

# Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR)

Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) is India's policy or doctrine of maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. The policy was first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 12 2015.

Although no single official documentary has been published regarding the approach of SAGAR there have been several initiatives and numerous maritime events that can be considered a part of it.

This article will further elaborate on the initiatives, and details related to the SAGAR initiative within the context of the Civil Services Examination.

## Vision of SAGAR

It was in a keynote address to the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) when Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated a vision for the SAGAR initiative by stating that *"Our vision for the Indian Ocean Region is rooted in advancing cooperation in our region and to use our capabilities for the benefit of all in our common maritime home"*

Based on this vision of the SAGAR initiative can be defined under the following terms:

1. **Security:** Enhancement of coastal security so that land and maritime territories can be safeguarded with relative ease.
2. **Capacity Building:** Deepening economic and security cooperation for smooth facilitation of economic trade and maritime security.
3. **Collective Action:** Promoting collective action to deal with natural disasters and maritime threats like piracy, terrorism and emergent non-state actors.
4. **Sustainable Development:** Working towards sustainable regional development through enhanced collaboration
5. **Maritime Engagement:** Engaging with countries beyond our shores with the aim of building greater trust and promoting respect for maritime rules, norms and peaceful resolution of disputes.

## Why is SAGAR mission required?

The Security and Growth for all in the Region initiative is required for the following reasons:

- India can leverage on the Blue economy through this initiative. A Blue economy presents an opportunity to meet its national socio-economic challenges. In addition connectivity with its neighbours can be enhanced
- Regional issue such as disasters, piracy can be tackled. Further an integrated approach and cooperative future will become possible through the implementation of the SAGAR initiative.
- Through the 21st Century Maritime Silk Route, China has been exerting its influence in the Indian Ocean region. This is a double-edged sword as they have commercial and military implications in the form of the String of Pearls strategy. Keeping this context in mind, the SAGAR vision is important in countering such issues.

## Strength and Weaknesses of SAGAR vision

Like many initiatives, the Security and Growth for all in the Region have its fair share of weaknesses and strength

**Strengths:** India's greatest strength in the SAGAR initiative is its central location in the Indian Ocean providing unrestricted access to the Indian Ocean Region. Along with this, it has immense capabilities which it can share with its maritime neighbours - strong and capable maritime security forces, shipyards capable of constructing aircraft carriers and submarines, vast industrial complexes, financial institutions, space assets to name a few

It was long understood by the political leadership that India's best defences lie in strengthening its maritime domain. There India has focused on issues that are of priority to the smaller nations – security of natural resources, sustainable development, protection from natural disasters, and controlling the ill-effects of marine pollution and climate change.

**Weaknesses:** The weakness of the SAGAR initiative is due to its capacity and execution. Although India has the capability to offer the maritime assets it has limited capacity to execute it. The limitation of capacity, coupled with a lack of international coordination, will fail in living up to the expectations of its maritime neighbours.

It can also be argued that India has still not adequately harnessed its capability in military diplomacy since it is careful in committing more assets and manpower, and due to its internal governance mechanisms. The capacity of the private sector has not been guided along with the SAGAR initiative.

## Conclusion

The elements of SAGAR constitute the IOR policy of India and substantial measures have been undertaken on each of these constituent elements. Central to the Indian effort will be the continued growth of its economy and economic prosperity. Any slowdown in its economy will bring all its efforts to a grinding halt.

In order to mitigate such effects, a regional legally-binding concerning marine genetic resources should be concluded within the framework of the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS).