

# Japan's Role in strengthening India-Vietnam relations

**Teresa Mili**

Ph. D Research Scholar at Centre for East Asian Studies, School of international studies,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi 110067

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## Introduction

Currently Vietnam and India are having progressive bilateral relations, with frequent Prime Ministerial and diplomatic visits with a lot of interest in civil nuclear issues, defence assistance, IT, pharmaceuticals and other areas. This paper reveals how Japan has directly or indirectly aided in the strengthening Vietnam-India relations by aiding Vietnam in becoming a regional power. Vietnam has a glorified history as it never submitted to foreign aggression. It fought bloody battles in order to sustain and taught the world that advance military equipment's alone cannot help to win wars. Arguably, Vietnam is one of those countries where the highest extent of bombing was done; the total amount of bombs dropped was more than II World War. Vietnam had fought wars for more than a century from the French colonization, Japanese imperialism, full pledged war with USA by the VietMinh army and in the year 1987 at the time of Chinese invasion. The country was divided into 17 parallel lines between the Northern and Southern parts due to ideological differences of capitalists and communists. After the Paris Peace Accords signed in 1973 Vietnam was left with a devastating economy. Civilian deaths were observed in millions, hunger, poverty and hazardous effects of chemical agents were used because of which help and aid became a necessity to survive. It was Japan who played the big brother role by financially assisting to re-habilitate in every respect, even if it were for its own self-interest. In 1986, Vietnam had adopted doi-moi policy of economic liberation under the communist regime. Japan provides more than \$27 billion ODA from 1992 to till date and consequently Vietnam has emerged as a regional power by becoming the fastest growing economy in the ASEAN region. Vietnam anti-china and pro-Japan policy trend has favoured India to strengthen the ties as all these countries are countering the same territorial disputes with China. All these factors have led India's interests towards Vietnam. India has two pillars in the military front in order to counter the Shino-centricism namely, Vietnam and Japan. Of late, India is about to sell Brahmos and train Vietnamese pilots about the different tactics of this missile.

The paper mostly involves observing policy trends. This includes a deductive method whereby facts and events have been collected and analyzed. Sources of this research derived from secondary literature like scholarly articles, books, newspapers, documents and published interviews. These methods have helped in answering some critical questions like: How has Vietnam risen despite devastating wars? What are the possible reasons behind India's rising interests in Vietnam? Can third party involvement like those of Japan and China have an impact on the bilateral relations between two countries? Answering such questions involve a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of inter-state relations.

## Bilateral Ties between Japan-Vietnam

To have a clear and detailed understanding of bilateral relation between Japan and Vietnam, it is required to make a historical analysis. Japan relatively has a long history of contacts with the Vietnamese. The links between the two countries characterized as the natural connection pertaining to their geographical location as they both are Asian countries. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century both the countries are engaged in friendly trade. The historical connections between the two countries date back at least to the fourteenth century, when a Japanese merchant community flourished in the city of Hoi An. Since ancient time Japan was a good infrastructure builders and in the central Vietnam the Bridge Pagoda was built by the Japanese who had lived between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and it is believed to have served to connect the Japanese to the Chinese quarter which are a characteristics feature of Japan presence in Vietnam. (Faure and Schwab, 2008)

Modern relations between the two countries are based on Vietnam's developing economy and Japan's role as an investor and foreign aid donor. Japan occupied Vietnam from 1940 and remained there until the end of World War II. There was full-fledged war with USA for the ideological difference between capitalists and

communists for twenty years and ultimately the Paris Peace Accords was signed in 1973 leaving behind Vietnam in a devastating economy. Civilian deaths were observed in millions, hunger, poverty and hazardous effects of chemical agents were used because of which help and aid became a necessity to survive. It was Japan who played the big brother role by financially assisting to re-habilitate in every respect, even if it were for its own self-interest. Vietnamese leaders also looked towards Japan for help and their guidance in their pursuit of national reconstruction. Actually, the location of Vietnam in the South China Sea was important and it is considered as gateway of ASEAN countries. Many Japanese companies were expanding investment in Vietnam because of favorable working conditions, cheap labor. According to Japanese Government data of 2015, Japan is Vietnam's biggest aid donor and fourth largest trading partner after China, the US and South Korea. Currently about 1400 Japanese companies are operating in Vietnam till date.

Japan and Vietnam set up diplomatic relations on September 21<sup>st</sup> 1973. Their relations have witnessed many ups and downs due to Japan's alliance with US however, since the last decade their economic and cultural relations are significantly increasing. In 1992 when Japan decided to resume its Official Development Assistance provision to Vietnam, relations between the two countries had significantly improved. Japan is one of the biggest aid donors to Vietnam because from 1991-2016 the total Japanese ODA for Vietnam reached about US\$ 27 billion. Japan has pledged to provide 11 billion yen (\$106.2 million) of ODA for Vietnam in fiscal year 2016, the funding will help to maintain macro-economic stability, enhance financial management including dealing with bad debts, banking reforms, push for transparency saving and treasure management. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed loan agreements with Vietnam on 16 January 2017 to provide Japanese ODA loans of 21 billion yen for assisting for two projects. 1) Support for strengthening international competitiveness through policy and institutional reforms 2) Support to fight climate change toward overcoming vulnerabilities. Also the Nhat Tan Bridge called Vietnam-Japan Friendship Bridge was constructed by Japan under ODA (Nguyen, 2010).

Joint Crediting Mechanisms (JCM) was established by Japan and implemented in 16 partner countries including Vietnam. The main objective of this project is to financially support the implementation of projects which reduce GHG emissions by utilizing leading low carbon technologies in developing countries and in return seeks to acquire JCM credits for achievement of Japan's GHG emission reduction target. In Vietnam JCM project was signed on 12 Sep 2013 and consequently the first meeting of the joint committee was held in Hanoi for the guidance and rules to implement the project. And in May 2008, Japan and Vietnam signed a nuclear energy cooperation agreement under which Japan would help Vietnam to prepare and plan for the introduction of nuclear energy, educate and training aspects in nuclear power and help the country formulated nuclear safety regulations with the highest safety standards and technology transfer. (METI, 2015)

Japan tremendously assisted in industrialization and modernization and it had found Vietnam an important destination for its companies. In 2006, Japan became a major FDI recipient from Japan and this had played a vital role in Japan-Vietnam economic relations and in 2007; there were 983 FDI projects operating in Vietnam (Cao Viet Sinh, 2008). Both the countries had made a great effort to promote the strategic partnership and their bilateral relation was built on win-win partnership. One of the positive moves of this effort is that the two countries had signed the Vietnam-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (VJEPA) on December 25<sup>th</sup> 2008. It was meant to boost trade liberalization, economic cooperation and investment. Today, Japan and Vietnam enjoy a trade balance, the main reason is tariff reduction in exports and imports in which 86 percent of agriculture, forestry; fishery and 97 percent of industrial exports from Vietnam to Japan will be entitled to tax incentives. Notably, the year of 2013 was chosen as the 40<sup>th</sup> Japan-Vietnam Friendship Year and the relations between the two countries have reached a new level. Japan has supported Vietnam's doi-moi policy and its integration into the region and the world by helping Vietnam to join Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), World Trade Organization (WTO), Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) and Asia Regional Forum (ARF) and also campaigning to increase Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) technical aid to Vietnam. Vietnam is helping Japan to get permanent member and Japan is helping Vietnam to get non-permanent member seat in the Security Council of the United Nations. Economic policies have brought significant achievements to Vietnam as foreign trade operations contribute an important source of income, employment and create the foundation for restructuring the economy. The bilateral relations between Japan and Vietnam resulted as a powerful country in the South East Asian regions and India growing interest in Vietnam because of the fastest growing economy and gateway in the ASEAN region.

### **Growing proximity between India and Vietnam**

India and Vietnam relations date back to over 2000 years as known by the ancient Hindu temples remaining. Both the countries developed the friendly and cooperative relations naturally on the base of similarity in history, geography, culture and economy and both of them went through colonial rule for centuries and won their independence through intense nationalistic movement based on the ethnics of anti-colonialism and solidarity which brought both the countries closer to each other. The friendship was nurtured long traditionally by President Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and also the Indian have great admiration for the people of Vietnam for their strong sense of discipline, capability to sacrifice and nationalistic feelings and Vietnam enjoys a very positive image in India. Today Indian influences are seen in Vietnamese folklore, religion, philosophy, art and architecture. India have trade relations with Vietnam and South Indian people are settled in Hochi Minh city and gradually the Indian influences have spread in the region in a peaceful way. Over the years, India and Vietnam are enjoying a traditional friendship and multifaceted cooperation and Vietnam is in top 10 trading partner with India. In 1982 Vietnam was voted as the "Most Favoured Nation" by India and signed an agreement to develop a joint economic, scientific and technical commission. The ties were successful with mutual trust despite historical ups and downs and have always been faithful friends, reliable partners with shared interest and vision. (Sakhuja, 2013)

Some of the rationale between India and Vietnam are the followings

1; In 1986 Vietnam adopted the doi-moi policy from a centralized planned economy to an open liberalized market-oriented economic system which had brought the two countries economically and geo-politically closer to each other.

2; The East Asia Summit (EAS) has bridged the gap between India and East Asia.

3; After the devastating economy, India has given aid to Vietnam for reconstruction in the year 1970's and 1980's and this assistance has brought both the countries closer to each other in the post-cold war years.

4; India's strategic of political and economic importance is spread not only to the Southeast Asian countries but also beyond the region, which has made the Vietnamese leadership to developed a pragmatic outlook towards India and brought both the countries closer to each other.

5; India considers Vietnam as the main obstacles for China's southward expansion.

6; The Look East Policy of India made closer to Vietnam.

7; In current days both the countries realized the importance of strategic partnership, based on national security interests, China growing military, economic and strategic footing in the South, Southeast and East Asian regions. The strategic cooperative and solidarity mind-set, which evolved during the cold war period between India and Vietnam, enhanced its space and tightened their embrace. (Bhatia, 2013)

In a span of 35 years, the relationship graduated from diplomatic to strategic and in 2007, India and Vietnam signed the Strategic Partnership that envisages bilateral political and economic engagements, security and defence cooperation, scientific and technological capacity building and enhanced cultural contacts. The bilateral relation is based on three pillars. The first pillar relates to trade, economic and energy cooperation. The second pillar relates to security and defence cooperation. Both are maritime country with common security challenges and much concerned about the rising tensions of South China Sea and pro to address non-traditional threats and challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, natural disasters, energy security and communicable diseases. The third pillar is India's support for multilateral institutions led by ASEAN; India recognises Vietnam's significant position in ASEAN. India is committed to the ASEAN principles of friendship and cooperation, supports the ASEAN regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Defence Ministers plus (ADMM) Eight Dialogue Partners Meeting and acknowledges the vital role of the East Asia Summit (EAS). After a sustained focus for over two decades, India's Look East Policy has matured and sees itself as an integral part of the dynamic Indo-Pacific region. India-Vietnam economic relations expanded since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1972. In 2012 the bilateral trade have increased to US\$ 5.4 billion and targeted to achieved US\$ 7 billion in 2015 and agree to work at the earliest for the finalisation of the India-ASEAN FTA in services and investments. (Jha, 2010)

Based on the principle of equality and mutual benefit the energy sector, Petro Vietnam and ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) have agreed to develop long term cooperation in oil and gas sector. Vietnam is the sixth largest economy in ASEAN with a dynamic and youthful population. India is cooperating closely with Vietnam in skill enhancement and human resource development efforts and also shared knowledge in the field of biotechnology, health and agriculture. Both the countries are highly dependent on sea for their economic vitality and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation, which has led to significant defence cooperation between the two countries including high level visits, military training and joint exercises and also signed an Extradition Treaty. Politically speaking in this NDA tenure the government

will export the Brahmos missile to Vietnam with the agreement of Russia and train the Vietnamese Pilot about the different tactics of the missiles, in order to counter Chinese naval dominance in the South China Sea. India will also grant \$500 billion US in credit line exchange for defence equipment. (Thayer, 2014)

Also both the countries are on a mission to strengthen the naval ties and to develop a sustainable maritime presence. Indian naval is privilege as it is the only one to get permission in different ports of Vietnam near Hanoi and facilitating the presence of Indian Navy in the South China Sea, by implementing greater strategic role for India in Southeast Asia. In mid-1980's Vietnam want to develop its nuclear power plants for scientific research and India have helped in this scientific endeavour. A strong and robust partnership is important for India for its strategic interests in the maritime domain and Vietnam is pursuing reliable international stakeholders in this region and as always Vietnam trust India as strategic partner.

The potential contours of the strategic partnership are:

- 1; India is supporting the freedom of navigation and Vietnamese territorial claims in the South China Sea both by ports and patrols.
- 2; Capacity building of the Vietnamese military: India will train Vietnam submarine crew as well as Sukhoi-30 pilots.
- 3; Building a limit presence for Indian forces in Vietnam: At Cam Ranh Indian navy having port for both signals and electronic surveillance is quiet significant.
- 4; Transfer of military technology and armaments: India is giving the Brahmos supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles and transferring patrol vessels which will help Vietnam to challenge the South sea fleet.
- 5; Joint exercises with the Vietnamese navy: India has joint exercises with the other naval to co-operate operational powers in the region, ranging from Japan, USA, Australia and also Vietnam.

### **Vietnam's position in International Politics**

Vietnam a country with glorified history with intense nationalist movement who fought war for centuries and defeated the French from its colonial rule, imperialism from Japan and full pledge war with USA and set an example to the world that a developing country can defeated the countries with advance military equipment. Today Vietnam is one of the fastest growing economies in the ASEAN countries with GDP of more than \$180 billion, liberalization under communist regime, hardworking young populations. Though it is a communist government, set enhancing market-oriented economy with the aim of "Emerging Market" status and this strong commitment of policies let Vietnam to achieve great success. Vietnam is endowed with energy resources such as natural gas, oil, coal, hydrocarbons, biomass, wind and solar energy. The estimated potential of oil and gas is about 4 billion tonne oil and currently a net exporter of crude oil but remains a net importer of oil products. Vietnam had adopt doi-moi economy reform policy in 1986 and came out with fruitful results as after 15 years the economy has rapidly grown and overcome its earlier period of stagnation. (Ernst, 2013)

It exports huge agricultural products like rice, coffee and rubber; it is receiving large investments for electronic manufacturing like Samsung and it expand its exports to USA but also to Europe and China. Vietnam is project to gain the most from the new Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal and its armed forces are larger than those of more developed and political powerful neighbours like Japan and South Korea with 5.5 million active military personnel. Vietnam's improving economic prospects are boosted in the propose TPP, a free trade deal between USA and 11 other countries. Presently the largest trading partner of Vietnam is China but the USA is also gaining very fast. Vietnam is also strengthened relationship with Japan, Australia, Singapore and Philippines with the agenda of counterweight to the growing influence of China in the region. (Luong, 2016)

### **Japan's economic assistance to make Vietnam a regional power**

The economic relations of Japan and Vietnam are based on ODA (other development assistance), FDI (foreign direct investment), infrastructure building, assisting in the petroleum extracting offshore, industries, market of finished goods and Vietnam based on doi-moi policy, reconstruction of devastating economy after 1973 (war with USA), Industries for domestic employment. In Vietnam, Japan gained a foothold by supporting Vietnam's *doimoi* policy in 1992 which means economic liberalization combined with an 'open door' policy under a socialist regime. In 2008, the FDI from Japan to Vietnam of the Japanese investment projects had numbered 1102 with a total capital of US\$ 17.36 billion (General statistics office of Vietnam, 2008). In 2009, Japan had 1164 direct investment projects with an investment capital of US\$ 17.85 billion and which accounted for 10.77% of the total FDI projects and 10.2% of total FDI capital in Vietnam. Japan's new policy on providing ODA in the year 1992, for Vietnam have focus on the following

areas: development of medium and small enterprises, improving living standards and conditions including the areas of education, health-care, rural development and enhancing institutions including improvements in the legal system and administrative reforms. (Ngoc Van, 2013)

In 1997, the mentality of zero-sum game in the previous periods has been substantially replaced by the prevailing trend of cooperation for development in the contemporary international relations in the region. It had boost bilateral Vietnam-Japan co-operation ranging from aid, trade, investment, political-security to culture, education, tourisms, labor and people to people exchanges between the two countries. The full assumption of its aid to Vietnam in 1992, Japan has made important contributions to the country's transition to a market economy as well as to its economic and social development. Vietnam is considered one of the most strategically important recipients for Japan's economic cooperation. The Japanese Government's "Country Assistance Program for Vietnam" echoes the important of such an aid strategy. Japan expresses its continued commitment to support Vietnam's institution building, industrial, infrastructure and human resource development which improved the efficiency of private investment. The two sides confirmed their cooperation in implementing human resource development projects to support the formulation of energy policies aiming at stabilizing electricity demand and supply in Vietnam and shared the intention to work together towards the effective implementation of the model projects on industrial waste power generation system in Hanoi, conducted by the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) and its dissemination to other provinces in Vietnam. (GRIPS, 2002)

A study of the strategic model of overseas infrastructure system which exports to Vietnam in Japan and consider the infrastructure export model of Japanese companies of 1997 with the 'framework of the institutional vacuum theory'. Institutional vacuum as an issue in the case of companies in developed countries to advance into emerging market refers to the under-development of local industry markets. The promotion of Japanese Investment into Vietnam is facilitated by the strong bilateral investment relations between the two countries by multiple bilateral agreements and treaties: The Japan-Vietnam joint initiatives 2003, the Japan-Vietnam Investment treaty 2004, the Japan-Vietnam Economic Partnership Agreement 2009, Japan-Vietnam joint statement on the strategic partnership for peace and prosperity in Asia 2011. The Vietnam-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (VJEPA) signed in 2008 has opened up new opportunities for the two countries to take advantage of that potential and takes effect as from October 2009. It is an agreement to liberalize trade, services, to protect investment and to encourage electronic commerce between Vietnam and Japan. Japan's Tokyo Metro will provide technical assistance and counseling services for the Hanoi Metropolitan Railway Management Board (MRB) to develop and run urban metro lines. In Feb 2013, the Japan International Cooperation Agency has helped Hanoi carry out a project on technical assistance and increased capacity building of a Hanoi agency to operate and repair metro lines in the city. (LNT and Partners report, 2015)

### **Japan's political assistance to make Vietnam a regional power**

Every year the two countries exchange high-level visits PM of Japan five times Murayama 1994, Hashimoto 1997, Obuchi 1998, Koizumi 2002 and Shinzo Abe 2006 and from the Vietnamese side General Secretary Do Muoi 1995 and NongDucManh in 2002 and PM are Vo Van Kiet 1993, Phan Van Khai 1999 and Nguyen Tan Dung 2006. (Patel, 2016) Japan had interest in the ASEAN countries by trying to solve the problems for Democratic Cambodia and play the role of big brother in the Southeast Asian countries. On 18 April 1984, Abe told the Japanese Diet that any renewal of Japan's economic aid to Vietnam would depend upon Hanoi's withdrawal of military forces from Cambodia. A closed examination reveals that Japan has consistently hoped to take political proactive policies toward the Vietnam since 1970's and that Japan has succeeded at certain times but has also failed at another time which means that Tokyo has taken both reactive and proactive policies toward the Vietnam throughout these years and that Japan has switched its modes operandi from re-activism to pro-activism and vice-versa. In Vietnam, Japan typical cooperation for legal and judicial reform has been centered on assistance for drafting basic laws or training legal professionals. As Asia Pacific is undergoing big changes, need to strive more to ensure peace and prosperity for the region. Japan always held in high regard and walk side by side with ASEAN. Vietnam played an important role as "the center of development" of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2013, they have discussed strengthening ties between the two countries and promoting cooperation in politics and national security. Japan considers Southeast Asia an important sphere of influence for its big power diplomacy particularly in winning supports for its bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council in 2005 and Vietnam always its consistent support for Japan permanent seats despite China's diplomatic pressure. (ThuyThi, 2011)

In the defense the Vietnamese Marine Police and Vietnamese Navy is taking possession of new maritime patrol aircraft, including Airbus C212 400 and Viking Air Twin Otter 400 over the next two years. And the

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) has experienced P-3 Orion crews with skill sets that would be very capable of engaging in such capacity-building which was signed on 2011. (Matsubara, 2012) The Joint Vision Statement on Japan-Vietnam Relations in 2014, report that the two sides shared the intentions to enhance cooperation in maritime safety and security, such as search and rescue, and in dealing with non-traditional security issues such as cyber security, cybercrime, terrorism, transnational organized crime, piracy etc. The two sides signed a Memorandum on Cooperation between Coast Guard Agencies and also signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on UN Peacekeeping Operation. The Promotion of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges where it was agreed to promote high-level exchanges, regular dialogue at the vice-ministerial level and cooperation in such fields as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The two countries agreed to proactively promote Japan-Vietnam defense cooperation and exchanges, including cooperation towards the Vietnam's first dispatch for UN peacekeeping operations. The Internal Bureau had been dispatched to Vietnam in October 2012, 2013 and 2014 where they gave a short-term seminar to medical officers in the Vietnamese Navy concerning diving medicines as well as inviting them to Japan to observe the training in September 2013. The visit by Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the ruling communist party of Vietnam, to Japan in September 2015 produced a Joint Vision Statement on Japan-Vietnam Relations as well as the Memorandum on Cooperation between Coast Guard Agencies. Tokyo also promised more used patrol vessels to enhance Vietnam's civilian maritime law enforcement capacity. The most significant of all being Abe's professed interest to consider supplying patrol vessels to Vietnam. (Collin Kohswee, 2015)

### **Why Vietnam is important to India?**

One of the main reasons of Vietnam importance to India is that both the countries have territorial dispute with China. As China is the most powerful country in Asia with territorial aggression nature and its claim on many Islands and territory. Historically, Vietnam was not in a good relationship with China and think Vietnam as a tributary state and Vietnam is resisting China for the last 2000 years. The antipathy towards China has deep historical roots in Vietnam, this is one issue in the past but now both the countries are claiming the Spratly Island. China unilaterally declared entire regions of South China Sea belongs to them but Vietnam being affected and strong contender in this region. The issue is not just territory but energy resources too. It is estimated that about 24.7 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas and 4.4 billion barrels of oil waiting to be trapped within the area in the South China Sea claimed by Vietnam and contested by China. (Stout, 2014)

China is the biggest long term strategy threat to India with issues like Tibetan refugee asylum, territorial dispute between Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin and the sudden attack of 1962; dealing with this threat it will require a multi-pronged plan. India's broader strategy is to create a Pan-Asian maritime security system with India is its centre. Vietnam is well placed to be the central thrust of such an effort due to a convergence of strategic interests with India and adopted the Kautilya Arthashastra words 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend'. (Shamasastri, 1915)

Therefore, both the country increasing naval and defence ties have been determinants, with number of important issues:

- 1; India and Vietnam are common sufferers of China territorial aggressive nature.
- 2; China clever mind set with regards to the claim of South China Sea and the Indian policy maker find that Vietnam prime location is best to counter the rising China's naval growth.
- 3; India Look East policy of 1980's should not be confined only to trade but also should be extended to many other fields like military security power and maritime diplomacy in the Southeast and East Asian region.
- 4; The main reason behind growing India and Vietnam relationship is the display of strength, existence, mobility together to counter the anti-China and its geo-strategic location.

The BJP government reframed the 'Look East policy into Act East policy' and under this policy Vietnam is an important element as India is aiming to revive its historical ties with Southeast and East Asian countries. Vietnam is very important for connectivity purposes and the trilateral India-Myanmar-Thailand highway will allow Indian goods to reach Southeast Asia region and Vietnam is the gateway for all this transportation. India's growing economy with huge populations needs energy resources and Vietnam is rich in natural resources especially hydrocarbon reserves. The ONGC is leading help in the oil exploration in the disputed water and find out two explorations block and recently the ONGC Videsh Limited have received one year extensions for exploration purposes. ( Roy and Bhattacharya, 2015)

## Conclusion

The findings reveal how Japan has played the big brother role to revive the devastating economy of Vietnam and aided it in becoming a significant regional power in the South-East Asian region. Today no doubt the better position of Vietnam was supported by Japan at the time of need with ODA, Foreign Direct Investment, legal advice and restructure of the economy. This culminated in India showing greater interest towards Vietnam economically, politically and culturally. As past experiences reveal, India seems to love to have cordial relationship with regional power like Vietnam and Japan for rebalancing China's intensifying power and its territorially aggressive nature and Vietnam being a gateway of trade in the ASEAN countries. The strategic partnership between India and Vietnam will challenge the monopoly of China in the South China Sea. Japan aid and investment have made Vietnam a powerful country in the Southeast Asian region and today's trust friendship of India-Vietnam is somehow given by Japan in the past with their economic assistance to Vietnam.

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