencies	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) missions

7. MARITIME SECURITY, DEFENCE COOPERATION, AND REGIONAL STABILITY

Maritime security is one of the most significant parts of India's Indo Pacific policy as the Indo Pacific region is of crucial importance for India's international trade, energy transportation, and strategic communication. The analysis reveals that India's maritime policies over the years have been gradually shifting towards recognising the importance of the maritime domain in the nation's overall national security and foreign policy objectives, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and maritime surveillance and security of sea lines of communication. This comprehensive approach highlights the interconnection between economic security, environment and regional security in Indo Pacific.

India has been modernizing its navy, enhancing its maritime domain awareness and deepening its ties with its regional partners. Regular bilateral and multilateral naval exercises, defence dialogues, intelligence sharing and capacity building programmes have boosted the operational



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coordination between Indo Pacific countries. India's participation in the cooperative security arrangements has also strengthened its ability to combat effectively the non-traditional security threats like piracy, illegal trafficking, maritime terrorism, natural disaster etc. These are all signs of India's intent to become a sea power that is responsible and to make sure that there is a shared security and not military supremacy.

The findings also show that there has been a consistent presence of defence diplomacy in India's foreign policy domain, which has contributed to the development of trust, transparency and institutional linkages across the region. India's contribution to smaller island states has been evident in its support in security, coastal security, humanitarian and other technical assistance, establishing itself as a trusted security partner. They also point out that India's compliance with international maritime laws and procedures for peaceful conflict resolution have enhanced the confidence of the region in the Indian leadership. Consequently, maritime security and defence cooperation have become an integral part of India's strategy towards ensuring security, safe navigation and good governance in the maritime domain of the Indo-Pacific.

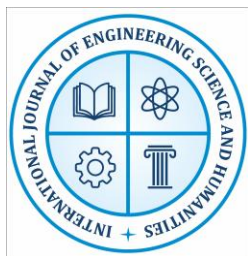
8. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR INDIA'S INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

With the increasing influence and contribution of India in the region, there are certain challenges which are still playing a significant role in the effectivity of India's Indo Pacific strategy. The growing geopolitical rivalry, shifting maritime conflicts, technological competition and global supply chain uncertainties are a complex strategic landscape that calls for astute policy choices. India should not let strategic autonomy come in the way of enhancing strategic partnerships in the region and at the same time should avoid unnecessary strategic confrontations. One of the features of India's foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific region has been this juggling.

Implementation challenges with resource constraints, infrastructure requirements and varying strategic priorities amongst regional partners also exist. Regional Connectivity Projects need continuity of investment, institutional coordination and policies to achieve success. Besides, new and non-traditional security issues like climate change, cyber security, illegal fishing, marine pollution and humanitarian crises require further multilateral cooperation and innovations. These challenges are interdependent and will need a kind of policy coordination in the traditional sense – that is, beyond just defence and diplomacy.

Table 5. Summary of India's Contribution to the Indo-Pacific

Dimension	Major Contributions	Expected Outcomes
Strategic	Regional diplomacy, strategic partnerships	Stable regional order
Economic	Trade, connectivity, supply-chain resilience	Sustainable economic growth
Security	Naval cooperation, maritime surveillance	Secure sea lines of communication



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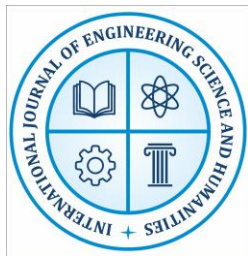
Diplomatic	Multilateral engagement and ASEAN support	Inclusive regional governance
Developmental	Blue economy and capacity building	Long-term regional sustainability

The study thus concludes that the future of India in the Indo-Pacific is bright as India is becoming more economically strong, technologically advanced, demographically powerful and more diplomatic. Continued investment in maritime facilities and infrastructure, modernization of the navy, and sustainable economic ties and connectivity with the region are likely to further strengthen India's influence in the region. Cooperation with the Indian Ocean island States and other like-minded members in the region in ASEAN is also expected to be increased, to enable India to have a greater role in the creation of the open and inclusive regional order. In this evolving geopolitical environment of the Indo-Pacific, with an increasing need for strategic foresight and pragmatic regional cooperation, India will continue to be a key force in promoting stability, sustainable development, and rules-based governance in this critical region.

9. CONCLUSION

India's Indo-Pacific vision is now a comprehensive one that encompasses strategic cooperation, economic collaboration, and regional security. The finding from this study is that India's rise in regional order shaping is a result of its geographical positioning, growing engagement in the region and strengthening its maritime capability. The Indian Government has taken several steps to promote a rule-based, open, and inclusive Indo Pacific, such as the Act East Policy, SAGAR and Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative and has been practicing strategic autonomy. At the same time, the strengthening of economic cooperation, regional connectivity, supply chain resilience and sustainable development efforts have strengthened India's role in regional prosperity and economic resilience.

The analysis further indicates that maritime security and defence partnership are now an integral part of Indo-Pacific strategy of India. India's growing engagement with multilateral institutions, naval exercises, humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions and maritime capacity building is testament to its desire to keep the seas free and ensure regional stability. A stable economic development, diplomatic leverage and strategic partnerships provide a foundation for India to continue to engage with the region in the coming years, though geopolitical rivalry, evolving security dynamics and implementation challenges will continue to play a role in India's engagement. In conclusion, the study suggests that India will continue to play a crucial role in the Indo-Pacific, and its diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation will be vital in ensuring the long-term peace, stability, and sustainable development of the region.



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