



Mains Practice Question

Q. With the rise of maritime territorial disputes and rising tension across the world, there is renewed focus on maritime security by India. Discuss the challenges faced by India in achieving maritime security. (150 words)

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Approach

- Introduce your answer by briefly describing maritime security and discuss recent examples of maritime territorial disputes.
- Discuss challenges faced by India in achieving maritime security.
- Discuss measures needed to be taken by India to ensure its maritime security.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- Maritime security could be **classified as the issues in the maritime domain** comprising national security, marine environment, economic development, and human security.
- Besides the world's oceans, it also **deals with regional seas, territorial waters, rivers and ports.**
- Further, maritime power plays a vital role in ensuring geopolitical stability and progression of geoeconomics, and India's geography makes a compelling case for maritime expansion and strategic ties.

Body

- **The recent examples of maritime disputes are as follows:**
 - China's imaginary nine dash line and creating sand island in the international waters of south China sea.
 - Russia's aggression in Crimea region and sea of Azov.
 - Iran's threats to blockade Persian Gulf.
 - **Issue in Indian ocean:**
 - Rising belligerence of Chinese navy in Indian ocean region.
 - Threat to sea lanes of communications by state and non-state actors.
 - Threat of Piracy and trafficking.
- **Challenges faced by India in achieving maritime security:**
 - **Climate Change and Water Pollution:** Climate change is always a problem to maritime security, it may make **challenges to the proper working of machines and unpredictable situations in the security**, unclear aims are making problems in naval systems.
 - The water pollution affecting the life mechanisms in the ocean will seriously affect the fisherman and other coastal problems at the seashore.
 - **Safe Passage of Merchant ship:** Either international conflict or civil war can present risk to ships or crew, this risk will depend on the nature of the conflict.
 - **Cyber-attacks:** Ships are increasingly using relay digitization, integration and automation, which calls cyber risk management on board with the help of information technology (IT)

and operational technology (OT).

- **Offshore facilities including Oil rig:** Extraction of the oils in international waters and the facilities which carrying to the ships and the protection of that ship and its facilities.
- **China's increasing influences in the region:** China is always trying to increase its power in the world with different types of policies and investments, which is also providing military and economic cooperation with its affiliated countries making some security problems to Indian security like:
 - **'One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR) and 'String of pearls policy' are the strategic policy of China,** which also has powerful ideas of the development of trade and other cunning policy of power upgrading against India.
 - Further, the string of pearls policy describes China as a plan to make creating military ports in nations like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar its challenge towards maritime security of India.
- **Measures needed to be taken by India to ensure its maritime security:**
 - **Joint Exercise:** Need of joint naval exercises including Indian navy and coast guard for effective co-ordination in Ocean security, as it will be helpful for increasing the influence and will be updated for security measures and further, help in maintaining a peaceful environment for maritime security.
 - **Creating Awareness:** Creating awareness among civil population like fishing community for reporting strange incidents in oceans.
 - **Technology:** Importing and implementing most modern technology for predicting and preventing enemy attacks in oceans.
 - Further, there is need for India to further enhance its capabilities like:
 - Operational Logistics
 - Self-Reliance and Indigenization
 - Updated technologies

Conclusion

There is an age-old saying that goes by "who rules the seas rules the world". It holds true even to this day. Though India is definitely not competing to dominate the world with military might, it is of prime importance to ensure regional stability and security. This would best be achieved by ensuring the dominance of the Indian Ocean region and simultaneously working with other global partners to ensure freedom of navigation in the Indian and Pacific oceans.