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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56615

Title: India–Mauritius Relations in the 21st Century: Strategic Convergence, Maritime Security, and Diaspora Diplomacy in the Indian Oceans

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The article titled "**India–Mauritius Relations in the 21st Century: Strategic Convergence, Maritime Security, and Diaspora Diplomacy in the Indian Ocean**" provides a comprehensive and timely analysis of a partnership that is central to the geopolitical stability of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The author successfully argues that the bilateral relationship has evolved from one primarily rooted in cultural and historical "soft power" to a robust strategic partnership defined by maritime security cooperation and economic integration. By employing an integrated theoretical framework of Realism and Constructivism, the paper offers a balanced view of how material interests (security and trade) and ideational factors (diaspora and shared history) coalesce to form a unique "special relationship."

The introduction sets a strong stage by identifying Mauritius as a "pivotal state" in India's maritime strategy. The author effectively uses the "Realist" lens to explain how Mauritius's geographical location serves as a strategic sentinel in the IOR, particularly in the context of emerging competition among external powers. Simultaneously, the "Constructivist" approach highlights the role of the *Girmitiya* history and the Indo-Mauritian diaspora, which constitutes nearly 70% of the island's population. This dual-theoretical approach is one of the article's greatest strengths, as it avoids the reductionism common in studies that focus solely on security or solely on culture.

A major highlight of the research is the detailed examination of **Maritime Security and Defense Cooperation**. The author documents the shift from the 2005 "Memorandum of Understanding on Defense Cooperation" to the modern era of the "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR) initiative. The discussion on the Agalega Island development is handled with academic sensitivity, positioning it as a move toward enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) rather than mere

REVIEWER'S REPORT

"militarization." The mention of trilateral security frameworks, involving partners like the Maldives or Sri Lanka, adds a necessary regional layer to the analysis, showing that the India-Mauritius bond is a building block for broader IOR stability.

The section on **Diaspora Diplomacy** provides a sophisticated look at how the "Little India" identity of Mauritius acts as a diplomatic lubricant. The author explains that the shared cultural heritage is not just a sentimental relic but a functional asset that ensures high levels of trust and consistency in diplomatic engagement. This "ancestral bridge" allows for seamless transitions between administrations in both New Delhi and Port Louis. The author's ability to link this sociological phenomenon to the 2025 pledges of economic support demonstrates how identity politics directly impacts fiscal and developmental cooperation.

In terms of **Economic Integration**, the article highlights the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA). The author identifies Mauritius as a key gateway for Indian investments into the African continent, a point that is increasingly relevant as India seeks to expand its footprint in the "Global South." The discussion on the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) and the evolution of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows shows a high level of technical competence. The author correctly identifies that while security is the "new" pillar, economic interdependence remains the bedrock of the relationship.

However, the manuscript would benefit from a few minor revisions to maximize its scholarly impact. First, while the Realist and Constructivist frameworks are well-integrated, the author could briefly address the "Liberal" perspective—specifically regarding the role of international institutions and multilateralism (such as the IORA or the African Union) in shaping these bilateral ties. Second, a more critical assessment of potential challenges, such as the influence of other major powers in the region or the internal political shifts within Mauritius that might impact the "centrality" of the Indian relationship, would provide a more balanced and realistic outlook.

Furthermore, the author mentions the 2025 economic support pledges; providing a specific table or chart comparing Indian Development Assistance over the last two decades (2005–2025) would provide a clearer visual representation of the "convergence" described in the text. From a structural standpoint, the article is logically organized and maintains a high level of academic prose. The bibliography is current and reflects a deep engagement with both theoretical literature and real-time diplomatic developments, including reports from 2025.

To improve the final version, the author should ensure that all acronyms (like MDA, CECPA, and IOR) are consistently defined upon first use and that the "Conclusion" offers a forward-looking set of recommendations for future bilateral policy. Specifically, discussing how the partnership can adapt to

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REVIEWER'S REPORT

non-traditional security threats like climate change or illegal fishing would add a necessary contemporary dimension to the "security" pillar.

In summary, this article represents a vital contribution to the study of South Asian and Indian Ocean geopolitics. It successfully captures the multi-dimensional nature of the India-Mauritius relationship, portraying it as a successful model of how historical bonds can be transformed into modern strategic assets. With the inclusion of the suggested minor additions regarding multilateralism and a quantitative breakdown of aid, this paper will be a definitive resource for scholars and practitioners in international relations.

Recommendation: Recommend for publication with minor revision.