

Regional Security and Economic Integration: Indo-Mauritius Relations with Reference to China's Emerging Suzerainty

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Abstract

The string of pearls theory is the most popular buzzword which reflects and throngs the mind of exponents in the deliberations and writings of the research in International relations. The economical warfare, Ukraine crisis and Gaza-Israel poses a serious threat for the International peace and security in the 21st century of the third millennium. In the multi-aligned world scenario, regional integration and mutual development is the most expected mode which may integrate invariably all regions and certainly paves way for world peace. SAARC QUAD BRICS are all varied organizations which are meant for regional security and indeed economical development. Indo-Mauritius relations is one among the less concentrated are which if focused, may fetch fruitful outcome not only for the said countries, but also for the entire region,. From 2000 to 2025, Mauritius contributes 180 billion USD in FDI, making it the second largest source of FDI into India. Nonetheless, the bilateral trade value between these two countries is approximately \$800 million. This research study attempts to reflect on the vitality of India-Mauritius relations in the context of China's suzerainty.

Keywords: *Super power; Regional Integration; Global power*

Introduction

Economy determines the well-being of all nations and its people in the 21st century through democratic governance and practices. A majority of nations in the contemporary world focus upon welfare policies, GDP, GDH, Purchasing capacity and economic development factors, keeping aside all other political-territorial-ethno-religious hindrances. Ancient state order was centered around the territory and its expansion by the monarchical states. Pelopponesian war and other European centered expansionist activities proved the realist theory of International relations. Macedonian empire established all around the world under the regime of Alexander, proved the aforesaid theory of "expansion". The medieval world system was accepted with Church vs God, which brought religious disputes and predominant church-related fights to the forefront. Monarchs and church authorities made little attempt to focus/prioritize people's welfare, despite the numerous social ideologies and ideas unleashed by doyens and scholarly geniuses.

The medieval world experienced seven centuries of religious and territorial warfare. Religion has used as a weapon for powerful rulers to establish and wield their dominance in various parts of the world. However, 100 years of war and 30 years of struggle were another example of crimes against humanity, humanism, and humankind. The Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648, was the first attempt by European leaders following the Battle of Waterloo to unite several territories on the European continent. During the French Revolution in 1789, a significant advance was accomplished by creating the fundamental ideals of democracy, namely liberty, equality, and fraternity. However, there was little indication of integrating regions and impoverished economies around the world for a noble cause.

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All sacred scriptures from various nations included democratic essentials in their rule of law mechanisms. WWI demonstrated that "war is a dangerous weapon to deal with," prompting the establishment of the League of Nations, which structured its resolutions and charters through the Treaty of Versailles. Despite all of these ideal functions, the organization failed to achieve its mission and motto of maintaining international peace and security as a result of Italian aggression in Abyssinia and Japan in Manchuria. Furthermore, Hitler's aggressive policy fueled the fire that eventually led to the tragic World War II. The San Francisco conference, sponsored by the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union, boosted another supranational institution, the United Nations, which had remarkable success in sustaining global order.

Cold war crises such as the Korean War, Vietnam, Cuba, Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq, Vietnam, Soviet breakdown, Berlin Wall demolition, Nuclear testing, Global War Against Terrorism, Arab Spring, Pandemic, Gaza, and Ukraine opened up new avenues for regional organization and security, making world peace appear possible to the international community. It continues to have a dynamic impact on international and regional organizations. Darwin's "survival of the fittest" theory is gaining traction as a result of superpower policies. Recent crises, such as Gaza and Ukraine's economic warfare, serve as stark reminders of the current international order.

Every regional organization is having its motto and regional security is the prime objective of such organizations. For instance BRICS is a regional organization of emerging economies which have its objective of upgraded economic development on par with existing or to surpass the prevailing super powers. The idea of conglomeration of emerging economies was mooted by Neil in 2000s and the recent summit proved that its ebullient functioning may strengthen each and every member of the organization.

QUAD is another group formed to protect the interests of its members, primarily to improve and sustain stability in the Pacific region, which was formerly threatened by the PRC. Thus, every organization can be understood in terms of realism and idealist goals. Similarly, NATO, which began in 1949, expanded its scope and had a significant impact on all regions of the world due to its extraordinary functions. The bulk of Eastern European countries joined NATO to safeguard their citizens from the iron curtain mentality. Additionally, the United States safeguards the interests of NATO members by its power, authority, and influence. At the same time, the United States has a very strong goal: to increase its influence among NATO members.

Regional organizations such as the OIC, APEC, and OPEC in the Pacific and Arabian areas have succeeded in proving and implementing their policies and objectives, hence ensuring regional security. However, other groups, such as SAARC NAM CENTO WARSAW, experienced numerous challenges in advancing their goals, resulting in a debacle. Overall, the goal of establishing regional organizations is to promote regional security and economic integration. But in certain regions relationship between two countries decides the ongoing functions and the success of organization. UNO is in the prime position, coordinating and controlling and maintaining peace and security along with the presence of regional organizations. Indeed, the functioning of regional organizations in the relevant regions reduces the role of the United Nations.

India and Mauritius

Mauritius was formerly a French colony before coming under British authority. During French administration in the 1700s, Pondicherry Indians were brought in as artisans and masons. From 1834 to the early 1900s, about 500,000 Indian indentured workers arrived under British administration, with two-thirds settling permanently. In 1901, Mahatma Gandhi visited Mauritius and inspired Indian laborers with ideas of education, political empowerment, and maintaining connected to India. Mauritius commemorates Gandhi's Dandi March on March 12, which also happens to be its National Day. Mauritius was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with independent India in 1948. Mauritius obtained independence from British administration in 1968. The country has been predominantly governed by two prominent political families: the Ramgoolams. Navin Ramgoolam, who won the elections last year, has previously served as Prime Minister twice (1995-2000, 2005-2014).

The first Prime Minister of independent Mauritius, Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, was an important figure in the country's freedom campaign. He collaborated extensively with Indian luminaries including Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal

Nehru, and Sarojini Naidu. He also had close links to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and proofread his book, *The Indian Struggle* (1934).

During PM Modi's 2015 visit to Mauritius, India struck an agreement to improve transport infrastructure on Agaléga Island, hence enhancing marine and air connectivity. These advances are intended to assist the Mauritian Defence Forces in securing their outer islands. In February 2024, both countries will jointly inaugurate an airstrip and jetty project. Speculations of India developing a military facility in Agaléga were denied by then-Prime Minister Pravin Jugnauth, who reiterated Mauritius' sovereignty over the island and blasted anti-India propaganda. With China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean, India is seeking to build connections with island nations such as Mauritius in order to maintain regional peace and security. Following Cyclone Chido, India sent naval assets to Agaléga to provide help. The new infrastructure also assists Mauritius with maritime surveillance, patrolling its Exclusive Economic Zone, and combating piracy, drug trafficking, and other security issues.

India and Mauritius intend to strengthen defence cooperation by signing a technical agreement for sharing white-shipping information. This will enhance marine security, safeguard trade routes, and strengthen regional data exchange. Over the last decade, India has supplied Mauritius with almost \$1.1 billion in economic aid, which includes \$729 million in lines of credit and \$427 million in grants. Key projects include three Metro Express phases and 96 small-scale infrastructure efforts, 51 of which have been completed. India, as a First Responder, has regularly assisted Mauritius during emergencies such as the Covid-19 epidemic, the Wakashio oil leak in 2020, and a recent typhoon, demonstrating its role as a dependable partner.

Mauritius is an important economic partner, accounting for the second-largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India after Singapore. In 2021, the two countries signed the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement, which marked India's first trade agreement with an African country. Several Indian public sector undertakings, including Bank of Baroda, LIC, and NBCC, operate in Mauritius.

India and Mauritius have been collaborating on space research since 1986. In 2023, ISRO and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a collaborative spacecraft, bolstering space ties even further. Mauritius has reaped major benefits from India's ITEC initiative, with around 4,940 Mauritians trained during 2002-03. In addition, 2,300 Indian students are studying higher education in Mauritius, including medical, hotel management, and business courses.

China Factor

India's development path is consistently and frequently hampered by the PRC, which poses a significant danger to regional security and economic integration. The 1962 war and its aftermath reveal a great deal about the territorial and power structures that have emerged in the international arena. Asia pivots. QUAD refers to all efforts by global powers to counter China's imperialistic tendencies. The latest tariffs imposed by Trump all around the world have a significant detrimental impact on many regions.

The competitive environment at the international level, combined with India's balancing role, resulted in a common journey. The 2008 financial crisis hit many countries, with 13 banks going bankrupt in the United States of America. War against terrorism in 2001 impacted in a positive way so as to be close with India from the side of United States of America. Significant changes in 2010 led India to join a number of regional organizations, including BRICS BASIC and other important groupings.

As highlighted by Jaishankar MEA, Indian nationalism leads to internationalism, and the enlightened national interest is the primary focus of India's foreign policy. Vasudeva Kudumbam and Vishwaguru have recently become watchwords in India's foreign policy, cementing India's position as a unique nation with strategic autonomy at its core. India's policy framework has evolved significantly during the last 79 years in response to major global shifts, but not in terms of fundamental values and civilizational ethos.

India is considered as a credible balancer since it has not maintained ill-will ties with either of the superpowers while daring to comment on developing issues. That being said, one belt, one road (OBR) was one such initiative that India

strongly opposed because it had a negative influence on security. India has recently maintained goodwill connections with Central Asian countries, the Gulf States, and ASEAN states, paving the way for the economic expansion of the Indian subcontinent.

As a peace-loving country, India has demonstrated its good intentions at various stages of the world. Its fight for a permanent place in the United Nations is also in the developing stage. The G20 presidency is a wonderful opportunity for India to establish itself as a soft power. Prime Minister Modi's recent visits to various war-torn areas on the basis of invitation is a vibrant substantial for establishing itself as a peace-seeker, as stipulated in the Indian constitution.

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