Eastern Indian Ocean

Eastern Indian Ocean: Historical Links to Contemporary Convergences

Edited by

Lipi Ghosh

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Eastern Indian Ocean:
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ABOUT THE SERIES
PASTS AND FUTURES:
READINGS IN A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The end of the twentieth century has seen momentous shifts both in production and in production relations, now visible in new clusters that dominate physical and intellectual landscapes. This has substantially changed the way we perceive ourselves, as well as the world around us.

And yet, this transformation is only partial, visible in some landscapes. Old theories are inadequate to address the rapidly unfolding changes. The question rises: how do we relate past experience-and conventional disciplines-with contemporary realities? How do those 'left behind' perceive themselves and the world around them? How do the humanities and the social sciences cope? What is the position, and function, of archaeology, a science that deals exclusively with the human past, in this new shift? What role do disciplines, citizens, communities, states and nations play in this new society? How do we negotiate this new world? Are we living only in a networked society?

Language, anthropology, history and historical sociology become, in this context, absolutely relevant once again. How can past experience help us engage with this new world? What are the processes through which the past is forged and the optics through which it is perceived, the tropes through which the present is negotiated, the lens which represents the past and foretells the future? The negotiation between the past and the present is never more robust than now, in this neo liberal age, when historical memory plays a critical role in defining identity: linguistic, religious, and racial. Paradoxically, nationalism, far from being under stress, is facing resurgence. The communities we forge are still imagined, but they now embrace cyberspace as well.

Citizenship is redefining itself. As new productive relations materialize, as new methods of organizing skills and workspaces occupy centre stage, as technology increasingly dominates our lives, as old hierarchies disappear and new ones are reconfigured spatially, citizens forge new links through

networks, rather than in clusters, within and across nation states. The power of ICT is enabling a new kind of *communitas*. Just as the invention of printing and the coming of the book created a group of readers in sixteenth century Europe, just as the newspaper in nineteenth century Iran created a political group anxious for democracy, so too the blog in the twenty first century offers multiple platforms for global citizens to voice their alarm and despondency over world affairs. Older clusters of activity transform into nodes in networks that are transnational.

The phenomenal growth of the knowledge economy has, therefore, changed the way we live our lives. Two examples come readily to mind: the awesome reach of the internet media which forges new communities as we just read and the transformation in work culture that is steadily eroding the conventional distinction between blue and white collar jobs. Cultures are no longer in transition; they are being reconstituted.

Silently, traditional disciplines are forging new bridges with technology: the transformation of GIS into digital geography is a case in point. There is a newness here that we often ignore: in this fast changing technology dominated world: the new relations that dominate our lives are both omnipresent and at the same time invisible.

How these changes reconfigure our negotiation with the past is the focus of **Pasts and Futures: Readings in a Contemporary World,** an initiative launched by concerned faculty in the Schools of Social Sciences and the Humanities, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India.

Eastern Indian Ocean: Historical Links to Contemporary Convergences, edited by Lipi Ghosh, is presented here, as the first volume under this series, with contributions from scholars working on South & Southeast Asia.

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FOREWORD

OM PRAKASH

I am happy to know that a seminar on the Eastern Indian Ocean was organized by the Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies of the University of Calcutta, Kolkata. As a result of the seminar, a book entitled *Eastern Indian Ocean: Historical Links to Contemporary Convergences* is to be published. I am pleased to contribute a foreword to the publication on the request of Professor Lipi Ghosh, the editor of the Volume.

The Eastern Indian Ocean in fact constitutes the Bay of Bengal, which is located in the northeastern Indian Ocean. It is bounded by India (to the west), Bangladesh (to the north) and Myanmar and the Andaman Sea (in the east). The region is influenced by monsoons and the outflow from several major river systems. Occupying about 839,000 sq miles (2,173,000 sq km), it is bordered by Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and the northern Malay Peninsula. It is about 1,000 miles (1,600 km) wide, with an average depth exceeding 8,500 ft (2,600 miles). Many large rivers, including the Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri (Cauvery), Ganges (Ganga), and Brahmaputra, flow into it. The Andaman and Nicobar islands, the Bay's only islands, separate it from the Andaman Sea to the southeast.

The trade profile of the Bay of Bengal is very interesting. It has long been crossed by Indian and Malaysian traders; Chinese maritime trading dates from the 12th century. Vasco da Gama and many other explorers also frequented the region. Located between India and the Malay Peninsula, the Bay of Bengal linked Eastern Asia with the Indian sub-continent. On the Indian side, Madras and Pondicherry dominated the Chola coast where ships set sail for Eastern Asia. Other ships on the maritime trade route between Rome and China passed through Sri Lanka. Often Indian ships collected these cargoes and set out for Eastern Asia. In order to reach Vietnam or China, the ships had to pass through the straits of Malacca. This was considered a dangerous voyage, where ruthless "sea gypsies" or pirates were known to lurk. An option to this was to unload the cargo on the shore and pay the local people to transport it across the Isthmus of Kra to the far coast where Chinese junks could collect it. Since this was a

difficult undertaking, the bulk of trade passed through the straits of Malacca. Cities overlooking the straits, such as Srivijay (near modern day Palembang) and Malacca became rich and powerful through trade and taxes on the passing ships.

Historically, all members of the surrounding countries of Bay of Bengal– India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Sri Lanka have witnessed dynamic interaction between maritime trade and cultural evolution. What Kenneth Mcpherson wrote about the Indian Ocean in general applies with even greater validity to the Bay of Bengal. 'The Indian Ocean region was the home of the world's first urban civilization, and the centre of the first sophisticated commercial and maritime activities. The ocean – as a great highway and source of food and raw materials was a vital force moulding the many societies on its shores long before people maintained written records.'

Throughout history, sailing was an important means of communication between South India and the distant lands of Southeast Asia through the Bay of Bengal. As Arasaratnam has pointed out, India acted as a bridge between the East and the West. Hence the Arab name for the Southwestern coast of India – Malabar – is the Arabic word for 'bridge' or 'crossway'. Indian contacts with Southeast Asia did not snap in the 13th century. Recent research in maritime history clearly proves that Keralites, Tamils and Gujaratis had extensive contacts with Southeast Asia in the medieval period. In fact, in the Islamisation of Indonesia, the Muslims from Gujarat and Malabar, Tamil Nadu and Bengal played a decisive role. India has land and maritime boundaries with Myanmar and maritime boundaries with Thailand and Indonesia. These countries are not only our next door neighbours, Indian political ideas, institutions, religion, art and language have in the past profoundly influenced them.

One out of five people in the world is a part of the Bay of Bengal community. The region is rich in natural and mineral resources. A recent publication of the FAO financed Bay of Bengal Programme points out: 'It encompasses the continental shelf off the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, where tuna are abundant; the nutrient rich upland riverine basins and the unique Sunderbans mangrove eco-systems of India and Bangladesh that support a host of fin and shell fish species of commercial significance; and the valuable coral reefs of Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar.'

In modern day context, the Bay of Bengal is a gift of 'Mother Nature' and the littoral states can cooperate with one another for common wellbeing.A negative feature of the area is that often cyclonic storms lash out Bangladesh and the Orissa coast. If the littoral states had agreed to cooperate in the crucial domain of weather forecasting, preventive measures could have been adopted and the population evacuated from the coastal areas well in advance of nature's fury. Similarly, the Bay of Bengal is used by the insurgents in the North East and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in Sri Lanka to illegally smuggle weapons. This maritime terrorism could easily be contained were the littoral states to share intelligence and coordinate their anti-terrorist activities. The list could be multiplied.

In short, exploitation of living and non-living maritime resources; development of maritime communications; ship building and ship repair; weather forecasting; prevention of pollution and combating maritime terrorism – these tasks, which are the exclusive responsibilities of individual countries at present, can best be accomplished through Bay of Bengal centric regional cooperation.

Unlike the South China Sea, where conflicting territorial claims threaten peace and stability, the Bay of Bengal region is an area of relative tranquility. India has settled its maritime boundaries with all its Southeast Asian neighbours. Agreements were signed with Indonesia in 1974 and 1977, with Thailand in 1978, with Myanmar in 1987, and the trijunction among India, Thailand and Indonesia in 1978. As far as South Asia is concerned, the maritime boundaries with Sri Lanka were demarcated by maritime agreements in 1974 and 1976. The agreements were based on the principle of equidistance, though in the case of Sri Lanka and Myanmar, New Delhi made some concessions in the interest of good neighbourly relations. Currently, the only unsettled maritime border is with Bangladesh. India's keenness to settle the border has not been reciprocated. The New Moore island is a subject of territorial dispute between the two countries.

Cooperation among the countries of Bay of Bengal community would pave the way for confidence building in security related issues as well. It may be recalled that the modest expansion of the Indian Navy near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the 1970s and 1980s, led to adverse reactions in Australia and some Southeast Asian capitals. However, welcome initiatives taken by India in the '80s and the '90s have gone a long way in removing apprehensions from Southeast Asian countries

about the Indian Navy's intentions and capabilities. Prime Minister Goh Chok Thong of Singapore expressed fears about the accelerated growth of the Indian Navy. It was only after the situation was explained that he was satisfied. ASEAN concerns regarding naval expansion in the region have been allayed after visits by senior officials from these countries to the naval facilities in the Andaman archipelago. Joint naval exercises with the United States, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia (and also with ASEAN collectively, appropriately called MILAN) have contributed to a better appreciation of India's security needs.

The present volume straddles both the past and the present day scenario of the Bay of Bengal. It contains a wide ranging selection of essays with past and present account of the region. It is a welcome addition for all of those who wish to gain access to the variable and multi pronged study of Bay of Bengal.

INTRODUCTION

TIME PAST IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE: EASTERN INDIAN OCEAN IN VIEW

LIPI GHOSH

Inter-Asian linkages and connections are fascinating subjects for modern day research. Indeed, in the present globalised world, commercial linkages pertaining to cross-border identities of people and the formation of multiethnic societies are important issues. Cultural processes and encounters transcend artificial boundaries and manifest new domains of relations across humanity. In this regard, Asian waters promise to be a new geo-strategic medium of international relations. During the past few decades Asia abruptly turned to the seas and noted historian, Paul Keneddy, calls this a "remarkable global disjuncture" involving 'massive differences in the assumptions of European nations and Asian nations about the significance of sea power, today and into the future."[1]

Major historical events in Asia have originated in the sea and some of the most dynamic and powerful economies on the globe are aligned to the Indian Ocean. Asia's entry into the sea is not a passing phenomenon. The geographic, historical and military imperatives are simply too compelling, and, seen that way, maritime affairs form an intensely multidisciplinary subject spanning political science, military strategy, economics, history and culture etc. The present book will attempt to understand how these issues of commercial and cultural linkages manifest along the Bay of Bengal or the Eastern Indian Ocean, an ancient important trade route linking India with South East Asia. It also aims to look at the various dimensions of the Indian Ocean in contemporary times and examine if the past has any role to play to shape contemporary contexts of the sea. India has a long maritime history, but unfortunately our knowledge in certain areas is still very limited, more so because the evidences are scattered. The proposed book brings together a comprehensive and multidisciplinary examination of the Eastern Indian Ocean. It analyses cross-cultural

interactions along the route and highlights their significance to the pre-colonial, colonial, and contemporary phases of intra-Asian linkages.

The Indian Ocean has attracted scholarly attention through the ages. In the late 1990s a paradigm shift occurred as historians like K.N. Chaudhuri and D. Lombard introduced concepts such as the 'Indian Ocean' or the 'Bay of Bengal' as tropes for investigation.[2] Chaudhuri, for example, sought to construct an Asian Mediterranean based on the analysis of trade and communication in the Indian Ocean. The idea was grounded on Braudel's interpretative trinity of region, structure, and period. Chaudhuri wanted to bring out the underlying cohesion of the Indian Ocean and the contrasting nature of its different civilisations by integrating specialized research into what he called 'a general mosaic of interpretation'.[3] He showed the significant degree to which the trading networks of the Indian Ocean were integrated into a genuine regional commercial culture, which Sanjay Subrahmanyam calls an *économie-monde* of its own. Following this network oriented approach Jos Gommans and Subrahmanyam have argued that within the Indian Ocean the Bay of Bengal constituted a distinct entity before the onset of high colonialism in the nineteenth century.[4] It is their contention that it was only then that Western technology, shipping and communication developed sufficiently enough to break up established patterns of trade that depended on the monsoon.[5] Gommans and Subrahmanyam rightly stressed the ongoing characteristics of openness and mobility in the context of an open frontier region. The Bay of Bengal in this view should be seen as a historical entity united by the monsoon system. As a result of this new focus on the Bay of Bengal, studies appeared which analysed, more in detail, historical developments along its shores.[6] The present book reconfirms this idea of the pervasive multiple historical and contemporary entities of the Bay of Bengal, named otherwise as Eastern Indian Ocean.

Eastern Indian Ocean in Asian setting

The Indian Ocean is the third largest body of water in the world, covering about 20% of the earth's water surface. It is bounded on the north by Southern Asia (including the Indian subcontinent, after which it is named); on the west by the Arabian Peninsula and Africa; on the east by the Malay Peninsula, the Sunda Islands, and Australia; and on the south by the Southern Ocean (or, traditionally, Antarctica). A component of the all-encompassing World Ocean, the Indian Ocean is delineated from the Atlantic Ocean by the 20° east meridian running south from Cape Agulhas,

and from the Pacific by the 147° east meridian. The northernmost extent of the Indian Ocean is approximately 30° north latitude in the Persian Gulf. This ocean is nearly 10,000 kilometers (6,200 miles) wide at the southern tips of Africa and Australia; and its area is 73,556,000 square kilometers (28,400,000 miles), including the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

The Eastern Indian Ocean stretches from the Eastern coast of India, comprising Bengal, Andhra-Kalinga and the Coromandel coast to the Java coast. In the context of South & South East Asian interactions, the Eastern Indian Ocean is best characterised as an "Interregional arena"- an arena which lies between the specificities of two different regions, i.e. South and South East Asia . The stretch of the Indian Ocean in Southeast Asia touches the rich deltaic areas of the region: the lower Irrawaddy and the Menam and the Mekong river valleys in what are now Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia and the lesser river systems in Java, Borneo and Sumatra. At the eastern end the Indian Ocean trade network spread, in the past, to the Southern Chinese coast on one hand and to the ports of South East Asia on the other hand. At Malacca, Acheh, Bantam, Patani, Ban Don tha Phet, Tenasserim and Mergui, there existed important port cities to connect the East and South East Asian trade systems with that of South Asia. Vibrant port cities like Tamralipti, Chandraketugarh, Konark, Khalkapatna, Puri, Manikpatna, Palur, Ganjam, Sonarpur, Kalingapattana, Kottapatanam, Krishnapatanam, Pulicat, Mylapur, Mamallapuram, Arikamedu, Kaveripattinam and many others dotted the South Asian Coasts of the Eastern Indian Ocean.

Eastern Indian Ocean: The Context of Past Linkages

Our purpose is to begin with a discussion of the Eastern Indian Ocean in the context of South and South East Asian interactions in pre-colonial and colonial contexts. We plan to look back to the history of Indian Ocean trade with the Southeast Asian states of the pre-colonial period.

The Bay of Bengal was variously known in the past. In the Sanskrit sources, it was called the *prachya payanidhi* or the Eastern Sea. It has been called in the Persian sources as *Khalij* (Bay) of the ocean or *Khalij* of Hind. The name Bay of Bengal seems to have been used in the European records of the 17th century.

Relations between India and the western parts of Southeast Asia go back to ancient times. India's cultural influence on Burma, Siam, Malaya,

Cambodia and Java is quite evident. Social and religious contacts have also thrived. These influences were the results of trading links and the spread of religious teachings. The sea was the obvious way to travel between India and the South East Asian archipelago. It appears from the writings of historians that in the pre-colonial era Siam maintained a significant range of trade in her western edge of the Bay of Bengal which was eventually linked to the Indian Ocean. Ayuthaya maintained this trade into two main trade cities - Tenasserim & Mergui. India also had trade contacts from Tamilnadu to south Thailand. There were many other trading networks. The voyages from the Coromandel Coast to the Straits of Malacca were short and their frequency was quite high. Indian traders also set sail from the port of Mahabalipuram, with cinnamon and pepper among the merchandise and carried various aspects of their civilization to the shores of Java, Cambodia and Bali. To reach the countries in the eastern parts of Indo-China, ships transited through either the Malacca or the Sunda Straits. Archaeological discoveries along these overland routes bear out these ventures and their importance. The security of the Straits had high priority in India's ancient interaction with the South East Asian states and it continued with the expansion of the empire of Srivijaya.

It is argued in recent researches that India's maritime contact with South East Asia can be dated as far back the 4th century B.C. It was these trade networks which not only marked trade and exchanges but also characterized the trajectory and route of the culture of the region, through Hinduism and Buddhism from South to South East Asia.

Contacts between South and South East Asia in the colonial age were extensions of British trade enterprises from the Eastern and South Indian coasts to mainland and maritime South East Asian countries. In the historiography of Asia in the last half century, colonialism has been commonly used as a framework to understand the interactions between European powers and indigenous states and polities. Many a time, European initiatives and agency were placed at the centre of analysis and the roles of other local players in the historical processes was largely marginalized. In turn, history was polarized into the (strong) Europeans versus the (weak) Asians, and the dynamism of the latter has been downplayed.

This book aims to rethink colonial history in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. Special attention is placed on the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth century, or what is commonly regarded as the period of colonial transition.

The Indian Ocean was converted into a European lake with the discovery of all sea routes to the East. The trade route between the littorals was subsumed by dominant European trading interests. The growth of science and technology was followed by an increase in material prosperity and this affected the political and economic set-ups of the European societies. The monarchical/feudal order collapsed and political authority was relocated in the democratic nation-states. The emerging trading and industrial classes became the basis of new European political structure.

In this eastern sector, the Portuguese were among the first to intrude. It is interesting to look at the Portuguese ventures in the era of western expansion in the East. The Portuguese, who had discovered the new route to India, displayed considerable zeal in seizing the most profitable ports of East Africa, the Persian Gulf, and the Saurashtra, Konkan and Malabar regions in India. A chain of fortified coastal settlements, backed by regular naval patrols, allowed the Portuguese to gradually eliminate many rivals, and enforce a near monopoly in the spice trade by the middle of the 16th century. Local traders were coerced into buying safe passage and paying customs duties to the Portuguese. However, this attempt to establish a monopoly was challenged by the Acheh based maritime powers of North Sumatra, as well as by the Omanis and the Gujarati traders, and this resulted in the final retreat of the Portuguese in the area.

The Dutch trade interest in the region is also evident. The VOC's seventeenth century trade with Burma and Malay is very interesting. The VOC's trade with Burma began in 1634 when the *Vlielandt* sailed from the Coromondel coast across the Bay of Bengal to Syriam. The Dutch established three factories in Burma and a main office in the port city of Syriam. However the trade began to be discontinued by the 1670s as a new Burmese king showed little interest in it.[7] This was followed by Dutch trade in Malay with Indian goods. The main participants of this trade were the Muslims of the Gujrat ports, Muslims of Bengal and Golconda, and the Hindu and Muslim traders settled in the Coromondel and Malabar coasts.

Regarding the Indian Ocean the British had a clear cut policy on trade. At a later stage, arms replaced trade and British paramountcy was established over the pride of Burmese Kings and Malaya Sultans. A simultaneous process was the flow of intermediary capital and migrant labour from

South to South East Asia within the broader structure of colonial and para-colonial capitalism.

Historically, the French interest in the lands east of Suez began with the organization of the French East India Company in 1604, the dispatch of the first French ships to the Orient in 1611, and the beginning of the French Oriental establishment in the middle of the century. As early as 1631, the French regarded Madagascar as of particular value because of its favourable location in extending their trade to South East Asia. By 1663 French priests were acquainted with coastal Burma, Siam and Cambodia and in that year made their first crossing of the Malay Peninsula, near modern Tenasserim.[8]

It is imperative at this juncture to refer to the Anglo- French rivalry in the East. The growth of British interest and activity in the areas east of the Bay of Bengal during the latter half of eighteenth century has often been explained as a response to the problem posed by the expanding China trade. Although the great majority of disputes between the English and the French continued to occur in India, it is worthwhile to remember that the pattern of trade extended throughout the region of the Indian Ocean and the Eastern Seas (as South East Asian waters were called) – from the Cape to Canton and that the ramifications of Anglo- French global rivalry were felt in those areas too.[9]

Eastern Indian Ocean: Contemporary Convergences

The process of decolonization in the fifties and sixties of the last century around the Indian Ocean Rim had one important development. Independence was given in rapid succession to collectives of people occupying lands of varying sizes and endowed with different levels of political, economic, military, social viability. The consequences of the resultant power vacuum and political instability in the littoral and hinterland were sought to be negated by the spread of super power politics and the growth of neo colonial influences.

A relative point of discussion for the book is the political atmosphere of post colonial South and South East Asia which encourages inter regional connectivity. The process of normalisation of relations between India and the ASEAN started during Rajiv Gandhi's visit in the mid-1980s. Sustained efforts of over a decade showed concrete results which were evident during the visit of Narasimha Rao in 1994. As a result of this

rapprochement, India developed closer institutional ties with the ASEAN, as illustrated by its upgradation from the status of "sectoral dialogue partner" to "full dialogue partner" in December 1995, as also through its participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) that discusses security issues. This gradual togetherness of India and the ASEAN should pave the way for sub-regional arrangements outside the ASEAN, as suggested in the Singapore Declaration of 1992, which had acknowledged that the ASEAN states could enter into sub-regional arrangements with non-ASEAN states on overall economic co-operation. In the search of a wider base of cooperation between India and the states of South East Asia, the area of maritime affairs is almost neglected. The Andaman Sea-Malacca Strait can be called the maritime link between India and South East Asia. There is a need to examine the feasibility of encouraging maritime cooperation in this sharply focused region as one of the several confidence-building measures as well as strengthening future cooperation between India- South East Asia. The arms race and the speedy acquisition of armaments in the South Asian region is reflected in the maritime surveillance and intelligence collection systems. Regional confidence and security-building measures are essential to reduce the possibility of escalation on perceptions. It is, therefore, important that regional mechanisms are instituted both to address the cause of the problem and to manage and reduce the tensions. The United Nations Law of the Sea convention sets out possible guidelines on which such disputes and security concerns could be met on a mutually agreed system.

The present book aims to present the security context of Eastern Indian Ocean. It highlights the context of the Malacca Straits. South Asia being a maritime region, the commercial activities and influence of the sea in South Asia in this new age requires some in-depth study. It is important to look into the bright picture of the Malacca strait as a trade- passage. The narrow channel that carries a third of global trade and most of the oil that powers Asia's economies has assumed a new significance due to a fear of the United States as well South and South East Asian powers that a terrorist attack on a merchant ship could hit international trade. This book proposes to look into the areas of policymaking / strategies, which may combat the forbidding situation of the security issue in the IO, particularly in the Malacca Straits region. Security in this context carries the traditional notion of safety and safekeeping through armed protection.

Along with trade, the next strategic maritime imperative is energy. Energy being another vital component of linking India with South East Asia, it is

necessary to have a look into the statistics showing the importance of IO as a passage. Between 35,000 and 50,000 ships including oil super tankers, liquid petroleum gas (LPG) carriers and huge container ships use the Straits annually, linking the biggest economies of the West and the East. It carries more than 10 billion barrels of oil per day to Japan, South Korea, China and other Pacific Rim countries. The book proposes to discuss the energy profile of Eastern Indian Ocean.

In the concluding part we plan to discuss globalization and its impact on the Indian Ocean. The dynamics of globalization in the post war period were radically different than those of the earlier centuries. The invention of faster and efficient means of communications made it possible for the people to know about the developments in different parts of the world. Rapid developments in the fields of information, communication, transport and military in the initial two decades of post war period spatially compressed the world, and thereby revolutionized global politics.

The political instability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) gave anxious moments to the western elites, because of their dependence on the import of 50 different strategic materials such as manganese, cobalt, titanium, chromium, platinum, tin, nickel, iron, lead, and copper from the IOR. European, Japanese and US economies, import 70%, 76%, 25% of their crude oil requirements respectively from the IOR. Besides crude oil, the IOR exports agricultural produce such as tea, coffee, rubber, sesame in large quantities to the West. The creation of dependent economies in the IOR was a second consequence. The dependence between asymmetrical economic forces resulted in the further impoverishment of third world economies in general and those of the IOR in particular.

Bretherton in his *Global Politics*, published in 1996, has identified four pillars of post cold war globalization, namely technology change, creation of a global economy, increasing commonality of political institutions, values and ideas. Each one of these seriously affects the IO landmass, island states, and surrounding warm waters. The institutional mechanism of the IOR- ARC is a response of the IO states to the changing dynamics and pace of globalization in the post cold war period. IOR has been in the vortex of international developments since the 15th century and will continue to remain that way in the 21st century. The success of the IOR-ARC will determine whether states of the IOR will remain as subordinate, marginalized units of international state system or whether they can shake

off the bondage of states of Western Europe, North America, Japan, and, at the same time, prevent Russia and China from intruding into the IOR.

Responding to globalization and the collapse of the cold war world order, India has consciously chosen the path of engaging herself with the East Indian Ocean region. Several political and economic agreements have been signed, at bilateral and multilateral levels, with the countries of the region. India is fast integrating with the region at every level. Politically, she is playing the role of a middle power aligning with the major powers of the region, including the United States, Japan, Australia and ASEAN, the influential multilateral organisation of the region. India has signed several defence pacts with the countries and is actively conducting military exercises with them to advance its strategic goals. Economically, India is an important trading partner of the region. In short, India is a key player in the politico-economic domain of the east.

Chapter Summaries

The present volume aims at throwing light on the major areas of connectivity between the South and South East Asian regions and reassessing the exchanges of mutual benefits.

The main focus is (a) to take up the history and cultural studies of Eastern Indian Ocean and (b) to develop study on the international relations of the region. It will be a rich product with contributions of scholars of contending views, formulating a detailed understanding of the Indian Ocean region.

Part I of the book brings together essays examining the phenomenon of sea power in the Bay of Bengal from a historical perspective. The book begins with the article entitled *India's Eastward Drives: Some Critical Reflections on Ancient Linkages* by P.V. Rao. It basically looks into the ancient historiography of the Bay of Bengal and shows how the Eastern Indian Ocean had been a major region coming under abundant Indian trade and religious influence in the past. It was India, and South India in particular, which was the source and spirit of major commercial intercourse and religious influence in South East Asia and Indo-China until the advent of the Europeans. Rao shows how the French historian George Coedes, among others, has substantively testified to the pioneering influence of ancient Indian entrepreneurial and religious communities on the Malay, Javanese, Indo-Chinese and other societies of the pre-European era. He

iterates that politically too, the region was successively dominated by the Indian dynasties such as the Pallavas and Cholas, culminating in the Mahayanist Srivijaya empire. Rao further noted how Arab and Chinese commercial and cultural invasion of South East Asia from around the middle ages had weakened the Indian influence in the region. The advent of European imperialism further weakened the role of India. However, European commercial interests during the era of first globalization had encouraged a new generation of Indians, the migrant labour, to strong presence on the East Indian Ocean region. The Indian diaspora, as the migrant workers are today known, is a sizeable number in many countries of this region, though their socio-cultural influence is far less strong compared to the ancient Indian impact. To round up, Rao takes into account the historical debates about Indianization, discusses the ideas of the historians of the Greater India Society and talks of the paradigms of Hindu- Buddhist dominations and in further extent refers to the Islamisation of the region and India's global economic integrations in ancient period.

Suchandra Ghosh's article, named *"Cultural Connections in the Bay of Bengal: Spheres of Encounters"* attempts to understand linkages in the early historical and early medieval periods of Indian history between the regions that lay adjacent to the Bay of Bengal by exploring two major spheres of contact like epigraphy and numismatics on the one hand, and seals, amulets and other kinds of votive offerings on the other. We know that from about the fourth century onwards, inscriptions written in Sanskrit began to appear in increasing frequency in the places now known as Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malayasia. The paper attempts to study the palaeography of some of the major inscriptions of Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka and trace its maritime connectivity across the Bay of Bengal with the different genres of script writing that developed in various parts of India. Commonality in numismatic issues has also been perceived. The paper investigates the nature of these numismatic issues as an element of shared culture as currency circulation across the boundaries facilitated early forms of integration. Amulets, seals and sealings and other votive offerings form a bulk of the archaeological materials, which also help in understanding the trans-culturation process. A set of shared expressive practices like shared script culture, parallel currency style, the art of jewellery making and creation of metal *stupas* could be perceived through a study of these objects. These were the agencies that helped in the process of a shared cultural evolution. According to Ghosh it is the shared heritage of the Bay of Bengal which

provided a platform for connections or linkages through the different periods of history.

Buddhist politics and cultures flourished in Southeast Asia due to maritime links and the Indian Ocean / Bay of Bengal had a definitive role to play in this. The paper by M.N Rajesh entitled *Alternate Buddhist Networks in the Indian Ocean* focuses primarily on the Buddhist networks in South and South East Asia which left a deep imprint and plays a great role in understanding the historical process in these regions and the emergence of new networks in the age of the knowledge economy. Rajesh talks of the Maldives as a test case, which is Mahayana in tradition. His paper deals with the Maldives' probable linkages with Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia and talks of many shared cultural patterns. It also identifies several, and diverse, range of influences that the Maldives inherited from different sects of Buddhism and also from the Hindus. He shows how the Indian Ocean became a major centre for the dissemination of new Buddhist ideas and practices. In the final turn the paper talks of the rise of knowledge economy and the adaptation to digital networks. Rajesh discusses the role of Taiwan in this set of dissemination of knowledge. He looks at the phenomenon from the perspective of a global knowledge economy. The article concludes with a specific argument that there were many networks in the eastern Indian Ocean of which some specifically were Buddhists. The historical events like the decline of Buddhist politics, globalization and the rise of knowledge economy have given rise to new networks, some of which give space to the earlier networks that are not accessible as part of conventional research.

Rila Mukherjee's article titled *Mastery for Bay: Strategies for Trade and Conquest in the northern Bay of Bengal* discusses how the northern part of Bay of Bengal underwent political and economic crises between the 14th and 18th centuries. Her research focuses on the struggle for mastery in the Bay and the different strategies of trade and colonization adopted by the French and the British companies during the period between the 1730s to the 1790s. The article is an indepth study about the dynamics of the two companies dependent, to a great extent, on the routes connecting them to the Bay system. The routes are the ancient land routes from Bengal to China through the northeast, Myanmar and Yunnan and the sea lanes from Bengal and the Coromandel Coast to Pegu. Bin Yang (*Journal of World History*, 15:3, 2004) argued that the Southwestern Silk Route running through Yunnan connected it to the Bay of Bengal and the IO system rather than to mainland China. This cultural and commercial space was

historically determined through its ancient links with the Bay. The medieval political units along this route were Yunnan (Dali), the Shan states (Mogaung, Pong), Ava (rising in part from the earlier Pagan), Manipur, Kamrup (later Ahom space) into Chattagrama and Gaur (Bengal). In the early modern period, these routes still continued as networks of social prestige and power, as commercial networks and as transmitters of cultural properties, but were transformed, into theatres of war and captivity from the 16th century onwards. They became spaces that underwent massive transfers of human population. She shows how migration within the Bay region has to be seen against the background of the political crisis in the Bay from the 15th century. Among the Europeans, it was first the Portuguese and then the French company, which favoured the land route for its penetration into China through Assam during the 1730s to the 1750s, but the English chose, from 1785, to favour the sea route instead. As the English extended their mastery over the Bay, French schemes for a great Bay system founded on Chattagrama and the Isle de Roy, off the Mergui coast, floundered. It is noticeable that the English brought in this system at a time of decline for the Bay world. Older centres such as Ava declined. Ney Elias (1876) marks the decline of former robust populations in the overland route from Bengal to Yunnan. The same can be said of the states surrounding the sea route from Bengal to Lower Burma. There was depopulation as people fled due to warfare, but also due to captivity and slavery of former populations. There were great transfers of human population from Pegu from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Older networks were transformed into migratory networks. But this world was ending. The 1790s saw the English attempting to impose a 'Permanent Settlement' of the Bay with which they could travel and trade in the Bay world much in the same manner, as they did in the case of land revenue in 1793, in India.

It was the colonial age when the Bay of Bengal continued to remain as a conveyor of people and transmitter of ideas under the colonial patronage. Within the Indian Ocean, the *Bay of Bengal* constituted a distinct unity at the onset of high *colonialism.* There was migration of population, of ideas and of nationalism. The paper by Asad ul Iqbal Latif makes an interesting study of the migration of ideas across the Bay of Bengal. He talks of revolutionary politics and nationalism. India absorbed invasions by land and turned the invaders into Indians. Invasions from the sea were different. As K. M. Panikkar notes in *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, seaborne invasions were meant to absorb India into larger patterns of trade and dependence. Domestically,