

Act East Policy, CLMV and Geopolitics: Developing a Research Proposal

PRAKASH KHUNDRAKPAM

Faculty Member

ICFAI University, Tura, West Garo Hills District (Meghalaya), India

ABSTRACT

The Act East Policy is the policy to endorse economic, cultural and other developmental relationship of India with her neighborhood countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Even though a lot of research activities have been done, the majority was on economic aspects and there still persists the lack of research in geopolitical issues. The onus of this paper is to provide a skeletal framework of developing a research proposal in the domain of Act East Policy considering India and the Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) region. The paper may be helpful to the beginners in the field of research in Political Science in particular and Social Sciences in general.

Key Words : Act East Policy, Geopolitics, Economic Integration, String of Pearls

INTRODUCTION

The Act East Policy, set in motion by Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, at the East Asia Summit in Myanmar in November 2014, focuses on the extended neighborhood in the Asia-Pacific Region. It aims to develop co-operation in the fields of economy, culture and strategic relations of India with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

India and the Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) region have had ties on cultural, civilizational and economic matters, since historical times. The flow of people, capital, material goods and ideas has existed over a long period. Even though such historical connections exist, these linkages or connections are marked by dormant, unutilized prospects today. That, there is a development lag of the CLMV region compared to the rest of the South East Asian (SEA) region. However, India's Act East Policy has not focused adequately on the CLMV nations in its quest of economic integration. The trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) linkages of India are asymmetric between the CLMV region and the rest of the Association of South East Asian Nations

(ASEAN) region. India's trade and FDI linkages are asymmetric even within the CLMV region with relatively stronger linkages *vis-à-vis* Vietnam and Myanmar (Das, 2015). India needs to strengthen its Act East Policy and foster stronger geopolitical relations with the CLMV and the ASEAN, if it is to fill the power gap and balance China if and when the USA retrenches from South East Asian geopolitics. If India seeks to cement its position as a regional power and eventually a global power to reckon with, it needs to do so by focusing on its immediate geographical proximities. This includes not only strengthening borders with Pakistan and China but also a focus on the East, that of establishing closer geopolitical relations with the CLMV and the ASEAN. In doing so, India achieves a two-fold objective; that of strengthening its own position in the region and of checking the rise of China. India needs to act fast and act with a resolve.

In the light of the above, the present paper focuses on a particular aspect of India's Act East Policy; that of integrating the economies of the CLMV countries with India. As economics is in introspect a political argument, the paper also highlights the geopolitical importance of the region and the possible impact of closer geopolitical

relationship of the CLMV countries with India on the region in particular and the global world order in general.

The main aim of this article is to develop a research proposal on the particular topic by highlighting some of the important issues that the beginners in the field of research may have to deal with during the initial stage of their research endeavour.

Proposed themes of Review of Literature:

A number of literatures on the proposed domain of research are available in the literature. But, the present paper has been taken into account on the major review on India's strategy for economic integration with CLMVs: a report published by Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (2015). The proposed themes of reviews that may be considered, are highlighted in the following six themes.

Why CLMV?:

The CLMV Countries consisting of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam form the vanguard of the ASEAN region on the western side and are the closest region of contact of India with the ASEAN nations. There are various arguments in favor of more strengthened economic integration between India and CLMV. As it would be evident, there are various reasons why India must evolve a national level strategy for integrating with the CLMV region. These are listed below:

(a) As CLMV are less developed compared to the other SEA countries; characterized with untapped prospects, they present more scope for increased economic co-operation with India. In addition, they have also recorded monumental GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and GDP per capita growth dynamism recently. As their developmental challenges are similar to that of India, increased economic co-operation and a better understanding of CLMV economies is beneficial for India.

(b) Locational proximity is another reason as it well manifest in lower transportation cost and time.

(c) Cheap labor cost advantage in CLMV, open trade and FDI policy regimes and gradually improving infrastructure make CLMV an ideal setting for India to harness the untapped economic potential that may exist in these countries.

(d) CLMV are keen to collaborate with India also due to the fact that they do not get adequate support from other ASEAN members – this could be helpful in India's negotiations in Regional Comprehensive Economic

Partnership (RCEP) i.e. ASEAN+6 etc. as they look up to India for leadership.

Despite these advantages, the present India-CLMV economic linkages, both in trade and FDI, are considerably weak. On the other hand, the major multinationals are already present in CLMV and there is a downside risk that India may miss the bus in terms of harnessing perhaps the last opportunity in terms of labor-cost arbitrage. There are several sectors in CLMV that have been identified as focus sectors by the CLMV governments such as agro-processing, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, wood and timber, light engineering, garments, automobiles, education, information technology (IT), Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), tourism, skill development. These need to be taken into account.

One of the most crucial ingredients of setting up business is availability of skill. There exists significant skill complementarity between India and CLMV: skill availability in India matched with unavailability in CLMV. This is in line with the success of India's Skill India Mission that seeks to create skilled manpower. Skilling India has produced ample skilled labor which can be used to meet the skill demands of the CLMV regions.

What and how of economic integration?:

The underdevelopment of CLMV is a developmental opportunity for India is the backdrop in which this study has provided sufficient rationale for economic integration between India and the CLMV region. However, the present levels of economic linkages including trade and investment between the two remain weak and low. On the other hand, there is enormous potential for a more heightened economic integration between India and the CLMV region in the domains of trade in goods, services, FDI and an overall integration of economies.

Looking into India's strategy for economic integration with CLMVs published by Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India (2015), the following points may be taken care of for the present paper.

Creating India-CLMV convergence of interests in regional trade negotiations:

India must engage CLMV as it wants India to play a more pro-active role. This is because these countries often do not get their voices heard in the ASEAN Caucus. Therefore, India-CLMV relations could be important bedrock for even the RCEP negotiations where India

can get support from these countries.

Regional Value Chains (RVCs):

Given the backdrop of India's participation in RVCs being relatively low and the fact that RVCs are not well-developed in CLMV, one of the prime strategies for India's economic integration with CLMV region is to create RVCs. This is in contrast to the fact that RVCs have huge presence in ASEAN. RVCs necessitate shifting of production bases, at different stages of the production or manufacturing process, to different countries. This form of industrial restructuring leads to increased efficiency. To realize such efficiency, an integrated approach towards policy strategy is required. Setting up RVCs in CLMV would be India's "Make Outside India", complementary to the Make in India policy pursued by the national government.

Integrated approach: identified sectors and integrated policy responses:

Instead of addressing issues for trade augmentation and increase in FDI in an isolated manner, an integrated approach is the need of the hour. This should manifest in the integrated approach encompassing trade in goods and services and India's O-FDI to the CLMV region, wherein interlinkages between them are taken into account. In addition, these would have a bearing on the evolving policy responses to interlinkages across sectors in the realms of agriculture, manufacturing and services. These need to be further aligned with the national level focus sectors in the CLMV region in order to harness inter-sectoral complementarities between India and each country of the CLMV region.

Alignment of India's commercial interests with CLMV's policy focus:

India must economically integrate with the CLMV also due to enormous comparative advantage and developmental experience that exist in India in areas that are identified as focus sectors as part of the respective national vision of each of the countries of the CLMV region. There are several sectors that qualify for such economic interactions between India and the CLMV region including Agricultural and seafood processing, Agricultural machinery, oil and gas exploration, extraction and export of metals, SMEs, labor-intensive industries, processing and manufacturing industries such as pharmaceuticals and healthcare, wood and timber

industry, garment industries, electronics, ship-building, manufacture of automobiles and spare parts, and services sectors that include transport, infrastructure and telecommunications, energy and electricity, tourism, human resource development, education, information technology (IT), light engineering, financial services, banking and insurance, electricity generation and environment and energy-saving services.

Integrating the SME involvement in RVCs:

It would be important to integrate the employment-intensive SMEs in RVCs through India-CLMV economic integration. This could be achieved with a three-pronged strategy which are:

- Linking SMEs with large companies locally and the latter gets engaged in O-FDI.
- Linking SMEs with MNCs in CLMV and
- Linking SMEs on a stand-alone basis with their counterparts in CLMV.

Increasing presence of Indian banks:

No amount of commercial and economic linkages especially in the framework of RVCs would be possible without enhancing the number of Indian banks present in CLMV in their full-fledged form rather than just being representative offices.

Bridging information gap:

In order to address information gap, its asymmetry, inconsistency and inadequacy, it is important that a dedicated web portal on India-CLMV economic linkages is created.

Outreach programme:

Outreach events to familiarize issues and potentials in India-CLMV economic cooperation could be organized. Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi and Federation of Indian Export Organisations, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India would be instrumental in organizing such programmes.

Joint ventures for digital and physical connectivity:

The developments in India regarding digital technology and the need the close proximity of the CLMV region with the NER of India, joint ventures, either as a partnership or through Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) for digital and physical connectivity could be pursued.

The Challenges:

In this theme, a brief overview of the challenges confronting India-CLMV economic relations is presented.

Information Gap:

The information gap between India and CLMV countries is enormous due to the four prime reasons namely asymmetry, inconsistency, inadequacy, and communication gap. It is asymmetric as various sources like United Nations International Trade Statistics Database (UNCOMTRADE), International Monetary Fund (IMF), national sources, etc. show varying data for different CLMV countries. For instance, statistics and databases are relatively more equipped to Myanmar and Vietnam but not so for Cambodia and Laos. Also, the data available is inconsistent in terms of number of years and data for latest years is not the same. The web-based-information is inadequate as much as published sources. Additionally, due to limited interactions at various levels there is a huge communication gap that needs to be addressed as it gets manifested in the information gap.

Banking Constraints:

Another constraint in strengthening India-CLMV economic integration is the thin representation of Indian banks in CLMV countries. A very few Indian banks have branches operating in CLMV nations.

Capacity Building/Skill Development:

There exists a mismatch between the skill/personnel/technology required by the CLMV economies and that which is available. To this end, effective collaboration for sector specific skill sets availability would have to be addressed.

Technical Support:

Inadequate availability of technical support was highlighted as a major constraint during various stakeholders' consultations conducted by the Government of India with the CLMV countries. These include onsite and off-site technical assistance and during the phase of after-sales services. Collaborative ventures to enhance the availability of such human resources through vocational training endeavors need to be strengthened.

Limited O-FDI of India:

Indian O-FDI has remained low, especially as compared to global players' presence in the CLMV region.

This acts as a major constraint in any economic cooperation strategy between India and CLMV. This cooperation needs careful consideration as these can hinder the process of RVCs creation as well as manufacturing by Indian entrepreneurs in CLMV for tapping market access in China under the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement in goods.

Infrastructural Constraints (Digital/Physical):

Infrastructure and connectivity between India and CLMV countries remains a major area of concern. Although the status of infrastructure in CLMV countries is improving, still connectivity with India is less. In terms of the three dimensions of connectivity digital, soft and hard/physical, CLMV countries lag behind India on many counts, with some exceptions in the case of Vietnam. However, in case of India as well, the North Eastern Region (NER) of India which is the point of contact with the CLMV countries lack the infrastructure that is needed to foster high levels of economic integration. Physical infrastructure remains abysmal, and digital infrastructure is almost non-existent; despite various schemes such as the Digital India Mission, Bharat Broadband Network, National Optical Fibre Network, etc. This situation is indicative of the need of India's greater O-FDI in areas such as digital connectivity and/or infrastructure, wherein India has the capacity to do and expand her business.

Geopolitical Relations:

India's relations with the CLMV Countries should not be one of mere economic co-operation. The region has utmost importance for India's bid as a regional hegemon and a rising world power. India occupies a unique position in the South Asian region. By the virtue of its size, location and economic potential, India assumes a natural leadership role in the region. But the over-bearing presence of a neighbour with aspirations for global leadership has also been a source of apprehensions for the other South East Asian countries. Consequently, cooperative efforts of the South East Asian countries are hijacked by the dilemma of comprehending India's perceived and actual role as a stepping stone or a stumbling block for the regional efforts. The same could not be said of the CLMV however. India has enjoyed considerably peaceful and neutral geopolitical relations with the CLMV countries, with little to no geopolitical tensions. As India seeks to cement its position in the region, it is mandatory that India establishes closer relations with the CLMV

countries.

However, India's journey to establish closer geopolitical relations needs to be analysed keeping in mind two central actors of the region and the world; China and the United States of India.

India's Tug of War with China:

India's efforts to make itself relevant to the region come at a time of great turmoil in the Asian strategic landscape. Events in recent years have underlined China's aggressive stance towards U.S. allies in Asia, and there may be more tension to come. With its political and economic rise, Beijing has attempted to dictate the boundaries of acceptable behavior to its neighbors. As a result, regional states have already started reassessing their strategies, and a loose anti-China balancing coalition is emerging. India's role becomes critical in such an evolving balance of power.

There is a peculiar relationship of China with the CLMV countries and the entirety of the ASEAN region in general. Even though China enjoys strained geopolitical relations with the CLMV countries, except for Myanmar, the economic sway China has over the CLMV countries is considerable. While India seeks to economically integrate the CLMV with India, Beijing has managed to do so with relative ease; mainly focusing on developmental aids, grants and infrastructural developments. What Beijing lacks in peaceful political relations is made up by the fact that it holds immense soft power over these countries owing to its economic prowess and sway over them.

What can India do at this juncture? The pathway should be a composite one of simultaneous economic integration and geopolitical campaigning. The South China Sea Dispute is the central theme of discontent between the ASEAN nations and Beijing. The nine-dash line area claimed by the Republic of China, later the People's Republic of China (PRC), which covers most of the South China Sea and overlaps the exclusive economic zone claims of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

India became an unwilling part of this debacle when in October 2011, India signed an agreement with Vietnam to expand and promote oil exploration in the South China Sea. After asking countries "outside the region" to stay away from the area, China issued a demarche to India in November 2011, underlining that Beijing's permission should be sought for exploration in Blocks 127 and 128.

Without it, exploration activities in the two blocks by India's state-owned oil company ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) would be considered illegal. Vietnam, meanwhile, relied upon the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to claim its sovereign rights over the two blocks. By accepting the Vietnamese invitation to explore, India not only underlined New Delhi's desire to deepen its friendship with Vietnam, but also ignored China's warning to stay away. India maintains that its exploration projects in the region are purely commercial. China claims India's activities violate its sovereignty, and views India's growing engagement with East and South-East Asia with suspicion. However, in recent times, India's stand in the South China Sea dispute has become stronger and shows resolve. This needs to be seen in light of the response of the international community as well. China's aggressive stance in the region has been met with criticism. The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) had in July 2016 ruled concluded that there was no legal basis for China to claim historic rights to the sea areas falling within the 'nine-dash line'. Even though China rejected the ruling saying that it "does not accept and does not recognise" the ruling, Vietnam and India welcomed it. Moreover, India has come to realise that closer geopolitical relations with the region serves as a check on China's aspirations for regional hegemonic expansion. Here we can allude to the String of Pearls theory.

The **String of Pearls** is a geopolitical theory on potential Chinese intentions in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). It refers to a grid of Chinese military and commercial bases and facilities, which extend from the Chinese mainland to Port Sudan in the Horn of Africa. The sea lines run through several major maritime choke points such as the Strait of Mandeb, the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Lombok Strait as well as other strategic maritime centers in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Maldives and Somalia (www.pacforum.org.) Many commentators in India believe this plan, together with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and other parts of China's Belt and Road Initiative under Xi Jinping, is a threat to India's national security. This as such a system would encircle India (indiatimes.com.) and threaten its power projection, trade, and potentially territorial integrity (Prabhash, 2015). Furthermore, China's support for India's traditional enemy of Pakistan and its Gwadar Port is viewed as a threat, compounded by fears that China may develop an overseas naval military base in

Gwadar (indiatimes.com.) which could allow China to conduct expeditionary warfare in the IOR (Times, 2018). India has since been making moves of various types to counter the perceived threat (Shrivastava, 2013).

USA-India Convergence:

The United States have played an important role in shaping the geopolitical dynamics of the ASEAN region since the end of the Second World War and during the Cold War period. The main reason for US interest in the region in that time lied in curbing the menace of communism, which was rapidly expanding in the South East Asian Region under the influence of China and the USSR. The highest point of culmination of US interests sparked off a 20 year war, The Second Indochina War or the Vietnam War as it is better known. Since the Vietnam War, the US has been perceived as a “negative actor” by the region itself. Nonetheless, US influence in the region remains considerable, mainly due to the fact that USA is the current world hegemon and seeks to check the rise of the China in the region.

But the question remains as to whether the USA could really contest China’s rise to power in the South East Asian Region.

First of all, the United States has multiple allies and partners in the region, including the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and so on. This is important because these states will look to the United States for security assistance if something bad happens eventually. Considering the fact that China does not have a formal ally in the region and is unlikely to find one in the near future, the U.S. alliance system is a big advantage for the United States.

Second, some of the regional states still hold varying degrees of suspicion toward China due to historical, economic, or strategic reasons. They may benefit from doing business with China, but they also want to keep a healthy distance from China, which might one day become the default hegemon in the Asia-Pacific.

Third, U.S. values are still prevalent in the region, though U.S. soft power has suffered to some degree since the onset of the Trump administration, whose “America First” approach has not won any friends in the Asia-Pacific. By and large, however, the Asia-Pacific still looks up to the United States in assessing a more effective mode of governance, even as the U.S. itself is facing major challenges domestically.

Interestingly, China’s advantages are exactly what United States lacks in the Asia-Pacific, i.e., economic

closeness and geographic integration. This is even truer in the backdrop of the ongoing U.S.-China trade war, as the CLMV and many ASEAN members watch uneasily and fear the fallout of this ugly economic competition. More specifically, China holds three main advantages when it comes to China-CLMV relations.

First and undoubtedly, China’s economic relations with CLMV and the ASEAN are strong and growing. China is ASEAN’s largest trading partner whereas the United States is only the fourth largest one, giving China a major advantage in dealing with ASEAN. Moreover, over the last five years, China has been pushing forward with the Belt and Road Initiative across ASEAN member states, despite some setbacks with projects in Malaysia and elsewhere. The ongoing trade war between the United States and China has also provided new impetus to conclude the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a trade agreement that includes most Asian economies but not the United States. In this context, the U.S. commitment of \$113 million dollars to the region is dwarfed by China’s mega projects across ASEAN.

Second, China takes the region much more seriously than the United States does. For geographic and strategic reasons, China must build a good and effective relationship with Southeast Asia if Beijing wants to increase its global weight. No other region is as close and as important strategically as ASEAN to China. The new slogan of Chinese foreign policy, to build a “community of shared future,” must start with Southeast Asia and this success, if achieved, will further prove the Chinese model’s global applicability.

Third, China has an advantage simply because it is close to the region. In addition to the daily business interactions between China and the CLMV-ASEAN region, the people-to-people exchanges between China and CLMV-ASEAN are rapidly increasing as well.

It is against this backdrop that the importance of India’s role as a “balancing power” come into action and the Act East Policy of India is of crucial importance in this regard. The shared interest in an Asian balance of power and a complementarity between an America shedding its global burdens under domestic pressure and a rising India taking larger responsibilities is not difficult to see.

The effort to construct an India-US strategic partnership in the last two decades was based on the assumption that the American unipolar moment will endure. America looked at partnering a rising India to

sustain US primacy in the Indo-Pacific. Delhi acknowledged American primacy, but was afraid of becoming a “junior” partner. It was concerned that US strategic indulgence towards Pakistan and China - the two main sources of India’s security challenges —may make Washington an unreliable partner.

As a result, the hype about India-US security cooperation never really lived up-to its potential. As Trump challenges the traditional assumptions about America’s global role, there is an opportunity, slim though it might be, for India to explore a new framework for strategic cooperation with the United States. If Trump believes that an exhausted America must step back from being the first responder to Asian crises, the India has warmed up to the idea of it as a leading power that must take greater regional and international responsibilities. Meanwhile, India has been granted the status of a “major defense partner” of the USA.

In addition to the above review of literature, the scholar may review the relevant literature from different sources. Since the present paper is only the framework of a research proposal, more review is highly needed.

Drawing the Research Gap:

The above discussion on the review of literature under six themes is basically to highlight the area where the scholar may undergo deep review of literature for the proposed research work. Generally, the studies on Act East Policy or the erstwhile Look East Policy of India centered on the economic aspects only; that of economic integration of India with the South East Asian Nations. Regardless of the large number of researches carried out on various aspects of India’s Look East Policy/ India’s Act East Policy, the research gap is evident in the area of geopolitical repercussions of Act East Policy on India’s foreign policy. In particular, the co-relation of the policy with India’s foreign policy and the triadic relation it shares with USA and China is virtually non-existent. Therefore, an integrated approach to study the aforementioned geopolitical repercussions of the policy in the South East Asian power arena in particular and global world order in general may be conducted.

Objectives:

The proposal may consider the following objectives:

1. To identify the challenges and potentials in regional value chain creation between India and CLMV region encompassing trade in goods, services and FDI.

2. To analyse the possible impact of closer geopolitical relations between India and the CLMV countries on the regional order in particular and the global world order in general.

3. To draw an appropriate policy and institutional framework for geopolitical integration between India and CLMV countries.

Methodology:

The study is mainly to cover the interactions between India and CLMV Countries. Also, it will include the study of the triadic relationship of the role of India, China and USA in the South East Asian Region, represented by the CLMV Nations; and how the policy could be used to strengthen India’s foothold and geopolitical interests in the region.

Secondary data is recommended for the purpose of the study. The relevant information may be collected from the websites, publications and office records of relevant departments and Governmental organisations. The addition to the above, research papers, published and unpublished dissertations/theses etc. will be the other sources to draw the secondary data. The collected data need to analyse on the basis of existing approaches of International Relations (IR) and other existing political ideologies to draw meaningful results. If needed, an interdisciplinary approach may be adopted. Political realism and Marxist approach to IR would however be the preferred approaches.

Conclusion:

As mentioned earlier, the paper is just to highlight for developing a research proposal on Act East Policy, CLMV and geopolitics for the beginners in the field of research in political science in particular and social sciences in general. The skeletal framework of this paper may serve as a simplified way to prepare a comprehensive and thorough proposal to initiate a research activity.

REFERENCES

- Abonyi, G. (2005). Integrating SMEs into global and regional value chains: Implications for sub regional cooperation in the Greater Mekong Sub region. Paper prepared for UNESCAP: Bangkok.
- Das, R. U. (2009). Imperatives of regional economic integration in Asia in the context of developmental asymmetries: some

- policy suggestions. ADBI Working Paper 172, Tokyo: ADBI.
- Das, R. U. (2015). India's strategy for economic integration with CLMVs, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
- Exim Bank. (2013). India's trade and investment relations with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV): Enhancing Economic Cooperation. Occasional Paper No. 161.
- <http://commerce.gov.in/>
- India, Vietnam sign pact for oil exploration in South China Sea. The Hindu, October 13, 2011. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- indiatimes.com. Here is all you should know about 'string of pearls', china's policy to encircle India. 22 June 2017. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- Krishnamoorthy, B. (2016). Combating China's string of pearls, The New Indian Express. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- Manoj Joshi; The South China Sea Disputes: Territorial Claims, Geopolitics, and International Law (<https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-south-china-sea-disputes-territorial-claims-geopolitics-and-international-law>) Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- Mohan, C. R. (2019). Chinese takeaway: String of Pearls, Indian Express, March 9, 2019. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- Poonsiri, P. and María P.A.C. (2017). The territorial dispute over the south China sea. 10.13140/RG.2.2.14894.00325. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- Prabhaskar K. Dutta (2015). Can China really encircle India with its String of Pearls? The great game of Asia, India Today. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- Pranab, D.S. (2012). China puts Indian oil block up for auction, Indian Express, July 12, 2012.
- Rakesh, S (2012). ONGC to continue exploration in South China Sea, Wall Street Journal.
- Shrivastava, S. (2013). Indian string of pearls: unstringing Chinese string of pearls theory, The World Reporter. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- Times, EurAsian (2018). China's "string of pearls" resulted in India's 1st loss at the Indian ocean. Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
- www.pacforum.org. Issues and Insights, Pacific Forum, Retrieved 21 May, 2019.
