

# NOMENCLATURE OF INDIAN OCEAN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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THE Indian Ocean is the world's third-largest ocean. It covers 70.56 million square kilometres. This ocean is bounded to the west by Africa, north by Asia, east by ASEAN states, and south by the Southern Ocean. The Indian Ocean has been the centre of attraction for trade, cultural exchange, and power dominance for ages. The name, Indian Ocean has been derived through an evolutionary process. The evolution of political systems and cultural dynamics has also contributed to nomenclature.

The Indian Ocean has been known by several names throughout history. The names include Erythrean Sive, Erythrean Sea, Orientalis, Mare Arabicum et Indicum, Mare Rubrum (Red Sea) , East Ocean/ Arabian – Indian Sea, Ocean Orientalis, Mare Orientale Sive Indicum, Meridiounalessive Aethiopicus, Oceano Meridionale Etiopico, Grand Ocean Austral. It was Sindhu Sagar (Indus River) in ancient times. Greeks used to name the Erythraean Sea which comprised the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. Throughout the medieval period, the Indian Ocean was known as the Sea of Zanj or the Sea of Abyssinia. Portuguese called the Indian Ocean as the Eastern Sea or the Sea of India by when they arrived in the 15th century.

The earliest known precursor was 'Shindu' which traces back to the Persian language. Persian people used this word for the people living near the Indus River called 'Sindhu River'. The Sindhu River is an important river flowing through Pakistan now and its name became eventually distorted as 'Hindu', given origin to word 'Hindustan' Gradually this name changed from 'Shindu' to 'Hindu' after the encounter of Greek civilization to Persian. Further modification of the word from 'Hindu' to 'Indu' as derived from the Sanskrit word for Indus River. The linguistic evolution from 'Indu' to 'Indo' reflects the cultural association of Indo-Aryan heritage. At last, under the influence of the European languages especially English, the 'Indo' finally becomes 'Indian'.

It is a fact that oceans are not named after any country. The Indian Ocean has been named primarily because of the Indian subcontinent. Further complications occur when India claims the "Indian Ocean as India's Ocean". India takes unnecessary advantage out of this name. The usage of the name "Indian Ocean" is a colonial legacy, Eurocentrism, and preserving the cultural dominance of one region over others. The evolution of nomenclature also

emphasizes these indigenous and alternative names which have contributed to the development and reflect their unique linguistic, cultural, and historical perceptions. Not only the political and cultural factors impacted the nomenclature of the Indian Ocean, but also scientific community played a part in it. The organization, International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) oversees the world's ocean and sea terminology. It also determines Borders and the names of the sea.

Academics and governments disagree and discuss the nomenclature of the Indian Ocean. Some argue the term "Indian Ocean" is Eurocentric and does not fairly reflect the region's cultures and ethnicities. Others argue that changing the name will have little impact on regional politics and economies. Many proposals have recently been considered to rename the Indian Ocean, one of the ideas was calling it the 'Indo-Australian Ocean' because both India and Australia have strong claims and recognize their strong maritime heritage. Another option was the 'Afro-Asian Ocean', which reflects both Asia and Africa.

In conclusion, the word "Indian" is derived from the word "Indus River". Therefore, Pakistan can rightly claim the Indian Ocean. In the 17th century, the name "India" referred to the whole of India which included Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, as the main colonial power of the British in the region played a key influence in establishing the nomenclature of the Indian Ocean. At times of independence when "All India" was divided into Pakistan and Bharat, India ceased to exist. However, unfortunately, Bharat inherited the word 'India' giving the perception that Pakistan was carved out of India, and hence, propagates the unification and nullifying the independence. This is historically incorrect as Bharat and Pakistan gained independence from British India as independent states.

Lately, there has been development to recognize and advance effective names for the Indian Ocean that mirror the cultural variety and chronicles of the region. This incorporates utilizing the Arabic expression "Bahr al- Hind" or the Malay term "Lautan Hindia" alongside the commonly used "Indian Ocean". Such endeavours might challenge the predominance of Eurocentric outlooks. It is the need of the hour to look into the Indian Ocean nomenclature based on history, political, cultural and scientific dynamics that have influenced its identity, fostering inclusion and a more realistic reflection of its rich legacy. Moreover, Pakistan should continue to address "Bharat" instead of India which reflects the true "Independence Ideology".