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Contents

Experts Speak

ANALYSING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Nigam Dave, Raviraj Dave

Cascading Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic Across Economic and Social Sectors of India 7

Nausheen Nizami

Covid-19 Crisis: India's Macroeconomic Policy Response and Future Challenges 15

Arbind Sinha

COVID-19 Through Social Lens 29

Sitakanta Mishra

The Post COVID-19 World Order 45

Gitanjali Sinha Roy

India-Japan Relations and the Chinese Aggression in the Post COVID-19 Era 63

Articles

Ritu Sharma

Spanners in India's Energy Ambitions: Negative Perception & Non-Committal Government 73

Harmik Vaishnav

The Evolution, Innovation and Escalation in Liberal Education in India: Role of Private Universities 87

Raenhha Dhami, Fiza Anand, Ritu Sharma, Nigam Dave

A Cleanliness Drive in India: Assessment on its Psycho-Social Impact 101

Monish Tourangbam, Sriparna Pathak

China and BRICS: Dealing with Power Asymmetry in a Multipolar World 117

Anurag Tripathi, B.M. Mandara, Anjana Mary Suresh

Turkmenistan's Positive Neutrality and its Bilateral Relations: Special Focus on India 131

Book Reviews**Shwetal Shah***India in a Warming World – Integrating Climate Change and Development*

by Navroz K. Dubash (2019). 147

Jay Desai*Our Time Has Come: How India is Making its Place in the World*

by Alyssa Ayers (2018). 151

Kavya Lakhani*On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong (2019). 157

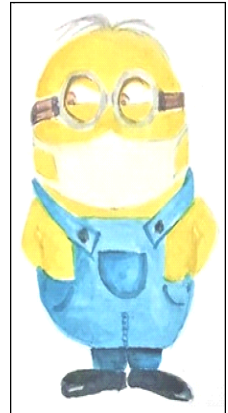
Experts Speak

ANALYSING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Concept Note

COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) did not discriminate anyone based on their economy, political affiliation, power equation, or social strata. The virus has touched every continent and almost all the countries and impacted the entire humanity. Starting from the Wuhan city of central China from the middle of November 2019, it spread so fast that by the time people realised its vulnerability it had already engulfed all. On 30 January 2020 it was termed as 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' and on 11 March 2020, it was recognized as a 'Pandemic'.

The Experts Speak section of the journal attempts to bring to fore some pertinent social-economic-strategic as well as psychological impacts of the pandemic on the entire humanity. As the pandemic is still upswing and the entirety of its impact is yet to be fully visible, the discussion analyses some repercussions so far. **Professor Nigam Dave** and **Raviraj Dave** explains the cascading effects of COVID-19 across economic and social sectors of India. The authors prescribe for a better response mechanism to such crisis if ever arise in future through resilient leadership and collaboration across various sectors. A focused analysis is advanced by **Dr. Nausheen Nizami** on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on India's macroeconomic sector - especially the macroeconomic constraints behind the fiscal and monetary stimulus packages announced by the Indian Government and the challenges that pose to the economy in mitigating such crisis. Dr Nizami points out that the biggest fiscal challenge amidst Covid-19 crisis for India is: how to effectively revive and accelerate the economic growth rate to above six per cent in the next two financial years. As she suggests, the current situation warrants for a comprehensive strategy of reviving all the industries in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector.



On the other hand, **Dr Arbind Sinha** examines the ground realities through the social lens by scrutinising the impacts of the pandemic on the lives people. Aptly the author argues that though it is not wrong that the pandemic has affected all layers of society, yet a minute study would reveal that it has a differential bearing on each section and sub-section of the society. The rural Indians, urban Indians, the labourers - though all have suffered enormously, the resilience of each strata is not same, therefore the impact is differential: different social strata have suffered differently. **Dr Sitakanta Mishra** takes the debate to the global level and argues that the geopolitical implications of COVID-19 pandemic are undoubtedly secondary compared to the global health and safety concerns; but in long-run, the upshot of the pandemic would be consequential for the global order in vogue. In the wake of pandemic, a global power vacuum has emerged given the fact that all major powers consumed with internal problems have become inward looking for fighting the pandemic. Dr Mishra argues that the upshot of the COVID-19 would certainly be consequential for the current world order; the world may gradually inch towards a new world order with new set of power equations and structural adjustments. He asserts that if the US and European powers remain absent in shaping a global unity to deal with the pandemic as they used to until now on other occasions, China and India may use the crisis as an opportunity to start setting new rules and initiate actions according to their global governance visions.

Lastly, **Gitanjali Sinha Roy** examines how the 'China threat' is a common factor in India-Japan strategic relations which is likely to strengthen in the atmosphere of COVID-19 pandemic. Chinese aggressiveness with respect to India and Japan is in fact propelling convergence of interests between New Delhi and Tokyo which would lead to greater collaboration among them, and also among their regional partners, culminating in an intra-Asian forum in future.

Cascading Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic Across Economic and Social Sectors of India

Nigam Dave*, Raviraj Dave**

1. Introduction

Edward Lorenz, meteorology professor at MIT, had posed a question during the 139th meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1972): “Does the flap of a butterfly’s wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?” He intended to mean that some complex dynamical systems exhibit unpredictable behaviors. These small variances in the initial conditions could have profound and widely divergent effects on the system’s outcomes (Americanscientist.org). Subsequently this came in popular culture as Chaos Theory or Butterfly effect which meant that ‘the cause and effect relationship of any occurrence cannot be precise and can have far-reaching variable impact.’ Here an attempt is made to understand the socio-economic repercussions of COVID-19 pandemic keeping in mind the framework of Chaos Theory.



The first occurrence of the COVID-19 case in Wuhan (China) and its global impact worldwide has made humanity think about the unforeseen chain of events

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known as the cascade effect. As the World Health Organization (WHO) aptly cautions it, the world post-COVID-19 outbreak would not remain the same, and humankind has to live with it for long. What started as a local disease limited to a city has engulfed almost the entire world, and all sectors of human endeavors are trying to adapt to the ‘new normal’. Can the entirety of its impact and the exact repercussions on the humanity be precisely fathomed?

While the initial response to the disease outbreak was anger and economic retaliation on China, what remains to be seen is the cascading effects on all sectors of industry when it unfolds fully. While severing or reducing business and economic relations with China is a policy decision, the long-term impact on each nation’s socioeconomic fabric would vary. Prolonged lockdown across countries has left a long-term ramification on economic, social, psychological, religious, educational, and cultural activities. The activities, in turn, are also impacting one another, and thus the impact seems to be intensifying. This paper reflects on and summarises the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic across various primary sectors, such as industries and raw product generators, and secondary areas such as production and tertiary and service sector. As projected, the total loss incurred economically across the globe is around \$5.8 trillion and \$8.8 trillion this year, and gross domestic product (GDP) will be down to 6.4 to 9.7 per cent (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2020).

2. The Impact of COVID-19 on Various Sectors

2.1 Primary Sector

2.1.1 Labour Driven Industries: In India, the unorganised sector mainly comprising of microeconomic activities, and the migrant labourers have taken the maximum toll. Thousands of people have lost their earning opportunities as well as the source of income and have painfully migrated back to their villages through whatever source of transportation available; even by foot. While many could make back to their home alive, the problem of providing them livelihood is a challenge for local administration. The industry experiences another difficulty in metros, which were dependent on the labour. While unlocking phases have allowed enterprises to re-open their services, many migrant workers are reluctant to come back, and the businesses have resumed at a snail’s pace. It has also resulted in an imbalance in the existing population across states, and migrant workers have come back to their homes, health and hygiene facilities are inadequate. Announcements by the Union government have given some hope, but how well these policies are implemented remains. Inadequate facilities to return to their homes have also resulted in interstate bitterness and the political parties, instead of bridging the gap, are busy scratching the wounds.

2.1.2 Agriculture: The agriculture sector has faced a significant loss due to COVID-19 as the primary consumers, and bulk buyers, demands from hotels and restaurants have reduced drastically due to lockdown. India lives in villages and the primary source of industry is still agriculture. Lockdown and the resulting restrictions on transportation have led to irreparable loss to farmers as they could not sell easily perishable crops and had to throw the produce. It has also led to hike of prices of various essential food products. Initial rumors regarding the spread of the disease created suspicions on poultry operations and led to a loss. 'Being vocal about local' looks good on paper, but for the industry, the disruption of supply chain can be deadly. Civic bodies classified many vegetable and fruit vendors as super spreaders, and this led to doubts in the minds of people with respect to safety regarding the consumption of vegetables and fruits. Before and after the announcements of lockdown, people rushed to markets only to hoard supplies, and spread public health vulnerability.

All these scenarios have brought economic misery and loss to farmers, transporters and delivery workers. More than 40 per cent of farmers have experienced the yield loss (Kapil, n.d.) across the India.

2.1.3 Petroleum Industry: The petroleum industry has also seen the changes during the pandemic. The government has imposed high taxes on petroleum products to recover from other financial losses during the COVID-19 lockdown. The lockdown led to a drastic increase in fuel prices in last few months. In the month of May, the price of petrol and diesel increased by Rs. 9.13/- and Rs. 11.1/- respectively; which is an increase of 13 per cent and 16 per cent respectively (Daniyal, 2020).

2.2 Secondary Sector

2.2.1 Manufacturing sector: The manufacturing industry, which contributes 20 per cent of the GDP, is now reeling down due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. According to the United Nations, Industrial development organisation, manufacturing during the lockdown has stopped across all domains except the rice milling sector, and production has reportedly dropped by half. Due to the disruption of the international supply chain from the restriction on international transportation, many industries have also faced a shortage of raw material for manufacturing. The major contributor to the manufacturing industry is the auto industry. Due to COVID-19 the sales in the auto industry has decreased by 15 per cent, leading to a production cut of 5 to 10 per cent (Jayaraman, 2020).

2.3 Tertiary Sector

2.3.1 Tourism and Hospitality Sector: Tourism and hospitality industry have

been affected severely, and it is not wrong to say that it is the most hard-hit sector due to COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3.1.1 Aviation Industry: Air operations were closed, and they have opened with a lot of restrictions leading to lay off and salty cuts in these industries. Safety guidelines announced after the unlock phase are also tentative and viewed with suspicion. International travel may not open soon for all countries.

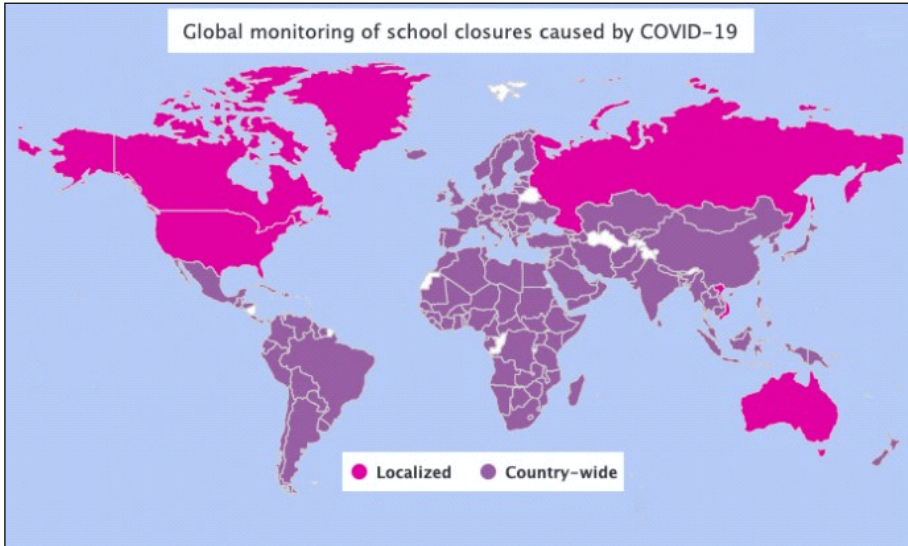
2.3.1.2 Tourism Industry: Lack of visits by tourists has led to income loss for local dependents also whose sole livelihood was dependent on the tourism industry. Prevailing uncertainties are baffling for these industries as the maintenance cost is soaring high, and there is no certainty for the normalcy. The World Travel and Tourism Council has warned that 50 million jobs in the global travel and tourism sector may be at risk (Faus, 2020). According to business standard, India is projected to loss of Rs. 1.25 trillion in calendar 2020 due to COVID-19 (Dash, 2020).

2.3.1.3 Hospitality Industry: Due to the pandemic, the hotels have received very few guests, which has resulted in revenue loss for many five star hotels. Due to the less amount of tourist mobility across the country, a large number of rooms remain vacant in hotels, leading to revenue loss per available room. Due to this loss of hotel industry, there are a significant number of people who have lost their jobs. Limits on numbers during social gatherings have created a colossal loss for many who depended on the hospitality industry.

2.3.2 *Education Sector*: During the phases of unlocking, the most challenging decisions made have been in the education sector. Although the government is hesitant to consider education as an essential service, the growth of the nation and future depends on skill enhancement of the youth. Ever since the announcement of the first lockdown, schools and colleges have shut down on-campus activities, and there is no hint as to when these can re-open. While various online engagements have provided an interim ray of hope, for a vast country like India with its socio-economic variables, online meetings look cosmetic.

Many universities across India have not been able to conduct final exams and many qualifying reviews are still to be undertaken, leading to uncertain academic schedules across the nation. The period of lockdown and online engagement of teaching-learning has led to a tussle between educational institutes and parents regarding fees payment. Either way, stakeholders would be at a loss. However, there is a silver lining; with all its challenges, stakeholders in education have quickly adapted to the new normal. At one sweeping stroke,

digital literacy has gone up, which would only serve well for the future. The online repository created by various bodies would help even when the educational activities commence on campus. The impact of school closure across the world can be seen in the figure (2).



Source: <https://uil.unesco.org/covid-19-educational-disruption-and-response>

Figure 2: COVID-19 Educational Disruption

2.3.3 Healthcare Sector: The most valuable player - the healthcare industry - has tried to respond valiantly, but many gaps in existing healthcare facilities have been exposed. The number of hospitals required and health care experts' presence is not adequate to an ever-increasing number of COVID-19 positive patients. The entire healthcare industry is busy experimenting with vaccines or panacea, and the world is waiting restlessly for such a solution to be made available. It remains to be seen how the distribution network would work even after the vaccine is invented. Psychologically, various medical theories floated by the pharmaceutical industry and universities have made people nervous as well as uneasy as each theory seems to contradict the other. Unproven messages spread like wildfire through social media, which has made majority of people try medical experiments at home or on their own without consulting medical experts. Sadly, many doctors and medical professionals are losing lives because of their close contact with COVID-19 positive patients. Eventually, the pandemic has led to various alternate treatments for immunity boost and people have turned to these also in hope.

2.3.4 *Real Estate Sector*: The spread of COVID-19 positive cases and ensuing lockdown led to no site visits by customers. The uncertainty of when the pandemic would end made people save money rather than investing in real estate. Virtual site visits and brochures have limited impact, and these all coincided with rumors that newspapers can spread corona virus and lack of platform to advertise property sales. Stringent social distancing rules enforced by the government and migration of workers have only compounded challenges for the real estate developers. In metros, many professionals have vacated their rented accommodations and are working from home, creating a dampened mood for the property market. With most universities resorting to online teaching, paying guest service providers are also at a mishit. There is no indication of when the situation would recover.

2.3.5 *Sports Sector*: Another industry that has been impacted is the sports industry. Restrictions on sports events, gym and swimming pool have led to uncertain schedules and search for alternate venues. IPL, which is as big as the World Cup for Indians, got delayed and led to a change of site in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Games without spectators look to be the possibility. Allied with these are the challenges of sponsoring agencies. The anger of Indians on Chinese products has created clouds of suspicion over the title sponsor of IPL, a Chinese company. Majority of games are now re-establishing new guidelines that would keep players safe. Now, how these changes would alter the entertainment section for viewers yet remains to be seen.

3. Social Impact

3.1 *Psychological Impact on People*: Psychologically the prolonged home stay and uncertainties have created mental health issues. Many are complaining of depression and anxiety attacks. - Number of suicide cases has increased and there have been more reported cases of divorce and domestic violence. Need of mental health counselors has never been felt more than now. Extensive screen time has also lead to online addiction and cases of cybercrime have gone up. For women professionals this has been the most testing time as they are struggling with work from home (WFH) and domestic chores.

Places of religious worship were also impacted with sweeping restrictions initially and then gradual conditional re-opening. Many religious festivals in India have been impacted with the pandemic and the senior citizens who are likely to be visiting the places of worship have suddenly found themselves locked inside the home. Cultural and psychological impact of these restrictions can be intangible but serious.

4. Political Impact

Politically the spread of novel corona virus has made most of the countries question China's role, and many conspiracy theories have been floated. The pandemic has a critical impact on approaching the US presidential election, and as anticipated, President Trump has been extremely aggressive in diverting people's attention to China's role. In India, Prime Minister Modi's implicit message of 'self-reliance' is also seen as a diplomatic response to China's alleged mishandling of the disease and recent geopolitical misadventures. Ban on the number of mobile applications has led to a war of words between India and China. India may gain considerable business opportunities if transnational companies shift their operation base from China to India. From defense point of view, India would have to be wary of China's forays into India's backyard and its influence on India's small neighbours.

5. Ecological Impact

From ecological point of view, sudden breaks on travel in every part of the world has been a blessing for the Mother Nature resulting in reduced pollution and less encroachment on wild life. Both air and water quality have improved (Lokhandwala and Gautam, 2020). South Asian River Dolphins also known as Ganges Dolphins have again been visible in Ganga near Kolkata. Drop in crazy transport rush and human sacrilege on nature has resulted in reduced seismic noise. This may allow researchers to better study the Seismic changes or volcanic activities.

6. Conclusion

A crisis can create clarity and concentration (Swapneil Parikh, Maherra Desai, 2020). The experience on the cascading effects of the pandemic can help humanity deal with such crises better with a collaborative effort in future. David G. Chandler has cautioned humanity that "No one would deny that all wars and battles are regrettable acts of human folly, causing unjustifiable agony and distress to combatants and non-combatants alike-but these considerations should not preclude their serious study if only to avoid the mistakes of the past which make such tragedies inevitable." Let us all introspect and have a better response mechanism to such a crisis in the future. The resilient leadership and collaboration across various sectors can help to recover all areas steadily.

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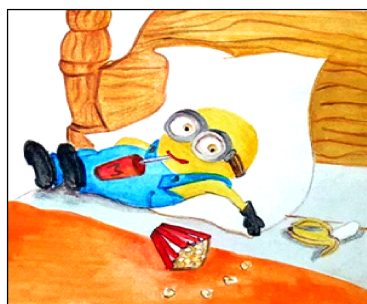
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Covid-19 Crisis: India's Macroeconomic Policy Response and Future Challenges

Nausheen Nizami*

Background

Indian economy was ranked as the 5th largest economy in 2019 (Myers, 2020). The country overtook France and Germany to secure the ranks of top five largest economies of the world. On an optimistic note, it has been growing steadily at a growth rate above 5 per cent in 2009-2019 time period. However, the world ranking is expected to change owing to the external shocks imposed by the Novel Coronavirus to all economies of the world. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans (WHO, 2020). The real impact of this disease has been studied by various scientists after it was declared as a pandemic in January 2020 by World Health Organization. Being a fast spreading infectious disease, COVID-19 has taken a serious toll on the human health with countries reporting alarming number of positive cases and consequent deaths within a short-period of time. Ruling Governments of all the affected countries face a serious challenge of saving lives and economy side by side. As majority of the affected countries imposed lockdown and work-from-home options (except the essential services and industries), the economic activities



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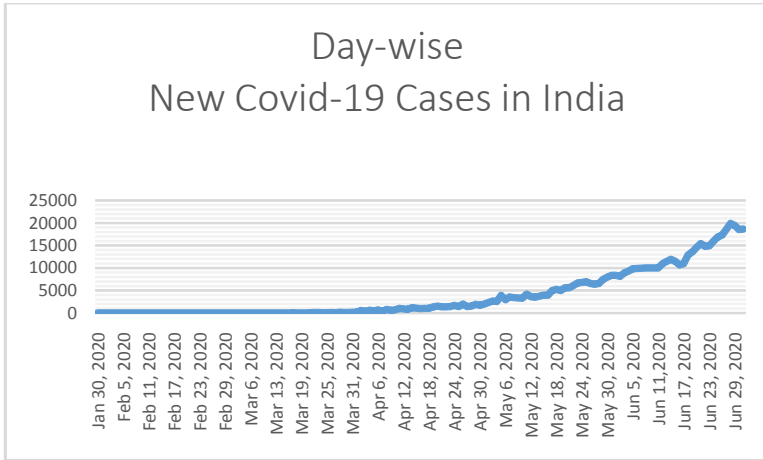
have been seriously affected. Rating agencies paint a gloomy future for the world economy cautioning against grim depression in store for the countries battling the disease.

Economic revival packages are being announced by various countries in order to restart economic activity and stimulate consumer demand. The global economy is projected to contract sharply in the financial year 2020-21 (nearly 3 per cent), worse than what was experienced during the times of 2008-09 financial crisis. The prime pull factors for the economic recession are: extent of globalisation and dependence of a country on imports, pre-crisis sectoral contribution of agriculture & manufacturing to GDP (as WFH options couldn't be substituted here), pre-crisis macroeconomic health of a country and post-crisis expansion of Government expenditure, quantum of foreign exchange reserves, foreign-aid recipient, extent of tax-base and revenue collections, etc. Detailed studies on these factors can potentially reveal the macroeconomic strength of a country in absorbing recessionary shocks. With the global and country-wide forecasts, the central banks of various countries have announced monetary stimulus measures to liquidate the economy and policy makers have adopted fiscal measures.

This research examines the macroeconomic constraints behind the fiscal and monetary stimulus packages announced by the Indian Government and reviews the challenges that pose to the economy in mitigating the present and future crisis. The paper discusses the Covid-19 crisis situation in the World and India in terms of economic indicators and examines the state of Indian economy before and during the COVID-19 crisis. The primary focus of the paper is to understand and explain the macroeconomic constraints/challenges linked to the fiscal and monetary stimulus announced by the current government. In doing so, the paper briefly discusses the broad elements of the fiscal and monetary package. It also critically discusses the growth forecasts and analyses the growth prospects of India for the forthcoming years. The paper concludes with a discussion on the key policy challenges for India with the COVID-19 crisis.

Covid-19 Crisis in India

Covid-19 has given rise to two concurrent global crisis: health crisis and economic crisis (UNDP, 2020). The first positive case of COVID-19 was detected on 30th January 2020 in Kerala where a student of Wuhan was spending vacation in the home state, Kerala in India (Rawat, 2020). India has seen an exponential curve in terms of rising cases since then. The total detected cases have crossed 5 lakh (5,87,092 on 01 July 2020) since then and there have been growing debates about the community transmission of the disease by different groups.

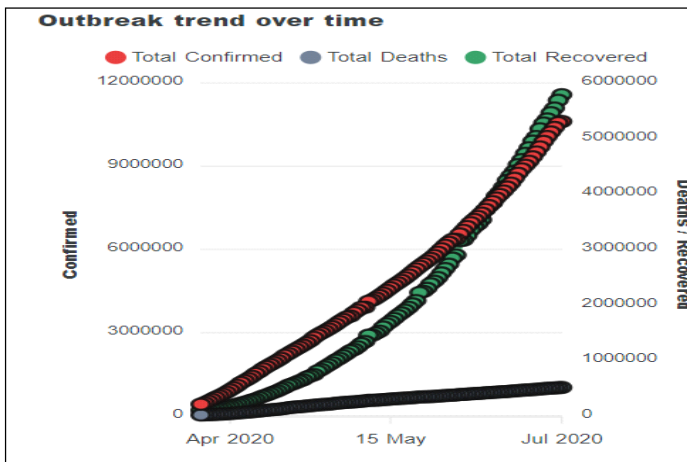


Source: Compilation of data from Web as on 01 July 2020.

Graph I: Total Covid-19 Cases in India

It can be observed that India has experienced a steadily rising trend from January till June 2020 and the positive impact in slowing the growth rate of this contagious disease can be observed giving time to the local and state governments to build the required health infrastructure and design policies to stimulate economic activity.

The number of positive cases by mid-June 2020 had already crossed 3,00,000 and the fatality rate has been 2.8 per cent which is relatively low given the large population density of the country. The Indian Government has been able to control time taken to multiply cases by imposing nation-wide lockdown for



Source: (Corona Tracker, 2020)

Graph II: Rising Trend of Covid-19 Cases in India (as on 01 July 2020)

68 days for March 25th to May 31st in the year 2020. However post-lockdown, India continued to report record-breaking numbers of positive cases as well as deaths, though it has been debated that the peak of Corona graph would be reached in August-September 2020 owing to the resumption of economic activity in different parts of the country and consequent risk of spread through close contacts at workplace or outside home.

Unlike China, India has experienced a distributed spread of COVID-19 Cases across states with not a single state/Union territory reporting zero case. Table 1.1 depicts the state-wise numbers ranked in the descending order highlighting the concentration of higher cases in urban clusters particularly around metropolitan cities.

STATE ↕	CASES ▼	ACTIVE ↕	RECOVERED ↕	DEATHS ↕
Maharashtra	1,74,761 ▲ 4,878	75,995 ▲ 2,682	90,911 ▲ 1,951	7,855 ▲ 245
Tamil Nadu	90,167 ▲ 3,943	38,892 ▲ 1,558	50,074 ▲ 2,325	1,201 ▲ 60
Delhi	87,360 ▲ 2,199	26,270 ▲ 24	58,348 ▲ 2,113	2,742 ▲ 62
Gujarat	32,557 ▲ 619	7,049 ▲ 178	23,662 ▲ 422	1,846 ▲ 19
Uttar Pradesh	23,492 ▲ 664	6,711 ▲ 61	16,084 ▲ 578	697 ▲ 25
West Bengal	18,559 ▲ 652	5,761 ▲ 226	12,130 ▲ 411	668 ▲ 15
Rajasthan	18,014 ▲ 354	3,381 ▼ 256	14,220 ▲ 602	413 ▲ 8
Telangana	16,339 ▲ 945	8,785 ▼ 774	7,294 ▲ 1,712	260 ▲ 7
Karnataka	15,242 ▲ 947	7,078 ▲ 692	7,918 ▲ 235	246 ▲ 20
Andhra Pradesh	14,595 ▲ 704	7,897 ▲ 418	6,511 ▲ 279	187 ▲ 7
Haryana	14,548 ▲ 338	4,340 ▼ 136	9,972 ▲ 470	236 ▲ 4
Madhya Pradesh	13,593 ▲ 223	2,626 ▲ 19	10,395 ▲ 196	572 ▲ 8
Bihar	10,043 ▲ 403	2,289 ▲ 101	7,687 ▲ 297	67 ▲ 5
Assam	8,227 ▲ 475	2,568 ▲ 160	5,647 ▲ 314	12 ▲ 1

Source: (COVID 19 Tracker, 2020)

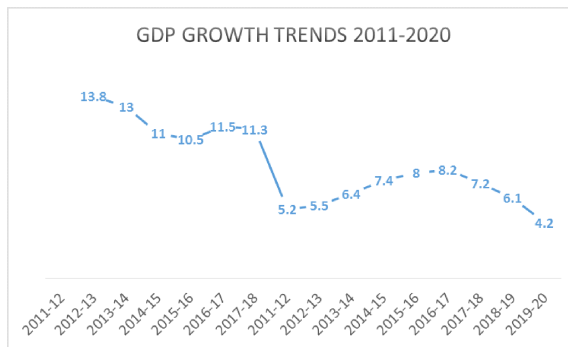
Graph III: State-wise Distribution of COVID-19 Cases in India

Maharashtra has reported the highest number of cases leading with nearly the 1/3rd of the country count vis-à-vis other states. This was followed by the state of Tamil Nadu and capital Delhi whereas the highest fatality rate has been reported in the state of Gujarat and the steepest steady rise in cases is being accounted by Delhi and Mumbai regions in the early June period. Multiple reasons account for the spread of COVID-19 in India ranging from relaxed approach to religious gatherings to the return of migrant labour as well as Indian citizens from overseas to various states during the lockdown period. Given the large population base, high number of migrant persons in different parts of

India and the re-opening of the economic activities, there have been growing concerns about need for further lockdowns in near future.

State of Indian Economy at the Onset of Covid-19 Crisis

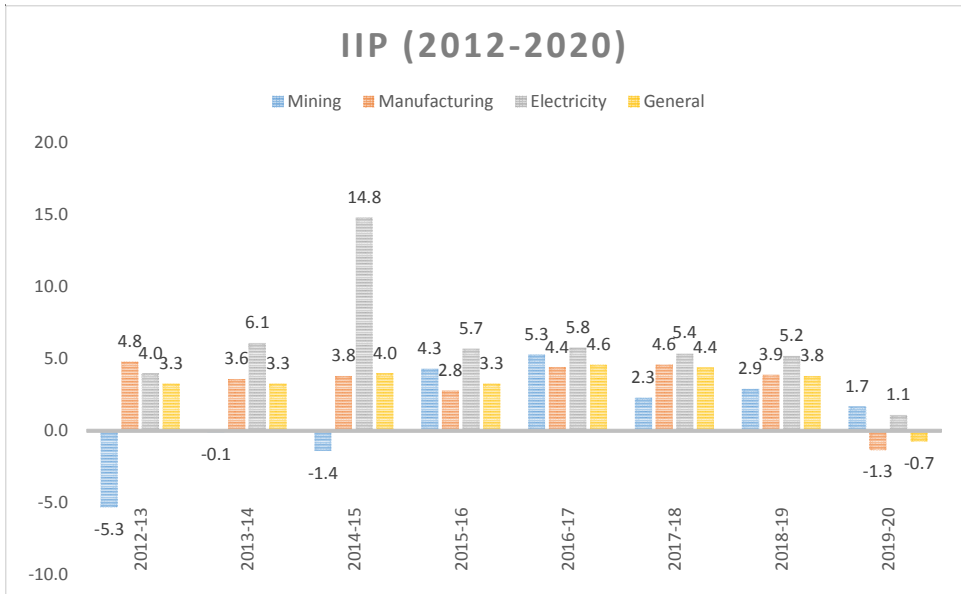
Despite being the 5th largest economy in the world, the slow pace of growth in the year 2019-20 had been a cause of concern for the Indian policy-makers. Slowdown in the industrial activity coupled with financial issues in the airline industry marked the beginning of financial year 2019-20. The GDP growth rate for the year 2019-20 fell to 11 year low of 4.2% amidst the end of the financial year during nation-wide lockdown. World output growth also grew at a slow rate of 2.9 per cent reflecting upon the slowing consumer demand worldwide coupled with uncertainties due to the US-China trade conflict and rising geopolitical tensions between US and Iran. This led to a weak environment for international trade, consumer demand and global manufacturing.



Source: Author's Compilation

Graph IV: GDP Growth Trends 2019-20

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data reflects that manufacturing activity contracted to -1.3 per cent in 2019-20 compared to 3.9 per cent in 2018-19. This was pertinent owing to the nationwide lockdown. It can be observed that electricity sector grew at the slowest rate (1.1 per cent in 2019-20) in the last eight years while manufacturing sector reported negative growth rate for the first time in this period at annual basis. Development theories account the linkage of high unemployment rate in developing economies to slow growth of manufacturing sector. Slowdown in the year 2019-20 was coupled with one of the highest unemployment rates India has witnessed in the last 2 decades (6 per cent approximately). It can also be observed that mining sector continue to grow at a positive rate (1.7 per cent) in the year 2019-20, mainly owing to key reforms in the mining sector.



Source: Author's own Compilation

Graph V: Trends in Index of Industrial Production

State of Indian Economy and Policy Announcements during Lockdown (2020-21)

Social distancing measures in the physical markets have brought in a sharp drop in consumer demand. Disrupted supply chains during the period of country-wide lockdown has also affected the inventory stock and business revenues across different sectors. Reduction in demand can have a vicious impact on further industrial activity plunging the economy into recession until the crisis is completely over. Government of India announced plethora of measures during the lockdown so as to prevent the economy from turning into an economic crisis from health crisis.

Monetary Stimulus Package: In order to arrest the impact of Covid-19 crisis and consequent lockdown on liquidity, India's Central Bank has announced stimulus package for the common man, commercial enterprises, non-banking financial companies as well as banks. The policy aimed to mitigate the ill-effects of virus, revive growth and ensure financial stability. The repo rate has been reduced to 4 per cent and the fixed reverse repo rate has been reduced to 3.35 percent. The Marginal Standing Facility rate has been reduced to 4.25 per cent. The accommodative stance has been taken mainly to revive growth. This measure has been taken to discourage surplus bank deposits with RBI and encourage their flow into productive channels of the economy. It also aimed to

expand the bank's credit growth which vital to revive the economy from slowdown. Reduction in Cash Reserve Ratio by 100 basis points to 3 per cent. Moreover, the Central bank also reduced the requirement of minimum daily CRR Balance to 80 per cent from 90 per cent effective from 28 March 2020 till 26 June 2020. Marginal facility rate has been increased from 2 per cent of statutory liquidity ratio to 3 per cent. Banks will be able to withdraw more money through this measure in times of stress. Targeted Long-term repo auctions of 3 years tenure to be conducted for a total amount of 1,50,000 crore at floating rate. This measure has been introduced to retain the liquidity in the banking system. Moratorium on term loans for the period of 6 months has been extended. This measure is aimed at stabilising liquidity at household level and to ensure sustained increase in consumer demand post-lockdown.

Refinance facility has been provided to financial institutions like National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Small industrial Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and National Housing Bank (NHB) to enable them to meet sector-specific needs. Advances under this facility to be charged at the RBI's policy repo rate at the time of availing it. Changes also introduced for the asset classification in the banking system. The 90-day NPA period will not include the moratorium period. Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) have been given flexibility to consider similar relief to their borrowers. Scheduled commercial banks and cooperative banks to not provide dividends to their shareholders from profits pertaining to the financial year 2019-20 till further instructions of RBI. This measure has been taken with a view to conserving bank capital. Liquidity coverage ratio has been brought down from 100 per cent to 80 per cent temporarily. It shall be restored back to 90 per cent by the end of 01 October 2020 and 100 per cent by the end of 01 April 2021.

Some other measures were announced by the Central bank for NBFC loans for commercial projects, resolution timeline, etc. which can be directly accessed on central bank's webpage. To sum up, the monetary stimulus package of RBI has been aimed to easing liquidity at not just banks, but also non-banks and financial institutions. RBI has estimated that inflation has been on a declining trajectory and is expected to fall below its target rate of 4 per cent at the end of the second quarter of 2020-21 (RBI, 2020).

It has also been found that in the production sectors, industrial production shrank by close to 17 per cent in March 2020, with manufacturing activity down by 21 per cent. The output of core industries, which constitutes about 40 per cent of overall industrial production, reduced to 6.5 per cent. The

manufacturing PMI for April recorded its sharpest deterioration to 27.4, spread across all sectors. The services PMI plunged to an all-time low of 5.4 in April 2020 (RBI, 2020)

Fiscal Stimulus Package: Alongside the monetary stimulus package, the Ministry of Finance also announced a fiscal stimulus package on 12th May 2020. Together, a whopping 20 lakh crore rupees have been injected in the Indian economy to enable it to recover from the external shock of Covid-19 crisis. Measures have been taken to boost employment, stabilise business investments and encourage self-reliant economy. The key highlights and their expected impact on Indian economy can be discussed:

- (i) Injection of additional Rs.40,000 crore to MGNREGA Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). This step is expected to boost rural employment and is hailed as an important step towards absorption of rural migrant labour that has returned from urban areas owing to nationwide lockdown.
- (ii) Rs.15,000 crores have been committed for health related measures for containment of Covid-19.
- (iii) Borrowing limits of the states have been increased from 3 to 5 per cent of gross state domestic product (GSDP).
- (iv) Structural reforms to be introduced in eight sectors: Coal, Mineral, Defence, Airports and airspace, Maintenance: Repairs and operations (MRO), power sector, social infrastructure projects, space and atomic energy
- (v) Upgradation of farm infrastructure (cold chains & harvest storage), animal husbandry (Rs. 5000 crore infusion to dairy farmers) and fishery (development of marine and in-land fisheries)
- (vi) Collateral free automatic loans for businesses and MSMEs and Rs.30,000 crore liquidity has been injected into NBFCs.
- (vii) Free food grains to be distributed to migrant labour for two months and affordable rental housing complex to be provided for Migrant workers or urban poor. Street vendors to be provided credit facility and Rs. 6000 crore employment boost using CAMPA Funds (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority)
- (viii) Rs.90,000 crore financial support to power discoms and Rs.3 lakh crore emergency working capital facility has been provided to the small businesses.

Key Challenges at Policy Level

(a) *Slow Growth Forecast*

With GDP growth slowing down to 3.1 per cent in the last quarter of 2019-20 and the consequent lockdown of more than 68 days, the growth forecasts of Indian economy have been revised from time to time. India's growth rate was 4.2 per cent for the year 2019-20. However, it is expected to contract below zero in the current fiscal year 2020-21. India's central bank has forecasted the annual GDP growth rate to contract in the range of 1 to 6 per cent while IMF has predicted that Indian economy will shrink by 4.5 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Table I: Growth Forecasts for India

<i>Name of the Institution</i>	<i>Annual GDP Growth forecast (In percent) in 2020-21</i>	<i>Annual GDP Growth forecast (In percent) in 2021-22</i>
FITCH	-5	8
World Bank	-3.2	5.8
RBI	-6 to 1	NA
Moody	0	6.6
IMF	-4.5	NA

Source: Author's Compilation.

Moreover, the merchandise exports have reduced by 60.3 per cent in April 2020 and imports have contracted by 58.6 percent. Incidentally, the net foreign direct investment as well as net portfolio investment has picked up in May 2020. The foreign exchange reserves of India have been US \$487 billion which are sufficient for a year's imports. Government of India has announced fiscal and monetary stimulus package with the objective of accelerating the economic growth rate from the second quarter of FY 2020-21. Moreover, in the post-lockdown period, majority of the workplaces have opened up which has begun the process of economic revival. It has been estimated that the unemployment rate in India fell to its pre-lockdown level of 8.5 per cent in the week that ended on 21 June from the peak rate of 23.5 per cent in April and May owing to job-losses to workers due to nationwide lockdown. However, urban unemployment continues to be higher than rural unemployment (CMIE, 2020).

(b) *Migrant Labour*

Nationwide lockdown initiated by the Government has impacted the migrant labour the most who form the larger percentage of India's informal sector. The migrant labour not only lost their temporary jobs and incomes accruing from it, they also faced cash and food crunch leading to voluntary return to their

hometowns. Nearly 40 million internal migrants have been affected directly or indirectly by the travel bans, lockdown and social distancing measures preventing them to return neither to their workplace nor to their hometowns (World Bank, 2020). This led to the beginning of journey of thousands of migrants on foot covering long distances (greater than 1000 kms) from their workplace locations to their home-states. This led to the Government starting special ‘Shramik’ trains for inter-state transport of migrant labour and also set-up of camps with basic provisions to provide shelter to stranded migrants in various districts. Government also began special air services ‘Vande Bharat’ to transport stranded Indian citizens/workers in other countries back to India.

The dual challenge of the State Governments has been to monitor the health status of the migrants who have returned from cities having high Covid-19 cases and also provide employment opportunities for their sustainable livelihoods. Skill mapping has been done by many states including Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh for the returned internal migrants and also been undertaken for skilled workers returning from foreign countries under the Vande Bharat Mission through the SWADES scheme (Sharma, 2020).

(c) FRBM Challenge

The economic shock induced by the Covid-19 crisis has further scaled up the Fiscal challenges of the Indian Government. The fiscal deficit in February 2020 (much before the crisis) was higher than the target rate and was proposed to be relaxed from 3.3 per cent to 3.8 per cent in the Union Budget announcements by the Ministry of Finance owing to the slowdown in the economic growth rate. However, the Covid-19 crisis coupled with the nationwide lockdown of nearly two months pushed the Government to announce economic stimulus package of nearly 10 per cent of GDP amidst the high fiscal deficit numbers further aggravating the gap between Government expenditures and revenues. This is expected to further deepen India’s fiscal deficit and rolling targets for the next two years.

Under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (2004), the Government has the challenge of reducing its fiscal deficit to 3 per cent of GDP using plethora of suggested measures to ensure the country’s financial stability. Government borrowings are expected to increase to the tune of 6 to 7 per cent of GDP which is again higher than the FRBM limit and will reduce public savings temporarily. Currency printing better known as deficit financing is another alternative in the hands of the Government. It is also being debated whether FRBM targets themselves need a practical revision as the Government has not been able to achieve them. There have been reports estimating fiscal

deficit target being revised to 7.9 per cent for the FY 2020-21 (PTI, 2020). Fiscal stability is the next big challenge for the Government post economic and health revival in India.

(d) Health Expenditure

It has been estimated that public health systems in countries have a chance to respond to the Covid-19 crisis without getting burdened if they are able to successfully 'flatten the curve' of new cases and resulting fatalities. It is equally important to not only reduce the caseload but also do so within the existing health system capacities of different regions (UNDP, 2020). In the Indian scenario, arresting the growth of Covid-19 cases has not only been a medical & administrative challenge but also a socio-economic challenge. 100% implementation of almost all the WHO recommendations for the individuals has been a serious challenge not only in rural areas but also urban areas leading to a spike in the number of cases after the country went in its first and second stage of 'Unlock'.

Despite of an increase in the health expenditure by the Government focused on containment of Covid-19 virus and boosting research and development for its treatment & prevention, positive results are still awaiting with the country grappling hard to control the spread of virus from the stage of local to community transmission. Effective health strategies and social outreach of Covid-19 related awareness programmes are the need of the hour to arrest the magnitude and spread of virus in the densely populated country.

Discussion and Conclusion

World Trade Organization has predicted that the global merchandise trade is expected to contract by 13-32 per cent in the year 2020. Capital outflows are expected to continue in the emerging market economies and global financial markets have been volatile. In the case of India, a consensus exists among the various forecasters for the sharp-turnaround of GDP growth similar to V or U shape expected from the third quarter of 2020-21. Preliminary data suggests that Indian economy has already resumed its economic activity and is currently on the road to recovery.

The biggest fiscal challenge amidst Covid-19 crisis for India is to effectively revive and accelerate the economic growth rate to above six per cent in the next two financial years and this calls for a comprehensive strategy of reviving all the industries in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector. However there are twin constraints to this challenge currently: less than full-capacity workforce at workplaces and worsening health status of few states in India. This is preventing

utilisation of productive capacity in optimum manner and is leading to slow revival in manufacturing industries.

Achievement of monetary targets of India's central bank is also a cumbersome challenge. Effective transmission of monetary policy changes in increasing household demand for goods and services is likely to be an important factor in stimulating economic activity in the country. However, this requires fine-tuning of demand-supply logistic chain which is possible only when the physical and e-markets resume manufacturing and delivery to the pre-lockdown levels. While RBI has infused seemingly sufficient liquidity in banks, non-banks, and other developmental and financial institutions, & also relaxed the moratorium period and other NPA measures, the transmission of the benefits of these policy measures to the common man in reviving aggregate demand is expected to take some time. Therefore, Indian economy is expected to grow at a slow rate till the end of second quarter of FY 2020-21.

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COVID-19 Through Social Lens

Arbind Sinha*

Theoretical Perspective

There is a popular mythological saying in India – *Hey Raam tere liye sab samaan (Oh God Ram, for you all are equal)*. That is true for most of the disease when Tartaglia spoke that “disease does not discriminate”. This comes true in the case of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) – a health hazard that, at the aggregate level, did not discriminate anyone – rich, poor, women, men, educated, uneducated, young and old, urban and rural people. Even age is not the real factor, although in the beginning it was told that children below 10 years and elderly people above 65 years of age are comparatively more vulnerable. Anyone can get afflicted with the disease regardless of her/his nationality, profession, economic status, or family cohesion. I thought of researching it from the perception of social change. Nicholas (2020) correlates human civilisation with larger cities, exotic trade routes, and increased contact with different populations of people, animals, and ecosystems and says that the more likely pandemics would occur.

Social change is a dynamic process and has been studied by different scholars at different points of time and in a different context. Zevallos (2017) has attempted to explain how social change happens and mentioned about various responsible factors, nobody had imagined that the society will pass through a phase of unprecedented social change triggered by a single factor – COVID-19 (referred here as Corona) that has forced the societies across the world, so he did not even mention about any such circumstances. Even when Dunfey (2019) defined social change as changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions that result in social change movements, there was no mention of any such disastrous force leading to social change.

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Frankel (1978) talked about special conditions that lead to social change. De la Sablonnière (2017) talks about the typology of social change and indicated towards psychological threat that may lead to dramatic social change.

However, Davies (1962) did talk about social changes because of the environment giving reference to human-environment correlation; an increase in the number of people affects the environment and ultimately increases the impact of a natural disaster. Lumen, perhaps, did not take any cognizance of the health disaster of last centuries that caused massive destruction on the planet. Maclver and Page (1962) too describe “Social Change as a process responsive to changes in man-made conditions of life” that go beyond human control. Recently, in its note, the UN indicated that the Corona outbreak shall, although affect all segments of the population; would disproportionately impact the health and economic well-being of poor people. (Report of UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 06 April 2020)

Corona, discredited as the repeat of faded history of human disasters of the planet is yet another devastating health hazard that started from Wuhan city of Central China from the beginning of January 2020 and had already reached Thailand, Japan, South Korea, USA, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Vietnam, France, Nepal, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Cambodia, Germany, Sri Lanka, Finland, and United Arab Emirates before the virus raised its head in India on January 30, 2020. By the time even the China administration realised the problem and its magnitude, it has gripped everybody, every race, every religion, and every region, mainly through the tourists and others who traveled for business or others who had come in contact with Corona infected people. People are more worried about the well-being of their children as it is human psychology that no matter how bad one suffers personally, the shiver comes with the realisation that ones own children may get a threat to their life.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared it as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and finally, looking at its rapid spread across the globe, on 11 March 2020, the WHO declared it as a ‘Pandemic’. This news sent a severe to the whole world. In the beginning either people did not comprehend it or they did not take it seriously. In many countries, preventive care was not taken till it took a dangerous turn. In India, gravity came only with the call of Prime Minister of India for a Janata Curfew (Public Curfew), and the whole of India remained confined to their homes throughout the day. Respective state governments also started issuing advisories. State governments of Maharashtra had already declared shutdown of all non-essential services in Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune, and Chinchwad w.e.f. 21 March 2020.

Scientists got to know that people are getting impacted by Corona that is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air. The only controlling factor for the disease is by using a mask to filter the droplets and by keeping a distance of 6 feet from another person in order to stop its spread. Although there were several myths about Corona like ‘it cannot survive when the temperature rises to 30 degree Celsius’, ‘it would not affect those who consume alcohol, and it affects women less severely.

International Horizon

Much has been written on Corona, its medical properties and its therapeutic aspects, on employment, on agriculture loss, and overall economic impact. The paper discusses the social perspectives in the management of COVID-19 linking with different facades of social life. It is examined by segmenting the society and explaining how each segment experienced this first occurrence in their lives. It also touches upon the structure and the function of society. The paper deals mostly with the Indian situation, but extrapolate the social situations of other developed countries.

To start with, let us focus on the impact of the pandemic on the lives people in other countries. In Spain - one of the worst affected countries, both the rich and poor suffer equally. All go to the street under strict police vigilance and drone patrolling the streets to keep pedestrians at home and when they reach the departmental store, they may find that the shelves of toilet paper stocked up while the wine aisles are empty.

The young generation as well as the adults miss their plenty of kisses and hug which is customary form of greeting for male and female acquaintances who kiss each other, usually on both cheeks. Their eating with friends and legendary night lives is now a matter of past. Young women practice meditation and yoga to pass their time. One lady who used to run up and down the building’s stairs for exercise — a neighbor’s young daughter would sometimes cheer her on — now other tenants just put up a sign asking her to stop. They were so scared of Corona spread. Students are kept engaged by their teachers through online assignments. They are getting bored with this compulsory load and miss their classmates and school ambiance. It’s not that they did not opt for online modules or courses, but this was in addition to their other outdoor learning and activities. Now they have only this mode or television or mobile phone – too much of screen time that has led to put strain on eyes. Worst sufferers are over nine million people (nearly one-fifth) in Spain who are over 65 years of age and

advised not to come out of their homes. For their weekly requirements they depend on the public supply system that may not reach in time.

Italy was the first democracy to impose a lockdown. The Corona has impacted this unruly, freedom-loving Western society that is known for being noisy and who live their lives in public. Italy has a strong family tradition and the young Italians often live with their parents even when they are adults. In usual time they often have a family outing to bars, pizza restaurants, and evening spots which they miss the most. They especially missed the evening gatherings with friends either outside or inviting friends to home. Corona has made them discover a sense of containment. The younger generation is the most frustrated lot. Now they don't go to the cinema with friends and neither do they engage themselves in sports. They have to glue themselves to their TV screen and be busy with social media. The elderly population over 65 years, which is more than 20 percent of the total population, is enjoying their leisure watching television, listening to the radio, and reading newspapers. The Corona has made them stay at home and manage the household activities together.

As in most of the cases, in the beginning, Italians were also skeptical about the danger of Corona and mocked at appeals for social distancing. Some demanded to lift the lockdown, some had drink party with several people and thousands of Italians packed ski resorts. However, the mood changed when the death graph went up. But, when they became serious, they also demonstrated that democracies can be just as efficient as dictatorships (Mediatore Del Transferimento Technology). Italians, not normally known for their patience at queuing, have been lining up diligently in front of supermarkets, bakeries, and pharmacies, keeping a safe distance. Italians proved that they feel more responsible for everyone's well-being.

However, all has not taken it as easily as others. A group of people in Palermo loaded their shopping carts in a supermarket and refused to pay for their food at the checkout. The situation took dirty turn and Police were called to intervene.

When we focus on Iran, another badly affected country, we find the city of some nine million became a ghost town. The bus carries a single passenger, gloved and masked; a cyclist rides alone on a three-lane highway, and a young man plays guitar on a rooftop singing a cheerful tune to the barren construction site behind him (*Getaka News*, 2020). Only a few people on road, men covering their faces with face masks and women covering faces with dupatta or Niquaab, experiencing limitation, boredom, and distance in everyday life. Corona already changed their relationship with their surroundings.

The economy is restraining the working class to stay away from the workplace Bizaer (2020). A young lady from the lower middle class in Tehran city did not go to work for 45 days, but “with bills mounting, she made the difficult decision to return to work, when the restrictions were eased. She takes help from her colleague who picks her up in the morning to avoid public transport. For people like her who can’t live without an income, it is really hard to choose between making money and trying to stay safe. ...The Coronavirus epidemic has deepened the misery of the poor. Many have lost income due to the recession, and cannot afford hygiene items at skyrocketing prices to resist the disease.”

The Corona has impacted American society in many ways – from working to socialising, and their interaction in the gyms. Children missed their classmates and friends, graduating students missed enjoying much-awaited convocations—a lifelong happy memory. People canceled their birthday parties, medical conferences, and sending children to school. They feel like meeting people, hugging them, and greeting friends and colleagues but are constrained by advice to maintain physical distance and remained behind closed doors and sever connections with others. Many of them avoided going out of home for groceries or work. A study published by Pew Research Centre (2020, March 30) reports on how the American adults feel about the Corona impacting their social lives. The paper reported that 91% of the Americans are missing going to any party, 77 per cent of them do not go out to eat in a restaurant, 42% don’t feel like going to store for buying their provisions, and 38 per cent did not want to go to meet friends and relatives at their homes. Elderly residents of nursing homes missed family visits.

Some information has also been collected from other countries where the havoc of Corona is not much. The Australian population can be divided into three age groups; youngsters, adults, and senior citizens. It merits mention that in those countries, children above 18 years are usually expected to have a separate living. The restrictions due to Corona, this generation miss their going to school/college and their usual evening activities of visiting malls, bars, restaurants, and other public places. They also miss their common interest like horse riding, fishing, attending concerts, etc. Some millennials have opted to return to their parents’ homes instead of remaining in their apartments. They miss their dating and long drive. School closures and household isolation has put extra responsibility on parents to take care of children when they are at home most of the time – from the paid economy to self-help. Elderly people, who can manage their cleaning, cooking, and housekeeping, they cope up and others call social service centers for their supplies and help. This is the best time in Sweden when they

enjoy the weather. Swedes miss their usual sunbath outside their apartments and at the beachside. It is told that drinking beer has increased in Sweden after the corona as people have more time sitting at home and they pass their time looking outside from their window while enjoying their beer. They fear that this no movement situation continues for more time, it is going to affect their health.

Back home, we can also divide Indian society into three categories of the upper class, middle class, and lower class and further based on deep understanding can divide it into observable sub-categories. We also have to see them from urban and rural lenses where two distinct classes of farmers and labourers exist in rural India.

Urban Lives in India

Oxfam (1917) has mentioned that one per cent of the Indian population is the super-rich who holds 73 per cent of the wealth generated. They are industrialists, the high places executives, or professionals. One can count their economic loss, but in terms of social disturbance, they are the least sufferers. Despite the fact that the staff or employees were operating from home, and did all possible transactions and coordination on the phone and/ or computer. They had enough space to move around and since their travels were restricted by law, their family got valued time to live together. Many of them had their domestic help residing in their villa and many others called them and provided a place to stay. Their supplies were uninterrupted. The aged population in these households who are still fit and used to go to family workplaces for an hour or so and as well attend social gatherings and functions are getting tired of sitting at home and initially started to complain. One of them got irritated – “Everybody tells to stay at home, what should I do sitting at home all the days”.

The salaried class - 23.7 per cent of the total employment in India, except those who were on emergency duties, were confined to home but they did not have to worry about their regular purchases and expenditures. Their needs were met by ATMs and banks, which operated with minimal staff. This class missed their social interaction in the workplace as well as in their neighbourhood. Even if they were inclined to interact, the other parties were skeptical and maintained distance. Tea parties and occasional pot lucks were missed. This category of people lived in two types of accommodation; those staying in independent houses have little better living than those staying in flats and high rising towers. They were confined to their homes. The discussion is not complete till we talk about a privileged category of urban salaried labourers who work as domestic support – maid-servants, drivers, gardeners, etc.

Another sub-set of this class has nearly 40.0 lakh people (2017 data) who are in direct employment in IT industries or who are forced to work from home using the IT platform. They are extremely uncomfortable as their workload has increased. On telephonic interviews, they were screaming that since human power is less they are getting more work from the company and they find it difficult to cope up along with the domestic work that they have to do themselves as their domestic support stopped coming due to Corona restrictions. Anybody coming from outside has to take care and wash their hands, anything that they get from outside has to be properly washed before it is consumed. One working IT couple mumbled – “honestly both of us do not know how to cook a proper meal. But now whatever we can and learn from YouTube, we prepare with limited supply. It so happens that we don’t like the food and try to blame each other. It sometimes leads to bitter discussion and strained relation, although it is temporary”. During their regular office days, they are mostly dependent on the canteen facilities they get in office and food packs, which often they pick up on their way back home or order it online. The other difficulty they face is the availability of advanced technology and the communication bandwidth that they were getting in their office set up. They say that if the lockdown continues for a month, it is going to affect their health – mental agony and back pain.

The students of senior classes and colleges is another sub-section. Those who were serious struggled with computer-based available materials and the homework that they get from school/college. However, many of them who were not very comfortable with computer-based learning had little difficult time coping with this. Others just used this as vacation.

The worst suffering at the household level was of the aged people. As per 2011 census, almost 15 million elderly Indians live all alone and close to three-fourth of them are women. If they are part of a larger family, someone else is taking care of the household affairs including purchases and they have to just provide supporting hands. However, in the urban areas there are many empty-nesters – the old couple staying alone and unable to take care of the household work or go out for purchase. By this age most of them had stopped driving themselves. They are lucky if their neighbours are kind enough to ask – if they can bring something for them and drop at their door. We can just imagine the type of adjustment they have to make for their living. Living with minimum requirements – minimum cooking, minimum food, no change of bedsheets for days and not having their towel changed every alternate day. It is a general observation in my colony and neighbourhood that many of the adults and oldies do not save regularly. Some of them started growing beard. Soon they were eagerly waiting for the barber’s shop to start functioning.

All these people suffer from social distancing stigma and feel depressed that they are not able to meet their near and dear ones, even in the events of joy or sorrow. Some marriages in the family have been postponed because important relatives could not make it and some have been solemnised in minimum possible ways. The real misery they felt when someone very close in the family passed away and they just could not be present there for their final rites. Reportedly the administration had been very kind, in many cases, making them feel the helplessness due to lockdown.

Rural Folk in India

Let us shift our focus towards rural Indians which has 68.84 percent of its population (Census 2011) and 59 percent of its workforce that's dependent on agriculture (FAO, 2016), they are managing their farm, farmers themselves with part-time working for other farmers, and those who solely survive by working for others' farms. Recent urbanisation has polarised the resources in urban areas and agriculture did not get its pie; that farmers find it difficult to sustain their farming. The input-output ratio has reduced and many of them gave away agriculture. The second generation of farmer managers' families got educated and managed to shift to the urban areas, so this category is almost missing in rural India, except in states like Punjab and parts of Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, and sugar-growing areas of Maharashtra where modernisation of agriculture has taken place. The third component – the farm labourers always look for their livelihood outside and there is large migration to the urban areas. The government has initiated The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MANREGA) programme to give some assured employment to the labour. Corona has the least health impact on rural and tribal India as they aren't in contact with international and urban carriers so far. Still there is awareness created by the massive campaign and they are conscious about the hygiene and distancing factors. For them maintaining a distance will not be a problem as they live in open space. The poor who do not have space inside the house, most of them sleep in open.

The Indian Labour Force

A sizeable number of population is at risk, i.e. the innumerable number of labourers who migrate for various durations in search of greener pasture. The migration happens from villages to towns, cities, and metros. There is no definite figure of daily wage and other contract labourers work in the factories, with construction companies, and work as domestic help. A large number of these labourers lost their jobs because of the lockdown – and hence, no income for them. An estimated figure from Delhi itself comes to approximately 30 lakhs.

Half of them stay in makeshift accommodations or slums wherein one room of 10x10 square feet space at least half a dozen of them stay together. The proximity is based on the village/area they come from. Similar is the situation in other major cities. For them there is no scope of their maintaining social distance.

The first blow to this category of people got when their employers sensed the impending Corona problem and asked them not to come to work, a couple of days before the lockdown was imposed. They started fleeing the city for their hometown – 100 to 2000 km of journey. Those who were from neighbouring districts or states, they could make it fast. Others made a beehive scene at the railway stations and bus stands. Mumbai started 17 special trains for the labourers for their far way placed.

This created problem for society as well as the administration. Since they were coming from Corona infected cities and were traveling in cramped public transport intimidating spread of the virus, the Chief Ministers of the receiving States started protesting against the cities allowing the labourers and others to travel to their hometown. They confessed that they did not have sufficient testing facilities and provisions of isolation for the people who are coming from different places and may carry the virus. This was a critical social dilemma for the receiving home states that they have to show their reluctance to receive their people.

The second kick in the teeth was the final lockdown, which closed the options of leaving the station – no train, no bus, no other means to travel. They were stranded. The respective governments and the socially concerned institutions and NGOs, and industries came forward with their social concerns. Some State governments offered funds to be transferred to their accounts and increased their ration supply. But there are a large number of them who are on daily wage and neither has a bank account nor a ration card. Cooked food and food ingredients were now being distributed to the people who had their income which served them hand to mouth and had nothing to eat. The number is huge and the efforts made were limited to certain localities with restrictions on people's movement. Many of the labour areas were poorly covered or not even covered.

The last nail on the coffin was accommodating them in makeshift camps (scope of social distancing at these places can be debated) and allowing them to sleep under the flyovers or wherever they could. As the days of lockdown passed by, many of them exhausted their means to survive. They also started to visit shelters providing free foods. The number started swelling and the resources with these benevolent organizations either started shrinking or remained constant.

Miss-managements should not be ruled out. Hunger broke the patience and these people started fighting for their survival, as a result of incidents that took place in Surat and Kashmiri Gate shelters in Delhi, in Aurangabad and a few more places didn't come as a shock! On telephonic conversation I was told that "the hunger-stricken people prefer going to jail where their food is assured and some space to sleep".

At the later stage when the lockdown prolonged and the supporting hands were constrained by their limited resources, this lot of labourers lost patience. There was a protest for managing their return to homestay, revolt against not allowing them to leave the containment zone, and march on foot to somehow reach their native place. They were people of no means and many of the villages/towns from where they were passing through, gave them food. Their horrifying stories were well covered by media. In a telephonic conversation, I tried to know why they are so adamant for returning to their native place and why did they decide to take up the hazardous journey of 500 to 1500 km being well aware that it was not an easy task. The author presents their argument and finds the social norm as the main considerations – "*Ghar mein baant boont kar kha lenge. Agar marana hee hai to ghar mein marenge, apno ke paas marenge*" (at our native place we will share with others whatever limited means we have. Even if we have to die out of hunger, we prefer to die at our place, will die where there are near and dear ones around). This sense of 'OWN' is deeply rooted in Indian social norms, especially among the communities from the eastern part of India.

Corona Control and Ground Realities

Time and again it was reiterated that Corona can only be avoided by two simple steps; covering face with a mask or any safety means to protect the spread of the virus and keeping social distance from a probably infected person –since we aren't aware of whether one is infected or not, the distance maintained should be around six feet. Protecting spread through masking ones face is a practical solution, but the question that arises is; who can maintain this distance? The situation of Gulf countries is said to be neither better. Mumbai is the worst Corona affected city of India. It is known as the most densely populated city of India with 73,000 people per square mile. Other than population density, the city has 41.3 per cent of its population living in a slum, known as the world-famous slum of Dharavi is also part of Mumbai and it has a population of one million. It is also a city of large number of migrant labourers and Mumbai airport handles major international traffic too. With this demographic distribution, chances of Mumbai getting more affected are obvious.

When the news of Corona came to public knowledge the first impact was restricted travel. Most of the people avoided travel by public transport – air, train, bus, and others which were considered a risk. Meanwhile, there was enormous public pressure on the administration to allow the students as well as the labourers to go back to their respective places, a provision that would demand special arrangements and relaxation of the lockdown rules. The process started with Uttar Pradesh facilitating students to go back to their homes. Similar was the situation on the labourers' front. They also wanted to go back home and had staged a protest. From 01 May 2020, special trains were arranged for the labourers from different parts of the country to make them reach their home state/city safely. No one is sure how the clause of social distance would be maintained when 50+ people travel in one compartment with four toilets, the same doors, and the same pantry. But there isn't any immediate solution to this problem.

Looking Back at the Social Reality

Even during the hike of the pandemic, Indians have not compromised on their usual social and cultural practices. This was apparent with Corona affected people belonging to one community deliberately defying the government norms for organizing some social gathering. Gathering for prayers, organisation of marriages, etc. have also been reported. There are unfortunate incidents of misbehaviour with health workers, aggressive attitude towards police and other government personnel, mishandling of cleaning staff, asking the vegetable vendors their caste/religion, denying medical facilities for specific group, etc. are some reflections of unfortunate social evils. Level of anxiety was equal among the essential service providers – the police and the health workers – as well as those serving at different centers.

At household level, those who did not know how to wash utensils started doing it themselves, never did car washing started doing all these and many other household chores. Shoba De (2020) rightly said that when you clean your toilet yourselves, the street of the posh colony is washed by residents themselves and each member taking care of their gardening and watering is a big social adjustment, if not change. People have realised the contribution of home-help and other services provided by other people on a daily basis and have learnt to be more polite to the people who are guarding their society, the lady who lifts the garbage, the boy who delivers water bottles. The jobs that seemed to be miniscule are no more miniscule, instead the ones that are the most important. It has made people realise that such jobs are more painstaking and filled with efforts.

Political Variances

Many of the states run by other political parties, compelled by the social situation and fear of spreading the virus amongst their citizens, undertook their own course of action along with the Union Government's directives. Maharashtra did not announce lockdown but imposed total shutdown in four major cities of Maharashtra – Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune, and Chinchwad, effective from 20 March 2020, even before the Prime Minister asked for Janata Curfew from morning through the evening on 22 March 2020. The mood was more explicit when it came to extending the lockdown from 14 April 2020.

Many other Chief Ministers belonging to the ruling BJP or supporting BJP also had the same social pressure and had already expressed their views in public for a need to extend the lockdown. The PM held an online consultation meeting with the Chief Ministers and took two-three days to make this announcement, keeping in view the holistic situation. But, even before the Prime Minister made the formal announcement of an extension of lockdown on 14 April 2020, several States run by opposition parties namely Punjab, Maharashtra, Telangana, Delhi, West Bengal, Mizoram, and Puducherry (UT), had already announced the extension of lockdown till 30 April 2020. Even BJP ruled states as well as other states like Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and Mizoram made their announcements. Similar viewpoints emerged when the Government of India was to extend the lockdown beyond 03 May 2020. This shows that although the situation created by Corona may result in many facets of social change at macro level, the social edifices would remain the same.

Conclusion

There are many angles of studying the impact of COVID-19 and it would not be complete if the social angle is not covered. The problem has affected different layers of heterogeneity of societies all over. On a blanket statement we can say that it has affected the entire globe, but it has a differential bearing on each section and sub-section of the society. This disastrous health hazard has impacted the world economically, psychologically, and also has affected the social fabric—the main binding force to keep the community united. This virus has worried the vulnerable population not only because it could affect their health and well-being, but because through them it is a threat to their “own” (near and dear) people and they don't want them to suffer for no fault.

Different social strata have suffered differently; some did not get domestic support and others did not get daily supply; some wait to greet and meet their friends and others struggle to meet two square meals, social events gave a deserted look and on the other side huge crowds are protesting for their return

to home. Social realities are not only well reflected in the ground-level process of lockdown, but it is also reflected at the highest level of operation. At every stage the social frame and the norms are obvious. However, when it came to their survival, with each passing day, the cross-section of society ultimately wants to be closer to their near and dear ones who will be ready to share with them, whatever they have.

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*The Post COVID-19 World Order**

Sitakanta Mishra

Undoubtedly, the type of world we lived during the pre-COVID-19 era would not hang on for long. During the last six months, indications of structural changes in the global power hierarchy can clearly be perceived. The world may gradually inch towards a new world order with new set of power equations and structural adjustments. Though there is no unanimity on the ushering of new world order post-pandemic, the upshot of the COVID-19 would certainly be consequential for the current world order which at first has started to reshape and will fully transform to its new *avatar* at once. When will it fully usher, and what would be the exact contours of the post-COVID-19 world order, is too early to conclude. But one must ponder if such a systemic alteration is to occur, some fracture in the global governance structure would too emerge. Has any irreparable fracture among the current global ruling elites emerged? Will the wrangling centered round the pandemic will prompt any fresh alignments and counter-alignments culminating in a new polarity at the global level?



The answers to these intriguing questions have been a matter of dyadic debate. Many foresee heralding of a new global order considering the unfolding power politics, especially between USA and China, and other actors like Russia, India and some European countries. While many scholars are not convinced that the shape of current global power hierarchy would swing in any significant

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manner. By connecting the socio-economic-strategic spats and crisis-time power play in the wake of the pandemic, this paper foresees a new world order is in the offing by identifying some broad pointers of the shift towards a new configuration, which may not be fully visible for next one or two years. Also, the assertion made here is that if the US and European powers remain absent in shaping a global unity as they used to until now, China and India may use the crisis as an opportunity to start setting new rules and initiate actions according to their global governance visions.

The Testing Time

At present, the geopolitical implications of COVID-19 pandemic are undoubtedly secondary compared to the global health and safety concerns; but in long-run, the upshot of the pandemic would be consequential for the global order in vogue. In the wake of pandemic, a global power vacuum has emerged given the fact that all major powers consumed with internal problems have become inward looking for fighting the pandemic.

All are aware of the fact that no nation is powerful enough to provide ‘crisis leadership’ globally at the moment. Does the absence of American leadership to deal the pandemic provide new opportunities for Moscow and Beijing? Will China assert global leadership aggressively as the United States falters; or the notion that ‘China as world leader’ just died given the massive negative impacts? Will America hatch a counter-strategy as it perceives Corona virus spread as a Chinese conspiracy against its pursuit of ‘Making America Great Again’?

Moreover, during this time of paucity in global leadership, will the world see arrival of a new super power leading the new world order? Will the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) arrive at a consensus to recompose the high table by accommodating a new influential power like India which willfully is shouldering the crisis-time leadership?

In a way, the COVID-19 pandemic is testing the legitimacy of the global order in vogue and the crisis leadership ability of its chief protagonists, especially America and other western powers. First, it is testing the agility of domestic governance of nation-states – the prime actors of international system; second, the relevance of global governance structures and institutions erected in the name of ‘lasting global peace and development’ in the post World War II period; and third, the ability and willingness of the existing ‘super powers’ to muster global response to a global crisis. So far, in all these respects, the current world order has faltered.

The idea that the democratic governance is best to cater to the last man seems hollow today. The global governance structure based on liberal-capitalist

framework nurtured by UN, IMF, World Bank, etc, has been a victim of power politics; nothing surprising today when China blocks UNSC discussion on the COVID-19 pandemic. More worrying is the shattering of the belief that a super power is one who is present in every corner of the world and willing to control the global outcomes, if possible singularly or multilaterally. Contrarily, the pandemic has brought to fore the global power vacuum, in as no superpower of our time can really control the state of affair in any part of the world today.

While America, the foremost superpower of the world, branded COVID-19 as “the Chinese virus,” an American company has filed USD 20 trillion lawsuits against the Chinese government for the creation and the release of the Corona virus as a bioweapon.¹ On the other hand, China which plans to connect every part of the world through belt-road connectivity, seals its own borders to most foreigners to stop a second wave of virus spread. The interconnected world is locked down to stop the spread of the pandemic which many view as the beginning of the retreat of globalisation or a reverse trend of global interdependence. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, some countries in Europe, and USA, have chosen to disassociate from regional integration and insulate their border respectively mainly to prevent large scale migration.

In addition, the global governance structure centred round the UN and Bretton Woods system has been under serious stress today, and has been subject to manipulation during the last few decades by their champions itself. The obstruction of the UNSC meeting to discuss the pandemic-related issue by China, and the WHO position regarding China’s dealing with the pandemic have renewed the longstanding debate about whether the world body is “sufficiently independent to allow it to fulfill its purpose.” These, and many such instances in the past give rise to a perception that the current global governance structure has become inept, therefore, warrant a complete overhaul.

Connecting the Spats and Fault-lines

Before a full bloom, a new system in the offing normally amalgamates some deep rooted spats and fault-lines to show the seeds of its arrival. It normally takes a while to build up to a precipitating stage and the outbreak of an event/crisis/war simply sparks its arrival. Apparently, during the last few decades, especially after 9/11, deep divisions are visible among the global governing elites over many global issues like non-proliferation, sovereignty, trade and interventions. The traditional alignments are fading and the international system seems to be moving towards a post-Western era. Gradually, the geostrategic pivot of the post-Cold War era has shifted from Europe to Asia and more

specifically to Indo-Pacific. In addition, the world is pondering if China will replace America soon in the global power hierarchy.

One wonders if the COVID-19 pandemic is just the beginning of the end of the current world order. There are many other indications of the unfolding new order. The sections that follow, identifies nine overlapping symptoms to help define the broad contours of the post-pandemic world order. All they are not likely to engulf the global sphere at once; rather their gradual unfolding would herald the historic moment “when the world changes permanently, when the balance of political and economic power shifts decisively, and when, for most people, in most countries, life is never quite the same again.”²

1. *An Alternative World Order in the Making:* Many would agree that China is crafting a new world order through establishing alternative global governance structures and alliance systems. This does not mean that the America-led world order in vogue is dead. What China seems laying down is a parallel global governance system “not to allow US monopoly to write the rules of international order.”³ The foundation of American world order in vogue is based on the Bretton Woods system, United Nations, and alliances crafted post-WWII, through which it could establish global hegemony and redefined the rules of global governance. China is a beneficiary of the “unilateral American military guarantee”⁴ and expanded liberal global order. But in the decades ahead Beijing is likely to marginalise the USA in many other spheres and with ascendance as a major global player, it will strive to reshape the world order as per its own design.

In the process, China will further insulate its own backyard from external intervention and at the same time ensure other regions of the world not being dominated by any other power. Also, it will enhance its power to reach every corner of the world at any point of time; in other words, it will acquire necessary capabilities to become a stakeholder in issues arising in every part of the world. China has embarked on the ‘strategic access’ method by building artificial islands, seaports connectivity, and alliances. China has already set out to build multilateral institutions, like Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India and China), New Development Bank (NDB), etc. by collaborating with like-minded countries, to carve alternative platforms for global governance.

Many observers opine that the COVID-19 pandemic might hamper China’s prospects as a superpower, and undermine the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party; they call it China’s ‘Chernobyl moment’;⁵ undoubtedly the pandemic is a dent in China’s growth trajectory, but Beijing is working to turn

it's early signs of success in controlling the pandemic into a larger narrative to broadcast to the rest of the world; this makes China an "essential player in a coming global recovery while airbrushing away its earlier mismanagement of the crisis."⁶ If China's claims to be believed, as the front runner in containing the pandemic, its "signature strength, efficiency and speed in this fight" has set "a new standard for the global efforts against the epidemic."⁷

At a time when no other global power could come forward to cater to Italy's urgent appeal for medical help, China publicly committed to sending ventilators, millions of masks, respirators, protective suits, and test kits. China has also dispatched medical teams and masks to Iran, and other supplies to Serbia, whose president dismissed European solidarity as "a fairy tale" and proclaimed that "the only country that can help us is China."⁸ Citing its "comprehensive strategic partnership" with Iran, Beijing sent flights and medical teams to help the country which witnessed more than 1,500 deaths. Likewise, Beijing sent masks and medical teams to Italy, whose leaders have launched a "Hug the Chinese" public relations campaign, with disastrous consequences. President Xi has made a suggestion to his Italian counterpart on building a "health Silk Road."⁹

Beijing's edge vis-a-vis any other major power in material assistance is high for the fact that much of the material required to face the virus is made in China, be it surgical masks, testing kits or gloves; to meet the spiked demand in all these material China through wartime-like industrial mobilisation has boosted these productions more than tenfold.¹⁰ China also produces roughly half of the N95 respirators critical for protecting health workers and produces vast majority of active pharmaceutical ingredients necessary to make antibiotics to deal with secondary infections from COVID-19.¹¹ One commentary in China's state media threatened that if China withheld drug ingredients, it could plunge the United States into "the mighty sea of coronavirus."¹²

It's ironic, only because China was the first country to deal with coronavirus, it is now ahead of most of the world in terms of containment and recovery, therefore will reap the benefits from first-mover status. Chinese workers are already returning to factories, while the United States and European economies are shutting down. When the world lies clueless on how to come out of the pandemic today, Beijing already has a plan for tomorrow. "In COVID-19, Beijing sees the chance to win. This time, China benefits from a near-peer strategic position. It also benefits from first-mover status."¹³ Like it or not, China is maneuvering for international leadership by turning the crisis into an opportunity— to increase the trust and the dependence of all countries around the world of 'Made in China' especially when the United States falters.¹⁴

Therefore, the view that the “Chinese Communist Party has done more damage to China’s prospects of becoming a global superpower than its most ardent detractors” is shortsighted; and the notion of “China is fit to compete with America for global leadership is dead” is incorrect.¹⁵

2. Towards a Xenophobic World: It is said that disease and prejudice go hand in hand. The post-pandemic world order will be coloured by hues of racism or xenophobia (or Sinophobia) for some time. The mysterious Corona lethal disease seems exacerbating racism and hatred specifically in social media.¹⁶ The social media is full of hatred for China and Chinese.. Conspiracy theories on how China wants to kill others are circulating on informal social media. Reportedly, in some places people with oriental or mongoloid features are now looked down upon as carriers of corona pathogen. The “Chinese residents in Asia and Asian people around the world have been treated with suspicion since the virus made international headlines.”¹⁷ The Chinese diaspora around the world are being targets of racial slurs. Anti-Asian racism and xenophobia have continued unabated elsewhere as well. Singaporeans and Vietnamese are reported to be the targets of xenophobia and racism related to coronavirus in the U.K.¹⁸ Reportedly, Canada’s Chinese community faced racist abuse in wake of coronavirus.¹⁹ “The coronavirus outbreak has taken a toll on Australia’s Chinese community, including a loss of trade at Chinese restaurants and stores as well as increased reports of racism.”²⁰ In USA, and especially in New York City, mishandling of Asians has been reported.²¹ In India there are reported cases of abuse of people with mongoloid features. These people are being denoted as ‘Corona’, and physically abused with a clear intention of socially discarding them.²²

Such sporadic incidents might be neutralised subsequently but for now some time onwards, the Chinese in Asia and Asians in the world especially with mongoloid features, will be subjected to additional health scrutiny or social seclusion while they are in transit.

3. Authoritarianism Gaining Legitimacy: Given the right wing political upsurge and consequent authoritarian political trend at the moment in various parts of the world, it would be safe to assume that the post-COVID-19 world order will be marked by relative decline of democracy along legitimacy of authoritarianism (read ‘benevolent despotism’). In the name of prompt implementation and containment of the pandemic, political authorities and administration machinery would use discretionary powers. Visibly “democracies being hampered by inherent inefficiency and political division” has been proved ineffective to deal crisis situations in comparison to the authoritarian systems. “China’s ... success

in coming to grips with the coronavirus pandemic as a strong case for authoritarian rule.”²³ The WHO called it “perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment in history.”²⁴ As said by China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi, “only in China under the leadership of President Xi there can be such effective measures to put this sudden and fast-spreading epidemic under control.”²⁵

Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, according to a host of media editorials, “Dictators are using the coronavirus to strengthen their grip on power”²⁶; “In coronavirus pandemic, authoritarians around the world see opportunity to crack down”;²⁷ “Authoritarianism in the Time of the Coronavirus.”²⁸ On the other hand, all democratic governments in the world would draw lessons from the successful handling of the pandemic by authoritarian regimes like China and may inculcate a bit of ‘benevolent despotism’ to their governance structures. This would be the beginning of gaining legitimacy for a new political system which can conveniently curtail civil liberty and democratic ideals in massive scale in the name of national emergency.

According to Florian Bieber, “Long before the virus hit, the world was already experiencing a decline of democracy. Since 2006, more countries have seen their democracies degrade than those that have improved. Last year, according to Freedom House, 64 countries became less democratic, and only 37 became more so.”²⁹ “The pandemic will strengthen the state and reinforce nationalism” further; “Governments of all types will adopt emergency measures to manage the crisis, and many will loath to relinquish these new powers when the crisis is over.”³⁰ “The trend towards centralised, authoritarian rule evident in many countries typified by China and Russia; this trend is coincided with the rise of right-wing nationalist-populist governments and parties in Europe. Some are now following China’s lead in attempting to weaponise the virus for political ends” opines Simon Tisdall in the Guardian.³¹ In essence, the post COVID-19 order will nurture “a world that is less open, less prosperous and less free.”³²

4. Cultural Superiority of the East: The post-pandemic world order will be coloured by the cultural superiority of the East according to SD Muni: “The positive fallout of Covid-19 is that it underlines cultural superiority of the East over the West by replacing hand shake with Namaste. It is also underlines the virtues of vegetarianism over wild and bizarre eating preferences.”³³ Undoubtedly, critics would point that COVID-19 is originated from the East itself; vegetarianism is practiced only by a minority of people in the East, and the Eastern culture is full of superstitions, so on and so forth. But nobody would disagree that for long the Eastern lifestyle, habits, and practices were considered inferior to the

Western practices; even the East emulated Western lifestyle madly in the name of modernity. Even if the entire Eastern cultural practices cannot be appreciated, many Indian lifestyle and cultural prescriptions for healthy life need to be praised. The Indian practices like Yoga, Ayurveda, Diya (small oil lamp), Kadha (an Ayurvedic drink made with herbs and spices usually boiled in water), etc. are likely to get wider acceptance in the world. This is not to discount or sideline other good cultural practices in other parts of East or West. The Eastern values that were viewed blatantly inferior vis-a-vis the West will no longer withstand.

Similarly, as Stephen Walt views, the pandemic response discourse “will also accelerate the shift in power and influence from West to East. The response in Europe and America has been slow and haphazard by comparison [with China, South Korea and Singapore], further tarnishing the aura of the western ‘brand’”³⁴ The traditional balance of power centred round Anglo-American narrative bound to shift to the East soon as both Europe and America will continue to face severe economic crisis.

Undoubtedly the economic impact of the pandemic is global and will be felt in every corner, but the inherent resilience of the Eastern economies and lifestyle will help the Eastern populace withstand the crisis at ease compared to the Western populace. Post-pandemic economic recovery of the East would be quicker than the West: given their market size and state protectionism policies, the Eastern economies would fare better in the subsequent decades. For China, “the virus has become a soft power tool to overtake its superpower rival, the US.”³⁵ China is reinforcing its credentials as a global leader by offering assistance to affected countries. India also seems to seize the opportunity to extend some leadership in the South Asian region as well as leading the G-20 to shape a concerted global pandemic response. *If the US and European powers remain absent in shaping a global unity as usual, China and India may take this crisis as an opportunity to start setting new rules and initiate actions according to their global governance designs.*

5. Retreat of Hyper-Globalisation: The post COVID-19 world will be a re-globalised world with a “retreat from this phase of hyper-globalisation, as citizens look to national governments to protect them and as states and firms seek to reduce future vulnerabilities.”³⁶ On one hand, the world may see “increased post-pandemic protectionism if, as some predict, countries attempt to limit future exposure to global threats.”³⁷ The economic globalisation that the world has embarked on long ago would continue for some time as economic dependency through the Bretton Woods system has strongly been entrenched. But physical mobility of men and groups has already experienced a stiff decline which is

likely to continue and physical world will remain disconnected physically for a long period to come.

Simultaneously, there would be re-globalisation of the world (Globalisation 2.0 as Robert Kaplan names it) which will be marked by emergence of “great-power blocs with their own burgeoning military and separate supply chains, about the rise of autocracies, and about social and class divides that have engendered nativism and populism, coupled with middle-class angst in Western democracies. In sum, it is a story about new and re-emerging global divisions”.³⁸ Robert Kaplan sees “the coronavirus pandemic as an economic and geopolitical shock”, “the historical marker between the first phase of globalisation and the second In sum, it is a story about new and re-emerging global divisions.”³⁹ The trade practices and supply chain system of the globalisation process in vogue will continue to work for a while, but likely to give way for the new parameters of the Globalisation 2.0 to entrench soon. The beginning of the end of the first phase of globalisation and onset of its second phase seems in progress. When the Globalisation 2.0 will be fully visible is a matter of conjecture, but the globalised world of this epoch will not endure.

6. Towards a Virtual Civilization: The post COVID-19 world will nurture a “virtual civilization”⁴⁰ as physical mobility of people is significantly curtailed and will remain so during the foreseeable future. Most nations would be reluctant to support and facilitate human migration anymore. It has been seen how many European and West Asian countries pushed back the migrants in the recent past. As far as control of the pandemic is concerned, the only effective method is ‘social distancing’ and restriction of movement. During such a situation, connectivity through virtual platforms or cyber domain is the only medium which has grown exponentially and is sustaining the globalised world.

As physical mass movement and interaction of human beings has come to a halt in the wake of the pandemic, the cyber world is experiencing corresponding overdrive. More innovations in virtual technology in future would herald a “virtual civilization” to flourish in the decades ahead. While social or physical distancing will be the ‘new normal’ or *nom de guerre*, virtual cohesion and capability will shape and drive the global discourse now onwards. But the world is likely to confront a new dilemma of how to make the virtual real, as it is prone to intense manipulation and disguise.

7. Crisis-Generated Alliances: The post-pandemic world will see shifting or formation of new alliances on the basis of crisis-time cooperation, and conspiracy theories involving the source of, and intention (if any) behind, the outbreak of COVID-19. While the conspiracy theories involving the virus origin

and spread are likely to worsen China-USA rift, the pandemic-time sympathy and collaboration will prompt strange alliance and counter-alliance formations elsewhere.

The Chinese version of the conspiracy theory, which Chinese social media abounds with conjecture, that the virus was engineered by the United States as an agent of biological warfare against China. A widely shared conspiracy theory says that American soldiers participating in the 2019 Military World Games in Wuhan deliberately shed the virus at the Seafood Market. On the other hand, the American version, accusing China of testing of biological weapons in its lab that got out of control, named it as the ‘Chinese virus’ or the ‘Wuhan virus’, and demanded accountability from China. The split between the two powers is wide open; which way it would escalate is a matter of introspection.

Meanwhile, global interdependence and the collective approach to address global problems, which the America-led world order propagated, seems impractical in the wake of the pandemic. As America itself is struggling within and is unable to lead in this time of global crisis, the unconditional support it used to receive from its European allies or NATO partners previously would not be available spontaneously anymore. China, on the other hand, reached out to the worst-affected countries in Europe enthusiastically, showcasing its strength and willingness to provide crisis-time leadership to the world. In other parts of the world, strange crisis-time partnership is evolving. For example, countries hitherto at odds each other, such as Iran and the UAE, are cooperating, at least temporarily. UAE has sent twice medical aid to Iran as coronavirus outbreak intensifies⁴¹ even though it conducted a major military exercise with USA on 23 March 2020 in the desert 125 miles southwest of Abu Dhabi.⁴² In Philippines, the pandemic crisis prompted a ceasefire with the Communist rebels.

Pandemics are recurring but the world’s strategy and leadership for dealing with them is woefully inadequate at the moment.⁴³ Logically, the world will soon see coalitions for fighting pandemic. The leading countries with advanced virology expertise will rally around to form a super-league to fight pandemics as it was the case to deal with terrorism. Consolidation of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations⁴⁴ (already launched in Davos in 2017) is likely to be the new coalition hub for the global powers.

8. Global Bio-Defence Regime: The role of nuclear weapons and utility of nuclear deterrence will continue to remain at the centre-stage of global security discourse but within the prism of the new apprehension of biological warfare with the background of conspiracy theories about corona virus. While nuclear weapon states would be reluctant to discount the role of nuclear arsenal, building

of a permanent bio-defence force would be a national security imperative in the post COVID-19 global security discourse.

The ninth review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention is scheduled for November 2021 where an assessment might be undertaken by state-parties on how the COVID-19 situation would be managed from the biological weapons standpoint.⁴⁵ Reinforcement of the biological convention with additional verification mechanism might be pressed upon the regime, or a new regime would take shape. Besides, the post-COVID-19 global discourse would press for a multilateral bio-defence regime with mandatory compliance mechanism to monitor national pandemic prevention policies, measures, and commitments.

9. The New Super Power India: History will remember the COVID-19 outbreak as an epoch changing event that shook the global balance of power. As visible, post-pandemic, the global power hierarchy will not remain the same and the redistribution of global power is unfolding. It would not be far-fetched to argue that there is enough scope for nations who have relatively resilient in fighting the pandemic and shouldered crisis responsibilities at the global level by extending valuable assistance. India has shown such leadership quality especially when there is a paucity of global leadership. It amply showcased its resolve and capability to shoulder global responsibility in time of crisis. It would be safe to vouch that India would be the fifth member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) replacing UK which has been plunged in the global power hierarchy long ago.

It is not to discount the enormity of the pandemic India is facing now. Owing to huge population and inadequate medical resources at its disposal, the days ahead will be tough for India. However, India has “managed to bring its domestic requirements and global responsibilities in sync”⁴⁶ during this difficult time as a responsible member of the comity of nations. When all other major powers have become inward looking while dealing with the pandemic, the world first time witnessed India’s activism despite its pressing domestic concerns. India’s message for the world is also that it is willing and prepared, within its limited resources and capabilities, to undertake responsibilities in preserving and promoting the global common good.⁴⁷ The initiatives New Delhi has shouldered so far “underline India’s commitment to become a credible global player”, says SD Muni.

When the paucity of global leadership is palpable across the world, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the SAARC conference on Covid-19 and suggested a coordinated response among the SAARC neighbours to combat

coronavirus at the regional level. The video conference of SAARC leaders, where Pakistan was also on board, welcomed Modi's proposal. Modi proposed the creation of a Covid-19 emergency fund with India making an initial contribution of \$10 million.⁴⁸ Modi also proposed setting up of 'rapid response teams' of doctors, specialists and arrange for testing equipment, besides imparting online training to emergency response staff so as to build capacity to fight such challenges across the region. "Modi's initiative came much before any other such regional initiative and drew a positive response not only from regional states but also from countries like the US and Russia as well as the World Health Organisation."⁴⁹

Prime Minister Modi also became the first global leader to call for a G20 summit via video conferencing to advance "a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its human and economic implications." This was accepted by Saudi Arabia, the current chair of the G 20. In the Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit, Prime Minister Modi underscored "the need to put human beings at the centre of our vision of global prosperity and cooperation, freely and openly share the benefits of medical research and development, develop adaptive, responsive and humane health care systems, promote new crisis management protocols and procedures for an interconnected global village, strengthen and reform inter-governmental organisations like WHO and work together to reduce economic hardships resulting from COVID-19 particularly for the economically weak."⁵⁰ Moreover, he called on the leaders to help usher in a new globalisation, for the collective well-being of humankind and have multilateral focus on promoting the shared interests of humanity.

In addition, India has undertaken tangible humanitarian measures like evacuation of nationals, supply of medical resources and support teams, above all, moral support to the needy while managing huge challenges at home. While evacuating its own nationals stranded in parts of the world, India has also extended this support to nationals from Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, US, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and Peru.⁵¹

Requests for emergency medical equipment from Bhutan and the Maldives have also been responded to by India. India provided 15 tonnes of medical supplies worth Rs. 2.11 crore to China on 26 February 2020⁵² for which China has expressed its appreciation.⁵³ India has exported 90t of medical protective equipment to Serbia under the guidance of UNDP. Most importantly, as part of India's measures to assist neighbouring countries in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, "six Navy ships have been kept ready and five medical teams are on standby by India for deployment to the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh,

Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan when required”, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.⁵⁴

India’s leadership in this time of global crisis is acknowledged and appreciated. The WHO has praised Prime Minister Modi’s initiatives to fight COVID-19 pandemic. Modi also had a telephonic conversation with US president Donald Trump. The two leaders agreed to put the full weight of the India-US partnership to fight the deadly Covid-19 disease.⁵⁵ Even Modi’s role and leadership is considered valuable by China when it “sought India’s support to counter US bid to lay COVID-19 blame on its door.” External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi had a telephonic conversation prior the virtual G20 summit. Wang Yi expressed hope that “India would oppose the comments made by the US President Donald Trump and other senior officials of his administration branding the Covid-19 as a ‘Chinese Virus’”.⁵⁶ All of these and many such leadership initiatives in the days ahead indicate that India has already arrived as a competent and reliable global power to co-shoulder global leadership.

The question which logically arises is whether India will fit in the unfolding post-pandemic world order? Will it collide or cooperate with the Chinese scheme of alternative order, or supplement its new leadership power to reinvigorate the outgoing America-led world order? The notion that the USA is the only conduit to the global powerdom strongly persists in India’s strategic calculations. Until now India has remained attached to, and integrating more with, the American global framework, even though Washington is still confused where to place India in its scheme. America has not been able to completely de-hyphenate India from Pakistan; it is not enthusiastic to facilitate India’s entry as permanent member of the UNSC. With the strong leadership and global vision of Narendra Modi, *India must look beyond the American framework, and both compete and cooperate with China, to help settle the post-pandemic world order to its advantage.*

Namaste to the New World Order

It would be highly unrealistic to smear the final shape of the new world order in the offing. No definite answer can be advanced on how soon it would emerge, and how distinct it would be from the order in vogue? Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to be shadowing, and simultaneously catalysing dynamics and events that are affecting the regional and global balance. In fact, wars, pandemics and large scale events accelerate redistribution of global power, hierarchy or systemic change. The pandemic has undoubtedly brought to fore the loopholes in the current global governance system, the weakness in supranational institutions, and vulnerabilities of the so-called ‘developed world’.

However, no black and white answer can be furnished to the question - what the post-pandemic world order would look like; who will be on the driving seat; what would be the global power equation; whose level will be up and whose will go down? But certainly there will be a post-pandemic world order, a departure from the past order, whose entire *carte du jour* may not be on the table soon, but definitely in a year or two from now - in which the health care paradigms, social safety nets for the most vulnerable sections, and crisis leadership mechanisms will have to be re-imagined and re-budgeted, because what would follow is a deep economic recession that likely to uproot the capitalist foundation on which the world relies until now.

Notes

- * The article is an amended version of the monograph published as *The Post-Pandemic World Order: The Nine Pointers*, IndrStra Global, 2020.
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India-Japan Relations and the Chinese Aggression in the Post COVID-19 Era

Gitanjali Sinha Roy*

The world at present is facing the worst global pandemic COVID-19. China's Wuhan emerged as the epicentre and as the virus spread across the world, it shattered world economies, imbalanced the fiscal markets and led to a severe shortage of healthcare facilities. Countries have been scrambling for medical supplies and trying their level best to support supply chains as China being the hub of manufacturing, shut down the factories inevitably halting the global supply chain, which has made countries rethink their dependence on China. Chinese aggression in the South China Sea and the East China Sea and its build-up of artificial Islands used as military bases has at present started an anti-China sentiment. India and Japan have also been victims of Chinese aggression in the past and now again, due to the above-mentioned reasons; India and Japan have yet again come closer in this disastrous COVID-19 time. In this context, the article traces down the evolution of the relations between India and Japan and point out Chinese aggressiveness with respect to India and Japan and further, identify the sectors of convergences in the post COVID-19 period between the two nations.



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Tracing the Evolution of the India-Japan Relationship

The robust relationship between India and Japan has evolved over a period of time. It is important to understand that this relationship started through the realm of long historical affinity and cultural associations and was further strengthened by the several visits of prominent Indians like Monk Bodhisena, Swami Vivekanand, Rabindranath Tagore, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, JRD Tata and Judge Radha Bindo Pal. The next phase of this relationship aimed to cooperate diplomatically and so, it led to the formation of diplomatic ties on 28 April 1952 with several high-level visits like that of Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi in 1957 and later in 1958, President Rajendra Prasad visited Japan. Economically too, the year of 1958 paved a way for greater cooperation as Japan provided yen loans to India.

In fact when India was facing the balance of payment crisis, Japan stepped in as a reliable friend and bailed India out of this situation. With the rise of China in 2000s, Japan was in the lookout for a trustworthy friend and India ticketed all the boxes and it led to a significant change in 2000 as it witnessed a qualitative shift in the relations between the two nations and established ‘Global Partnership’ when Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori visited India. Later in 2006, the status of Global Partnership further paved a way for ‘Strategic and Global Partnership’ highlighting the rapidly growing economy of India which would help Japan get benefits in their corporate sector and so, this became the driving force of this relationship. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was the Chief Guest at the 2014 Republic Day celebration and later Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit led the bilateral relations to be ‘Special Strategic and Global Partnership’. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Japan in 2015 and together with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe resolved to transform the relationship between both the countries to a deep, broad-based and action oriented partnership with a broad convergence of political, economic and strategic goals and they announced ‘the Japan and India Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World’ a joint statement that would serve as a guidepost for the ‘new era in Japan-India relations’.¹

The next stage of evolution was in November 2016, when Prime Minister Modi visited Japan and together both the nations through India’s Act East Policy (AEP) and Japan’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) transformed the India-Japan relations which determined the regional order and further paved a way for a ‘new era in the India-Japan relations’ aiming towards cooperation in peace, stability and prosperity in the region of the Indo-Pacific. Also, the Indo-Pacific

region needed to be free and open which was only possible with an unwavering commitment. Indo-Pacific needs to be inclusive and open to all along with abiding by the rule-based order, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity among nations and ensuring the freedom of navigation and overflight, all in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law especially the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and refraining from any threat or use of force.

The 13th Annual Summit was held on 28-29 October 2018 between India and Japan and this Summit aimed for a shared vision for the Future of India-Japan relations and 32 MoUs and Agreements were signed in sectors like healthcare, food processing, etc. This was by far the greatest level of interaction with any country and so, it was a clear give away that the relationships between India and Japan were growing in leaps and bounds. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Japan on 27-29 June 2019 to participate in the G20 Summit and on the sidelines of this Summit, they discussed strengthening the cooperation between them through defence cooperation, bilateral cooperation in more countries like Africa and collaboration on investment promotion and further aimed for Japan's assistance to India for the coalition on disaster resilience infrastructure, fugitive economic offenders and anti-corruption measures and highlighted the infrastructural works done by the Japanese companies in the Northeast part of India.² Another path-breaking meeting was the first India-Japan 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting scheduled on 30 November 2019 and they focused upon the need to enhance their strategic depth in order to deal with the emerging challenges from other countries especially in the Indo-Pacific.

Therefore, the relationship evolution between India and Japan has grown continuously, but it is also important to understand the reason behind this evolution. India and Japan are geographically far and also, share no historical baggage which is rather interesting. Also, due to historical and civilisational ties especially due to Buddhism, the relationship has always remained calm and respectful of one another. China rise in the 2000s was a major reason why Japan's interest in India grew, also India is an emerging market and Japan wanted to make the best use of it. Japan realised that there was a need to push India to develop infrastructure and industries so that India could emerge as a manufacturing hub. Japan knew very well that if Northeast India is developed, it would open up a new route of trade and communication as it would open up the Southeast Asian markets connecting till Thailand which is a major ground of Japan's investment. Also, India is the heart of Asia especially the region of South Asia and has been constantly in conflicting border issues with China and

both India as well as China share brutal history of wars and tensions. Japan too sees China as a concern in the South China Sea and East China with regard to the Senkaku Islands. China emerged as a common bone of contention for both India and Japan and since the two countries emerged as trustworthy and reliable friends together, they aimed to strengthen their relationship vis-à-vis China.

China - the Common Concern

Chinese aggressiveness has been paramount in recent times, but the rise of China started in 2000s and Japan found India as a trustworthy friend as India proves its metal as a reliable partner. The world at present is dwelling in the mayhem of the Coronavirus Pandemic and since, China's Wuhan emerged as the epicentre, anti-China sentiment. Meanwhile, Chinese aggressiveness in the South China Sea and East China Sea and harassing countries like India, Taiwan, the Philippines and Vietnam has made the bonhomie between India and Japan as India possible. India's active engagements with the Quad has only strengthen the cause of the Indo-Pacific. Most importantly India has been actively promoting Japan's goal of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and that has further strengthened their relations. It is important to trace the irritant that India and Japan face from China which would further help to find the common points of convergences in the post COVID-19 period.

The year 2020 marks 70 years of diplomatic ties between India and China but this relationship has been mark with several cracks like the 1962 border war, 1967 Sikkim skirmishes, 1987 Sumdoromg Chu Valley skirmish, and 2017 Doklam standoff. Despite all contentious issues, both countries have attempted all possible methods of rapprochement while adoptinig hedging strategy resulting in regional instability. China's aspiration for supremacy and its strategy of power politics plays the game of 'divide and rule'; it doesn't consider India as equal and wants to dominate the whole of Asia.

India, on the other hand, feels that it is a major power in the region of South Asia and has the capability of being a regional power and eventually establish itself as a global partner. China has been using the string of pearls strategy to encircle India by using ports as a way to keep a tab on India and has been constantly propping up Pakistan to play the balance of power. China's Belt and Road (BRI) passes through India's territory of Gilgit-Baltistan which is objectionable to India as it is a violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects in Kashmir is also objectionable for the same reason.³ The trijunction Doklam issue between China, India and Bhutan has also been a major concern for India as there was a

confrontation between the Indian and Chinese troops as China was constructing a road and this action purely portrayed China's assertiveness⁴.

China seems to be concerned about India's ties with the United States and its Indo-Pacific strategy in which India plays a major role. Also, in recent times, Chinese maritime aggressiveness in the Indian Ocean is a major cause for India.⁵ Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese troops have had a confrontation with the Indian troops. It is important to understand China's aggressiveness in the times of the global pandemic.

The Japan and China relations have a long history of hot and cold interactions. Japan has very patiently dealt with its immediate neighbour and has always tried to maintain peace and stability in the region of East Asia but China's aggressiveness in the South China Sea and East China Sea along with the Senkaku/Diaoyu conflict has left Japan rather doubtful of China's intentions. China has been aggressively building artificial islands and setting them up as full capacity military bases. China's Wuhan emerged as the epicentre of the COVID-19 and that disturbed the supply chains of Japan as most of the manufacturing factories were in China so Japan has decided to reduce its industrial plans in China and have moved industries back to Japan or to other Southeast Asian nations. All this was being done as their affects felt in the economic sector and there was a need for a stable industrial growth along with flourishing supply chains and wanted to remove its heavy reliance on China. On 05 March 2020, the 36th Council on Investments for the Future was held at Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Office where he said: "as for those products with high added value and for which we are highly dependent on a single country, we intend to relocate the production bases to Japan."⁶ Japan due to the coronavirus spread had to delay the Tokyo Olympic Games and the country was already facing an economic slowdown and now it has reached the brim of recession and so, it needs to concentrate to reshape its old conservative regional coordination which has promoted internalisation, adhered to multilateralism and expansion of free trade zones and so, they aimed towards their own prioritization in the sectors of economic and trade cooperation.⁷ Japan has always been a kind neighbour to China and has always valued the historical linkages, but China's seaming aggressiveness is extremely disturbing for Japan. Moreover, Japan has time and again walked the tight rope between the U.S. and China and has always been left disappointed with China's behaviour.

Convergences in the Post COVID-19 Period

The relation between India and Japan during the pandemic has grown considerably. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

have discussed the situation and have agreed to cooperate in tackling COVID-19 spread in their respective countries and also discussed the post COVID-19 relations where they decided that “India-Japan special strategic and global partnership can help develop new technologies and solutions.”⁸

With the outbreak of the pandemic, Japanese factories in China have been badly hit and Japan has decided to move out its factories from China. This move has been supported by the Government through an economic stimulus of 2.2 million dollars, where 220 billion yen has been given to help shift out the factories back to Japan and 23.5 billion yen has been given to other Southeast Asian nations. Since Japan is diversifying, India appears to be one of the most sought after investment destination which was proved in a survey done by the Japanese manufacturing companies in collaboration with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), where India was ranked second in 2017.⁹ This paved a way for India as a prime destination for Japan. The tariff war between the U.S and China is another issue for Japan as it is a trading partner with both and due to the tightly roped dynamics between the U.S and China, Japan gets stuck.¹⁰

Japan chooses to have a bankable friend which India is because of China’s hot and cold behaviour and uncertainty in the future; Japan has greatly invested in India over the last few years and also, the labour costs in India are far cheaper compared to China. With the economic crisis due to the spread of the virus, Japan would choose a stable, bankable India. According to 2018, 1,442 Japanese companies registered in India and most of these companies comprised of the manufacturing sector and several projects for the manufacturing industry was set up like 12 Japan-India Institutes of manufacturing and a Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) in India were set up and 161 TITP interns were sent to Japan to work in jobs in sectors like machining, construction, factory sheet metal work, machinery and metals, automobile repair and maintenance, care-worker, welding and cultivation agriculture.¹¹

Many Japanese companies have already invested in various Indian sectors of automobile, chemicals, textiles and renewable energy and have already reaped benefits. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has undertaken many industrial as well as infrastructural projects like water supply in Guwahati, the road network in Assam-Meghalaya and many other projects in northeast India with emphasis on forest management and agricultural development. Also, infrastructural projects like the Japanese Industrial Townships (JITs), Japanese Bullet Trains System ‘Shinkansen’ project, the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) of the Indian Railways

and in the south, the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC)¹² all paves a way for not only infrastructural development but also it will help boost the economy and transportation industry. Therefore, all these above-mentioned projects make India an attractive destination for manufacturing for Japan in the post COVID-19 period which would also help India's Flagship initiatives like 'Skill India', 'Make in India' and it would also help to promote local products which would help 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' or Self-reliant India Mission.

The spread of COVID-19 has led to a severe shortage of healthcare facilities and essential medicines. India has supplied hydroxychloroquine to most countries in the world and this humanitarian gesture has been appreciated globally. Japan's Fujifilm Holdings Corp was successful in producing Avigan, an anti-viral to treat COVID-19. India is now the new Chairperson of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and India has succeeded Japan. All the countries at present want an inquiry against China and why China didn't warn the world about COVID-19. Also medical research teams from India and Japan can cooperate and work towards developing a vaccination to treat coronavirus. Also, Ministry of AYUSH has brought in many ways to boost the immunity and through its flagship initiative 'Ayushman Bharat' lays emphasis on the use of Ayurveda and practice yoga for a holistic mind, body and soul which would also help tackle and treat stress-related issues in the times of the COVID-19.¹³ Secondly, Taiwan was supposed to be made a part of World Health Organisation but China objected and called Taiwan, its own territory and there was no need for Taiwan to separately be a part of the WHO. India at the moment is diplomatically on high-level global interaction and has achieved the name of being the pharmacy of the world for its kindness of sending and supplying essential medicines to treat COVID-19. After assuming the Chair of the Executive Board of WHO, India will have to take a difficult decision and if India agrees to run an inquiry on China. This would worsen its relations with China; but since India is an active part of the Quad backed by the U.S., India's decision would only benefit its relations with the U.S. and Japan.

India and Japan as part of their India-Japan Digital Partnership, can work towards the development of science and technology and focus on harnessing a digital economy which should be supported by Indian as well as Japanese companies. Their focus should be on Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, fin-tech, healthcare, consumer, education, robotics, automation and business to business software and invite Start-up companies for ideas in these sectors. This would also benefit the Start-Up India initiative. India has developed a mobile app 'Aarogya Setu' COVID-19 internal tracing system in India for the benefit of their citizens and along with that India has developed an

electronic platform SAARC COVID-19 Information Exchange Platform (COINEX)' and this has helped to exchange information and provide tools for health professionals about Coronavirus along with facilitating several online training resources and e-learning module. This can also be shared with Japan in their fight to combat COVID-19. Since India is an 'emerging technological hub' it can pave the way for institutional exchanges in research and development emphasising on Artificial intelligence and set up many laboratories which would help identify new technology in medicine, equipment, arms and ammunition, space technology and together India and Japan can aim to cooperate in the post COVID-19 era.¹⁴

Satoru Nagao, Visiting Fellow Hudson Institute, views that under COVID-19 crisis, there will be new move where the key feature would be the US demand is de-coupling from China and this would be done as a result of the vital information being hidden by China on the COVID-19 spread to the countries like the US, Japan, Australia. Nagao further quoted that the US allies in Europe would rethink the relation with China and since relocating the factories from China would be a major pillar of this understanding, India would be a major destination and if this tendency would continue, then the Japan-India-U.S. should collaborate and prepare bigger funds for the companies to relocate their factories from China to India and therefore, could be a new achievement for Japan-India-U.S. cooperation.¹⁵

Conclusion

The convergences between India and Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic would lead to greater collaboration not only among them, but also among their regional partners which would culminate in an intra-Asian forum in future. To face and neutralize Chinese aggressive posture, India and Japan could further strengthen their relationship among themselves as well as with the United States.

Notes

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Ritu Sharma*

Spanners in India's Energy Ambitions: Negative Perception & Non-Committal Government

Abstract

There is no denying the fact that developing countries, like India, would need energy to feed its development, while at the same time trying to keep in check its carbon emissions. If India intends to increase the living standard of its people, attain increased level of industrialisation and pursue the projects of national importance nuclear energy is an extremely reliable de-carbonised source of energy. The Indian Nuclear energy capacity, however, has not augmented even after the Indo-US nuclear deal. Also, the sluggish growth of the nuclear energy prior to the inking of the landmark Indo-US nuclear deal was attributed to the lack of adequate of financing, technological denial regimes, continued non-availability of uranium at low cost, the limitations of the Indian manufacturing industry and negative public perceptions about nuclear energy.

This paper attempts to look into the two main challenges faced by Indian civil nuclear power programme. It attempts to compile various reasons as to why despite the nuclear energy being projected as one of the main energy sources since the inception of the Indian nuclear programme, the rise of nuclear energy has lacked progress.

Introduction

The commercial generation of nuclear power has a global history of over six decades (Obninsk – First Nuclear Plant to Produce Commercial Electricity in 1954, 2019). But, the fear of it has been a critical impediment towards its acceptance by countries across the globe, even though the world today has 450 nuclear reactors operating. India too has 22 nuclear reactors operational in the country and decades of successfully operating nuclear power plants, but the ambivalence of the Indian Government and the negative public opinion against the atomic power is the reason that the ambitions of the country vis-à-vis nuclear power are from its reach.

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According to the statistics of the Ministry of Power (Government of India), as on January 2019, the total installed power capacity of India is just 367,281 MWs. Out of this a whopping 62.8 per cent comes from fossil fuels like coal, lignite, gas, diesel. Renewable energy like wind and solar comes next at 23.1 per cent. Then is the hydro power at 12.4 per cent. The lowest share is that of the nuclear energy at a meagre 1.9 per cent (that is 6,780 MW) generated by its 22 nuclear reactors (India, 2019). According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), India ranks 27th as per its share of nuclear energy in the total energy matrix.

In 2004, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) set an ambitious target of generating 20,000 MW by the year 2020 (Subramanian) and 64,000 MW by 2032 (Sharma, 2019). This target was further confirmed in 2010 and in 2011 the eyes were set to achieve a nuclear power generation of 63 GW by 2011 (Khan, 2019). In fact, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh termed the goals as ‘modest’ in 2007, and asserted that India was capable of generating ‘double’ the current targets by opening to the international cooperation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government in July 2014 also asked the Department of Atomic Energy to recalibrate its nuclear power goal to 17 GW by 2024. In March 2017, answering a parliamentary question the government said that the 14.6 GW target of nuclear capacity by 2024 was achievable (Sharma, 2019).

The sluggish growth of the nuclear energy prior to the inking of the landmark Indo-US nuclear deal was attributed to the lack of adequate financing, technological denial regimes, continued non-availability of uranium at low cost, the limitations of the Indian manufacturing industry and negative public perceptions about nuclear energy. The historic Indo-US nuclear deal did build up the expectations about the growth of the Indian Nuclear Power sector and as did the ensuing civil nuclear cooperation agreement with France, Russia, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom and Japan. Buoyed by this the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) projected the 2052 nuclear power generation to 470 GW by 2052 (Khan, 2019).

The Indian Nuclear energy capacity, however, has not augmented exponentially even after the Indo-US nuclear deal. The Nuclear Power Plants planned to be set up jointly with foreign vendors like the US and France who have long gestation periods. The US nuclear cooperation Westinghouse and the French Areva, now owned by EDF; has been undergoing negotiations with the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) over tariff of the power units and the modalities of the construction of the power plants at Jaitapur (Gadgil, 2015) (Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, 2018).

The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu, constructed under Indo-Russian cooperation, is the only successful example of a joint venture in the field. But the fact remains that the construction began in 2001 and it was scheduled to be completed in 2007. However, the construction of the first unit was completed in December 2011 and that of the second unit in December 2012. According to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India's 2017 report, the missing of the original deadline was caused because of "delayed completion of different activities, of which many were attributable to the M/s Atomstroyexport (ASE), a company responsible for undertaking the Russian scope of work (General, 2017). There was also vehement opposition from the nearby villages under the banner of People's Movement against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) further scuttling the construction.

Domestically, the Indian government sought to fast track the nuclear power industry by approving the construction of 10 indigenous developed Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR) with a total capacity of 7,000 MW. In its announcement, the Government enumerated the advantages of nuclear power – how it can ensure "long-term base load requirement for the nation's industrialisation" and is in sync with its sustainable development goals (Boost to transform domestic nuclear industry, 2017). To be inducted in fleet mode, the 10 PHWRs do give the Indian industry a lease of life, albeit a short one.

This paper intends to look into the two main challenges faced by Indian civil nuclear power programme. The quest is to compile reasons as to why despite the nuclear energy being projected as one of the main energy sources since the inception of the Indian Nuclear Programme, the rise of nuclear energy has lacked progress in other sector.

Global Scenario

Countries arrive at their power mix taking into account their overall energy scenario – that involves availability of fuel sources, projection of power demand and the political compulsions of the government. The world has been talking about 'nuclear renaissance' – a term for the revival of the global nuclear industry, when over 250 earthquake tremors and ensuing Tsunami in Japan, presented nuclear power its biggest challenge in the form of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident (Fukushima Daiichi Accident, 2018).

The accident created a political panic across the world governments, even though as per the World Nuclear Association, no deaths were reported due to the radiation from the nuclear reactor. As a result many developed countries, particularly Germany, announced roll back of their nuclear programme (Dohmen,

Jung, Schultz, & Traufetter, 2019). The German experiment of “exceptionalism” in nuclear policy has been termed “Energiewende” (literally translating to energy transition) and entails the European country phasing out nuclear power in a decade (Beveridge & Kern, 2013). The entire world is closely following the developments in the “Modell Deutschland” and if successful, is likely to be replicated around the world.

The German distrust of nuclear energy is riding on the premise of it being inherently unsafe. Despite, the German public’s unanimous opposition to nuclear energy, the ‘Energiewende’ as programme has little to show in terms of results as the largest economy in Europe continues to fall short of its sustainability goals (Pflugmann, Ritzenhofen, Stockhausen, & Vahlenkamp, 2019). The phasing out of nuclear power has made Germany more dependent on coal. In 2017, the share of coal-generate power in Germany’s energy mix is the same as it was in 2000.

German experts are waking up to its perils and enlisting problems of intermittency, grid and stability of distribution, market distortion, storage problems and its damaging effects on bio-diversity to build a case against ‘Energiewende’. Fritz Vahrenholt, who has served in several public positions with environmental agencies such as the Federal Environment Ministry and Deputy Environment Minister and Senator of the City of Hamburg, gave a presentation titled ‘Germany’s Energiewende: A disaster in the making at the House of Commons in 2017. Owing to the heavy subsidies given by the German government to push its ‘Energiewende’ programme, the energy prices in Germany are the second highest in the Europe (Vahrenholt, 2017).

The US is also leaning towards increasing the use of natural gas with massive reserves being discovered. In US, the proven reserves of natural gas have marked an increase of over 80 per cent to approximately 430 trillion cubic feet. Already the largest oil and gas producer, the US is aiming to increase its share of global oil production to 17 per cent and of gas to 23 per cent. In the 2020s, the US is set to supply over 60 per cent of new oil and gas (Clemente, 2019).

The developed countries have their own political and economic compulsions to pass over the option of nuclear power, but reports have time and again underscored the importance of nuclear energy. A 2018 interdisciplinary study done by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) titled ‘The Future of Nuclear Energy in a Carbon Constrained World’ has unequivocally underlined that nuclear power has to be part of the energy mix in any pathway to a 1.5 degree Celsius future. The report expressed concerns at the ‘dim’ prospects for the expansion of nuclear energy in many parts of the world. “The fundamental

problem is cost. Other generation technologies have become cheaper in recent decades, while new nuclear plants have only become costlier. This disturbing trend undermines nuclear energy's potential contribution and increases the cost of achieving deep de-carbonisation," the reports contend while calling on the world governments to provide a level playing field to nuclear power vis-à-vis other renewable sources of energy (The Future of Nuclear Energy in a Carbon-Constrained World, 2018).

The downside of the Great German Energy Experiment is that the anti-nuclear panic amongst German population has forced the government to shut down itself to any technological advancement in making the nuclear power safer. The scientists in other parts of the world are working to find if it is possible to run power plants on radioactive waste – which would be a two pronged solution to manage the nuclear waste better; to make the nuclear energy technology better and safer.

Developing countries like India and China need energy pathways that lead to a destination with greater share of nuclear energy in their overall energy matrix. Numerous studies charting out scenarios of India's Energy pathways indicate a greater share of nuclear energy if the country wants to meet its future energy requirements while at the same time keeping its greenhouse emissions low (Mohan, 2016) (Gambhir & Anandarajah, 2013) (TERI, 2013). In October 2012, Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change (AVOID), a UK funded research programme of the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), published a study on India's energy pathways to 2050. The study while outlining the ways to reduce greenhouse emissions and to minimise the costs to the energy system, found that irrespective of the scenarios the nuclear power in India requires fresh impetus (Gambhir & Anandarajah, 2013).

Challenges to Nuclear Energy Pathways

The political and public panic ensuing post Fukushima disaster had scuttled the growth of the global nuclear energy sector. Since the disaster in 2011, it has only been in 2019 that the nuclear power generation showed an upward trend. The World Nuclear Association (WNA), the international organisation representing the nuclear industry, released the 18th edition of the biennial 'Nuclear Fuel Report: Global Scenarios for Demand and Supply Availability 2019-2040'. The Upper and Reference Scenarios show global nuclear power capacities growing over the period up to 2040 at a faster rate since 1990, "increasing mainly due to extensive reactor building programmes in China, India and other countries in Asia" (World Nuclear Association sees upturn in uranium demand, 2019).

Secretary DAE and Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission KN Vyas enumerated the challenges encountered in the capacity addition programme. “These include delays in land acquisition and related research and development, obtaining statutory clearances and difficulties faced by Indian industries in timely manufacturing and delivery of equipment or components. In respect of projects to be set up with foreign cooperation, the techno-commercial discussions to arrive at project proposals have been long drawn as they involve complex techno-commercial, legal and regulatory issues,” Vyas added (Vyas, 2019).

Negative Perception

Since its inception in 1950s, the Indian Nuclear Programme has matured without any nuclear accidents. However, the negative perception around nuclear power, especially among those living close to a Nuclear Power Plant, remains one of the biggest challenge that civil nuclear programme up against (Malhotra, 2016) and the Indian government has not done much to dispel the misinformation around nuclear technologies.

The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant has faced a vociferous opposition from the population residing around the nuclear plant resulting in much delay. The Nuclear Power Plant was even a pivotal issue of the Tamil Nadu elections since 2011. As India plans more nuclear power plants across the country, the opposition would become more noticeable. The Planning Commission’s report on “India’s Low Carbon Strategies for Inclusive Growth”, also indicated that the future capacity addition in nuclear energy sector also depends on public acceptance. The report reflects that “nuclear accident in Japan has raised public concerns about the safety of nuclear power as an energy source” (Low Carbon Strategies for Inclusive Growth, 2011).

The Bharatiya Janta Party-led government at the Centre has now woken up to the pitfalls of public anxiety about nuclear energy. Union Minister of State for Atomic Energy and Space Dr. Jitendra Singh said at the Indian Energy Forum 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave in 2019 that awareness needs to be created among the public to bust the myths associated with the use of nuclear energy. “I have been trying to sensitise states about nuclear energy, making them aware of its diverse benefits,” Singh said during the Conclave (Bureau, 2019). The Minister’s statement is, albeit, not backed with a concrete strategy.

In 2017 the government had to shift a proposed 6000 Megawatt nuclear power plant from Mithivirdi in the Bhavnagar district of Gujarat to Kovvada, Andhra Pradesh following a decade long resistance from the local populace. This would have been the first nuclear power plant under the Indo-US civil

nuclear pact 2008 and as a joint venture between state-owned Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) and the now bankrupt Westinghouse Electric Company. The resistance against the atomic power station saw protests with rallying cries like '*maut nu karkhano band karo*' (shut down factory of death), '*anu bijli sasti nathi salamat nathi*' (electricity generated from atomic energy is neither cheap nor safe), 'we will give our lives not land' and 'not here not in our land' that were heard on that day became part of the movement till the end (Dhar, 2017).

Watchers of the Nuclear energy in India says that the resistance faced by the nuclear power plant in Mithivirdi and delay in land acquisition in Kovvada due to strong public opposition as "merely a PR disaster" rather than anything scientific. So far, the scholars working on the topic has not been able to chronicle any instance of "wholehearted support" for nuclear energy projects (Mishra, 2012). This negative perception has been the reason for the long gestation periods for setting up nuclear plants. Since Chernobyl, nuclear power plant construction has come a long way and the reduction in construction time has been noticeable (Sethi, 2012).

Experts in the field of Nuclear Energy have time and again pointed out that there are no sources of energy generation that are completely risk free. Even oil industry face environmental disaster as was seen after about 3.19 million barrels of oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico – resulting in the largest accidental ocean spill in human history (Team, 2010). Despite the huge damage to the marine life, contend the experts, there were no calls for boycotting oil as energy source. Rather, research studies were conducted to improve safety in the sector (Mishra, Fukushima Disaster: A Breakdown of Events, 2012).

Contrary to this in the history of civil nuclear power three major reactor accidents have been observed/witnessed – Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima. The World Nuclear Association website reads: "One was contained without harm to anyone, the next involved an intense fire without provision for containment, and the third severely tested the containment, allowing some release of radioactivity." These are the only three big accidents in over 17,000 cumulative reactor-years of commercial nuclear power operation (Safety of Nuclear Power Reactors, 2019). Out of these three accidents – Chernobyl and Fukushima, had received a level 7 (the maximum classification) on the International Nuclear Event Scale.

In the case of Chernobyl, 31 people died due to direct exposure to the radiation released following the accident and the estimate of the long term deaths resulting from low level radiation exposure ranges from 16,000- 60,000. The

Fukushima Disaster in 2011 is reported to have resulted in injury of 40-50 people at the nuclear facility but the number of direct deaths from the incident are said to be zero. Around 1600 people, however, are said to have died due to evacuation procedures (Ritchie, 2017). The casualty in two incidents nearly 25 years apart indicate the strides that nuclear reactor safety has taken and it is a “unique feat” compared to any other fuel used for electricity production (Sethi, 2012).

The DAE has been aware of the opposition that nuclear energy evokes. “Scare caused by Fukushima accident and public, at large, going in overdrive and failing to understand the differences between Fukushima and Indian scenario in terms of the types of reactors, environmental conditions, etc,” Secretary DAE KN Vyas says (Vyas, 2019).

Anil Markandya and Paul Wilkinson published a comparative analysis of the death rates in major ways of energy generation. The duo while expressing concern about the piling nuclear waste, a matter that the scientists are also seized of, established that nuclear energy resulted in the least amount of deaths when compared to coal, oil and gas (Markandya & Wilkinson, 2007).

The study concluded that fossil fuels have killed more people than nuclear energy, but the negative public opinion stemming from imagined catastrophic accidents continues to be the hurdle in the Government’s commitment to nuclear power. This indicates the next challenge in the growth of Indian Nuclear Energy sector at desired pace.

Non-committal Government towards Nuclear Power

Nuclear Energy was not adopted as the general policy to combat global warming at the 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris, owing to the concerns around its safety. The Indian Government, despite its stated ambitions with respect to nuclear energy, has not committed to nuclear energy in the same manner as it has to other renewables. The nuclear energy requires a policy intervention from the government to compete with other carbon emissions free renewables like solar and wind.

The other renewable sources of energy – wind and solar, are carbon emissions free, but they are not base load source of energy. Recently, a task force headed by former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission Dr. Anil Kakodkar, examined the Indian nuclear energy eco-system and found that the Government’s incentives to the Renewable Energy Sources have tilted the odds against the nuclear energy. The report titled ‘Nuclear Power: India’s Development Imperative’ said: “In any comparison with coal, emission costs must be factored

in.... Without factoring grid/system costs of renewables, nuclear tariff may appear high. A well-designed financing and pricing policy should, therefore, be put in place at the earliest. (Nuclear Power: India's Development Imperative, 2019)"

Making a case for nuclear power, the task force said that "low emission" and "grid stability" are its two chief attributes. Both, as per the report, are the public good for which "no mechanism exists to ensure due compensation to the nuclear power producer". A report released by Independent Power Producers Association of India, by the end of 2022, India will have installed capacity of 100 GW of solar power and 60 GW of wind power. But, these renewable energy resources will not come without their socio-ecological impact, as they are the most land hungry energy-generation resources. According to experts, to replace the power generated by one typical coal-fired power station with renewable energy requires an area of around 500 km square. And, in India land is one of the scarcest resources considering its population (Sharma R., 2017).

The Indian Government's preferential treatment towards renewables meant that early on they were given feed-in tariff and they are still given incentives like Accelerated Depreciation and Renewables Purchase Agreement. Feed-in tariffs (FIT) are fixed electricity prices that are paid to renewable energy (RE) producers for each unit of energy produced and injected into the electricity grid. The accelerated depreciation benefit allows the commercial and industrial users of solar power in India to depreciate their investment in a Solar Power Plant at a much higher rate than general fixed assets. This in return allows the user to claim tax benefits on the value depreciated in a given year.

The Renewable Purchase Agreement means that the large power consumers have to ensure certain percentage of the energy mix comes from renewables such as wind and solar and is likely to increase to 21 per cent by 2022 (UN, 2018). This obligation is akin to a subsidy impetus to the renewable sector and helps in generating demand for the sector. The 2016-17 Economic Survey pegged the social cost of producing renewable energy to three times that of coal-based electricity at Rs. 11/- per kilowatt-hour (kWh). The Economic Survey reported that though solar and wind power tariffs dipped to Rs.2.44/- per kWh and Rs.3.30/- per kWh, respectively, making renewable energy cheaper than coal-fuelled electricity; these low tariffs do not reflect the "costs of integration with the grid, and other costs such as those of stranded assets and land opportunity costs" (Economic Survey 2016-17, 2017). The survey cautioned that the push to renewable energy could worsen the bad loan woes of the banks.

Despite the lack of desired government support, atomic power plant operator Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) has been self-sustaining

for all these years without relying on government subsidies and loan guarantees. In the year 2017-18, the NPCIL delivered a profit of Rs. 4622 crore before taxes and its net worth was also up by 4 per cent (31st Annual Report 2017-18, 2018).

The Anil Kakodkar-led task force takes these concessions given to renewable energy and seeks a zero emission credit on the patten of the United States to nuclear power as well. The task force report made a point that unlike coal, nuclear power cannot be backed down. Nuclear power plants, therefore, need to be given ‘must run’ status. The Indian government has to ensure, says the report, a long-term power purchase agreement with bulk buyers (Nuclear Power: India’s Development Imperative, 2019).

Presently, the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has been deciding the tariff of nuclear power under the Atomic Energy Act. The DAE is also seeking government support till the nuclear energy, which is a “more sustainable” option, comes at par with other renewable energy resources (PTI, 2019). The Kakodkar report says that for achieving this target, there has to be effort put in by various stakeholders. The provision of Rs. 3,000 crore per annum falls short of the equity of Rs. 20,000 crore needed per annum to achieve the target. It recommended that several Public Sector Units form joint ventures with Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL). The government might also have to amend the Atomic Energy Act if we are trying out a model where foreign vendors are allowed to invest in the plant and operate it for large periods. The Indian Government has, in fact, allowed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the field of Nuclear Energy in January 2020.

Even as India is dithering to be assertive when it comes to nuclear power, European Council has maintained that it is eligible for ‘green’ financing. Because of this nuclear power projects will be eligible for finances allocated by European countries to curb carbon emissions (Valero, 2019).

Conclusion

There is no denying the fact that developing countries, like India, would need energy to feed its development, while at the same time trying to keep in check its carbon emissions. If India intends to increase the living standard of its people, attain increased level of industrialisation and pursue the projects of national importance like lift irrigation or river linking, nuclear energy is an extremely reliable de-carbonised source of energy.

The Indian Government’s push to the country’s nuclear power programme in the form of the 10 indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) has come at the right time. But, in commensuration what is required is a strategy

to dispel the misconception surrounding nuclear power and a clear strategy on part of the Indian Government to put its money where its mouth is, if it wants the nuclear energy to stand a chance against other renewables.

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***The Evolution, Innovation and Escalation
in Liberal Education in India: Role of
Private Universities***

Abstract

Liberal Studies as a concept was already successful in the Western countries especially the US. It is already on the path of success and sustainability in Indian education scenario as well. During the last few decades, the people and the government saw the rise of Indian corporate houses, their competency and liberalisation in industry succeeded liberalisation in education sector also. Liberal studies is the speedily moving and widely accepted model of education in India today. The article focuses on the success of Liberal Studies owing to the active involvement of the private institutes, their endeavours, their initiatives to make a difference. The study has focused on twelve institutes of national repute most of which were founded in the twenty-first century who have brought liberal education to a new height with various experiments and endeavours.

Introduction

The dawn of twenty-first century saw the rise of India in the field of commerce and industry and also in education. New institutes came up with state of the art campuses, dynamic management, innovative practices and pedagogy to impart various courses. Courses or combination of courses hitherto unheard of were accepted and took pace as if the people and the industry were waiting for it for long. The old courses, curriculum, nomenclature and pedagogy started becoming redundant. This period also saw the rise of private players in school and college education. Institutes backed or promoted corporate houses or tycoons came up as self-financed institutes. They brought professionalism in the management of

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the institutes, focus on the field and innovation in research and dissemination of knowledge. These institutes also had international universities as their role models and the main thrust was on Total Quality Management [TQM].

It is noteworthy that courses which were considered as derisory like BA, B.Com, BBA [Social Sciences, Humanities and Commerce] etc. got a new fervour with fundamental innovation in the course structures, pedagogy, addition of multidisciplinary approach, research and practical exposure and ‘Liberal Studies’ as the new flagship nomenclature encompassing everything. Liberal studies is the speedily moving and widely accepted model of education today. The word ‘liberal’ itself seems attractive apparently especially if in education. But it is not about being liberal about studies or assignment or attendance or exam. The institute may provide flexibility but it is about liberating the mind, knowledge, wisdom, thinking and creativity. In other words, making mind, knowledge and creativity shackle free and not limiting education or a course only to a specific topic or educating self for a particular profession only and nothing out of it. “Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world [e.g. science, culture and society] as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills and as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2015”¹ Liberal studies has endeavoured to break the water tight compartment of education, especially university degree education which limited a student in terms of knowledge but also in following a profession and understanding other aspects of the world. Liberal studies focuses on skills, human life, critical thinking and creativity and thus broadens the choice of profession and occupation a person can take with a better understanding of self and world.

Methodology

The study has focused on twelve institutes of national repute most of which were founded in the twenty-first century and have brought liberal education to a new height with various experiments and endeavours.

The details are based on the primary data from their websites, official brochures and also on secondary data from educational portals mentioned in bibliography. Talks with a few educationalists, interviews, have also been used as an aid for broader perspective and knowledge. The author also does not

claim authenticity of data or facts mentioned as they are taken from the official websites and may change from time to time. The said data and facts are just to add to the discussion and substantiate the reasoning.

Discussion

Liberal Studies as a concept was already successful in the Western countries especially the US. It is already on the path of success and sustainability in Indian education scenario as well. The article focuses on the success of Liberal Studies owing to the active involvement of the private institutes, their endeavours, their initiatives to make a difference.

1.1 The Entry of Private Players

“A lot of corporates with deep pockets have entered the education space in the past few years, giving a further boost to a sector which was already hot. With huge investments, they want good people to run such units.”²² The trend of entry of private players in education also saw many corporate houses, business leaders establishing institutes and universities as an offshoot of their group. This may initially be a part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) or initially they may fund them but the model is to make them self-sustainable financially and in reputation and management. Of course they would not like to run it as profit centre like their companies but a workable model which reaches potential to develop on its own, independent of the corporate group. This model of self-finance universities is new in India. The Central or State government established and managed the colleges and universities directly or by granting funds to the trusts. The trusts, however, were not independent in matters of funds, recruitment, development and curriculum. The private players added a new flavour to the philosophy and education, dynamism in management style, and fluidity in the courses, curriculum and pedagogy.

The people and the government saw the rise of Indian corporate houses, their competency and liberalisation in industry succeeded liberalisation in education sector also and the economic growth of people resulting into various initiatives. Perhaps, the time was right and many initiatives and endeavours to revolutionise education scenario in India took place. “Many ideas fail not because they are bad ideas, nor because they are poorly executed, but because the timing is not correct.”²³

1.2 Renovating the Gate of Entry

The private universities showed their in-depth comprehension and foresightedness of education and its impact on the society and professional world. Their experience of business, industry and ever changing scenario of global economy and world order brought new ideas and insights. These universities first of all renovated the gate of entry for the students to the institutes. “On the issue of admissions, private player may be given the discretion for admission, but will have to justify merit. Perhaps a Tribunal on Admission Disputes can be set up for those aggrieved by the admission policy of an institution.”⁴ Entrance exam of their own or of national reputation was made compulsory and gone are the days when a student just walked in with a rich mark sheet of board or an influential contact to seek admission. To bring quality and transparency the universities gave little or no importance to just the academic performance in board exams. They wanted sharp students who would score well in entrance exams customised for their purpose with personal interviews. This brought about a sense of fair play and healthy competition for admission, the universities too will get filtered quality on whom they would invest time and energy in shaping them into better citizens.

This endeavour also brought about consciousness and cautiousness amongst the people for the importance of liberal studies, studying various subjects, overall grooming and inculcation of good attitude. The fees charged by the private players are higher compared to the government funded institutes and so the students as well as the university want value of money and maintain quality and promised standards. The simple wisdom of if you have good students you will have excellent faculties, dynamic management and broad and deep research initiatives. There is also a noteworthy point here: the admission cycle of these universities do not just begin after the higher secondary board exam results are declared but way before it. In fact, the entrance tests are completed before the board results are declared and the registrations have to be made much in advance. The online revolution made it possible for students to apply to any university across the country without having to pay a visit. These universities walk an extra mile to attract good students and to facilitate them by conducting tests, interviews and counselling at different centres and not just their campus. This was an effective step to ‘reach out’ to the talented lot. The table below shows universities taking admission based on entrance tests:

CHRIST UNIVERSITY	SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL [DEEMED UNIVERSITY]
NARSEE MOHANJEE INSTITUTE	SRM INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
PANDIT DEENDAYAL PETROLEUM UNIVERSITY	O. P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
AZIM PREMJI UNIVERSITY	ASHOKA UNIVERSITY
FLAME UNIVERSITY	RNB GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

- The universities are mentioned as per the chronology of their establishment year.

1.3 Pedagogical Edge with Set of Distinct Deliverables and Outcome

There was a time when study of humanities or social science was considered lower in cadre among the educational degrees. Literature was considered as reading stories and poems, performing arts were considered as hobby classes, social science subjects like history, sociology, public administration, international relations etc. were considered just theories. All in all a student who studied humanities or commerce was considered inferior to engineering, medical or science graduates. One of the reasons was the pedagogical approach to the study of humanities and commerce and second was the perception. The education imparted was all bookish and mugged up theories without any practical approach, applicability and add-ons like critical thinking, creative solutions, leadership and personality development. The advent of private players and new methods to pedagogical approach did a reverse engineering of developing certain skills in students and broadening their horizon of thinking and widening the knowledge area by defining deliverables and outcome. The new pedagogy was designed accordingly and more and more people joining from industry or practical field added their experiences in the syllabus and courses lessening the gap of employability and education. “The key to a successful liberal arts education is the discovery process. It is the process that is often taught to entrepreneurs as “lean” or “customary discovery”. It is not about taking a theory and overbuilding an unusable solution. It is about seeing the simplicity of the world.”⁶

The importance of liberal studies rose as it gave a wider scope of learning, training of skills set, industry and practical exposure imbibed as part of pedagogy and deliverables reflected in grade sheets as well. The rise of competition among the students also ensured that students take to practical exposure programmes like industry visits, internships, research projects, and fixated short term courses seriously offered and encouraged by these dynamic institutes. “These graduates didn’t leave learning at the classroom door. Instead, they have experimented and experienced life, often through internships, and in the process they fine-tuned their careers.”⁷

Skills building and developing leadership qualities, research bent, fostering creativity and critical approaches, innovation and entrepreneurship are a few intensive areas of outcome around which the institutes and the educationalists started weaving their curriculums, students’ activities and overall deliverables. “We must create learning environments that let students draw on the internal resources that brought them to college in the first place. As instructors, we must

focus our attention on creating an environment where students can gain knowledge and skills in critical thinking and problem solving in their chosen areas of learning”.⁸ One of the advantages that the institutes offering liberal studies got was the selection of students, limited seats and higher fees compared to traditional government institutes. As discussed in point 1.2 the institutes renovated the entry itself and thus filtering the quality of students, higher fees ensured that the students and the parents remain vigilant about their education and career unlike the traditional government institutes where a student gets admission without any filtration and pays meagre fees and there is no vigilance or sense of responsibility from either the students or the institutes. The huge number in the traditional government institutes was also a hindrance for individual attention of the faculties and planning of the institutes. Thus, a student of liberal studies started developing his soft skills, communication, leadership skills and people skills to balance the lack of technical skills that a student of engineering or medical would have. This raised their level in employability and entrepreneurship. “It is critical to understand the difference between what people say and what they do. You have to learn how to do the same thing. I would recommend that you spend some high-quality time and effort to become a student of people.”⁹ JRD says, “I came long ago to the conclusion that the three most important requirements for getting along with people were, first, communication; the importance of frank and sometimes continuous discussion between people of groups.”¹⁰ Here it is pertinent to quote and refer to JRD Tata who always regretted the lack of technical skills but always excelled owing to his people skills, communication and critical thinking. What could be a better example for a student of liberal studies to excel in life and career?

International exposure programmes were initiated by many dynamic institutes offering liberal studies. These programmes were not targeted to encourage brain drain or attract people with glamour but a genuine effort to round off the exposure programmes. The exposure programmes that the institutes have initiated range from rural work or visits, industry visits and internships, cultural exposure and visits, research projects and field research to international exposure where the students do not visit a particular country and university as a tourist but to study the culture, working style, and education of that country. This also brought universities of various countries closer wherein they could exchange good practises for the overall betterment of education and a peaceful world order. The cross cultural exchanges increased among the youth itself and technology and social media facilitated it. Many times we understand ourselves and our culture in comparison to others and other cultures. A new outlook and understanding rose when the youth started interacting and becoming friends at

international level. Now the relations amongst the nations are not just political or commercial but also educational and cultural. “I don’t want my house to be walled in on all sides and windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my houses as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.”¹¹

1.4 The New All-rounder of Education at the Institute-Teacher

The teacher is the central and pivotal organ of an educational institute. No institute can function or move an inch in the absence of a teacher. A new institute set-up first of requires enlisting good and qualified teachers over and above everything. The students’ education, activities, curriculum design, research, assessment will fall into place only if there are teachers around to carry out their work. Infrastructure and facilities are secondary to teachers and students. Good teachers are the sure-shot *Mantra* of acceptance of the institute and success of the students. The traditional government institutes faced certain restrictions in attracting good teachers and even the government started to think of them as liabilities who have to be paid well and not assets without which you cannot function. “A major shortfall in this direction is the inability of our institutions of higher learning to attract and retain qualified and trained faculty of high order. As the bureaucratic process of administration continues to stifle Indian academia, it will further reduce the competitive edge of Indian higher education institutions.”¹² The rise of private players in Indian educational scenario also saw the rise of ‘the new teacher’ who is an all-rounder; is passionate, researcher, manager and many a times an experienced person from industry. These new institutes encouraged and invited people from the industry to join full time academics or on ad-hoc basis to tab their experience and practical outlook. This gave new bent to the curriculum design and pedagogical flavour.

“Besides curriculum re-design and practice orientation in sync with the changing realities in the world of business, the institutions need to focus on developing worthy faculty to meet the ensuing global shortage of educators.”¹³ Many professionals joined as a full time faculty or an expert faculty bringing and implementing their rich experience for the betterment of education. The private players of education also renovated entry gate or teachers. A teacher need not join at the bottom but at any level depending on his/her experience and expertise. “Faculty members from practice bring a wealth of business experience that enriches both faculty research and classroom learning”.¹⁴ They were given freedom to design curriculum and experiment, facilitated with speed in execution and investment to bridge the gap between education and requirements of the society and industry.

This teacher did not just use books, libraries or labs, he/she used experience, insight and wisdom in the classroom and outside. The teacher also got involved in the operations and strategies of the institutes, in research and internships. The rich industry experience to the teachers, who had, did not have to be told about the constant need of upgradation and evolvement, about importance of skills and leadership, they brought them here and implemented. The students who were focused accepted the teacher because of his/her background and practical tips. The pedagogy and curriculum saw new dimensions in revamping and delivery. "A feeling of discomfort and with what one is doing and an urge to seek improvements in the competence and professionalism of one's students are pre-requisites for enhancing one's teaching capabilities."¹⁵ The teacher became a teacher, a mentor, a doer, a researcher, a leader and an example to be followed beyond his/ her knowledge of the books and lectures in the classrooms. "I did not find it at all necessary to load the boys with quantities of books. I have always felt that the true text-book for the pupil is his teacher. I remember very little that my teachers taught me from books, but I have even now a clear recollection of the things they taught me independently of books."¹⁶ The benchmark that 'the new teacher' has set today has kept even the corporate leaders wondering as he/she has been contributing in all round development. The best investment any philanthropic organisation in education can make is investing in teachers and facilitating them with their experiments and self upgradation. They cannot be just taken as employees like employees in any other industry or organisation but as the pivotal figure who can function and bring laurels if given freedom, respect and facilitation in endeavours.

1.5 Breaching the Barriers

The nation like India has been blessed with diversity of nature and culture in its vast expanse. The institutes of higher education formerly catered to the local community or to say in other words the students who enrolled in the institutes were from the same city or towns nearby and so were the academicians. There was only limited local flavour in education which limited the scope of the students as well as the teachers in understanding the diversity of nation itself, global outlook still distant. The new age private players entered the education arena with a bang revolutionising many dimensions as we saw above. This included breaching the barriers of distance, culture and language. An institute today does not have intake of students just from the neighbouring towns but from the entire nation and so is the case with faculties. The students do not just opt for a nearby college but a known and a college of good ranking anywhere in the country. The criterion of distance as the choice was removed and quality

education, good infrastructure, competent faculties and peers at par became the criteria for applying to an institute.

The boundaries were still breached when institutes embraced internationalisation and global outlook by welcoming students from other countries for short term programmes or degree courses. They also started encouraging their Indian students for international exposure by giving incentives, scholarships, travel grants and various alliances with universities abroad. The role of teachers who also did not worry about working in a nearby college became important. These universities have stringent parameters of selecting faculties and their promotions and diversity is welcomed even in the faculties. Yesterday the traditional government institutes had faculties from nearby areas or from the same states who did not bring varied culture or perspectives. This also limited a student's learning of languages, cultures and regions.

Today the new age universities have faculties from various states and also from abroad who bring varied perspectives and knowledge to the table. This breached the geographical barriers and the horizon of the institute as well as the student widened immensely. It was an excellent icing on the cake of the pedagogical endeavours of the visionary founders especially in subject like liberal studies. The facilitation was practical and visible and not just an ideal on paper. "Indeed, liberal education models can produce learning or change, by being one of the key voices which question how the fruits of scientific, religious, and political ideas help, or not, in educating, developing, and sustaining more whole human beings and, by extension, a more just world."¹⁷

The state of the art infrastructure developed with no avariciousness facilitated the new models of education. The campuses became a world in themselves, vibrant with activities, multi-cultural people studying and working together, accommodation facilities, in-house sports complex etc. The government accreditations like NAAC also encourage and incentivised infrastructural facilities in the campus. The ambience, safety and security, facilities and amenities within the campuses attracted students from distant lands to join an institute.

The institutes also initiated their outreach and branding activities across the country as well as abroad. The new age private players who renovated the entry for the students spread their admission centres in various cities to facilitate students seeking admission from distant lands.

Figure 1.2 shows universities with more than ten test/PI centres across India:

CHRIST UNIVERSITY	SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL [DEEMED UNIVERSITY]
NARSEE MOHANJEE INSTITUTE	SRM INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
PANDIT DEENDAYAL PETROLEUM UNIVERSITY	O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
AZIM PREMJI UNIVERSITY	ASHOKA UNIVERSITY
FLAME UNIVERRSITIY	RNB GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

- The universities are mentioned as per the chronology of their establishment year.

The breach of barriers was not just geographical or cultural but also skill and knowledge based. The universities came up with centres of excellence in various subjects and expertise. This was to bridge the gap between the industry, required research and education imparted. Many companies started sponsoring centres of excellence for sharing their expertise, facilitating the students and teachers with research and trying to bridge the gap of industry and societal expectation and education. This initiated continuous cycle of interaction of institutes with society, industry back and forth and continuous upgradation of curriculum, pedagogy and research areas. “If you successfully apply these ideas, but then stop doing them, you will slide backward from great to good or worse. The only way to remain great is to keep applying the fundamental principles that made you great.”¹⁸

1.6 Breaching the Broadcasting Barriers

The private players who entered the educational arena brought many dynamic practices from corporate. One such was the novel and continuous outreach to students’ community in particular and society at large. They broadcasted about their promoters, infrastructure facilities, students’ achievements and activities, academic up gradation and achievements etc. through various means hitherto unknown or untouched by the traditional government institutes. Like any vigilant FMCG company, these institutes used all the means of clear branding available in the twenty-first century from developing elegant and informative websites to active use of social media portals, to education promotional sites to traditional print, TV and billboard ads to spread awareness about their activities and achievements. There was also a movement of creating news first and then broadcasting them. The dynamic private players who had brought their global exposure and rich industry experience understood the nuances of moving forward, dealing with change, branding activities and ultimately what is needed to ensure that a student gets conducive atmosphere with maximum opportunities to learn, train and develop into a responsible citizen and professional.

Conclusion

The dawn of twenty-first century saw the sunrise of Liberal Studies conceptualised and driven by the private universities. It was soon accepted and taken as a holistic replacement of the traditional courses and degrees of government universities. Humanities and Social Science got a shot in the arm with the new design of curriculum, pedagogical approaches, research insight and the various careers options after following the courses. The role of Liberal studies was aligned with the need of the hour in various fields from government to industry, from entertainment to entrepreneurship and the outcome based education brought vigour and respect for what was once considered bookish or theoretical knowledge. “In the context of building socially cohesive societies and sustainable models of development, the humanities and social sciences can never be irrelevant. For example, studies in psychology, sociology and philosophy need to be reoriented to reflect new information and communication technologies.”¹⁹

When the curriculum was developed for holistic effect and acceptance, the institutes too facilitated this with state of the art infrastructure, expert faculties, cutting on red-tape for fast forward movement, involvement of industry for helping at every stage from curriculum development to placement activities. This was possible with the advent of the corporates who initiated various institutes first as a philanthropic activity but with a vision to make it self-sustainable operationally. Their rich corporate experience and global outlook helped the institutes to take wings and soar. The trust behind the names of the promoters also played a major role in public acceptance of the experiments and endeavours. “Perhaps, then, you might gain that rare tranquillity that comes from knowing that you’ve had a hand in creating something of intrinsic excellence that makes a contribution. Indeed, you might gain that deepest of all satisfactions: knowing that your short time here on this earth has been well spent, and that it mattered.”²⁰ The visionary founders proved it and have continued with their endeavours for bringing about a major change and paradigm shift in the way humanities and social sciences have been delivered.

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***A Cleanliness Drive in India:
Assessment on its Psycho-Social Impact***

Abstract

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (a cleanliness campaign) was initiated in 2014 under the regime of the NDA government. As the name signifies, the term 'Swachh' denotes cleanliness in Sanskrit. In its nascent stages, the program attempted to ameliorate waste management – most predominantly open defecation and efficient utilization of resources. With the primary motive of having a hygienic surrounding environment for its people, the government of India initiated sundry cleanliness drives under this campaign. However, the conceptualisation and formulation of plans is one aspect – the praxis, i.e., the practical implementation of these plans is another important consideration altogether, which is perhaps the primary concern for the Government of India – for, if there is an inability to acquire mass involvement and participation then there is an automatic implication of failure.

By having a comprehensive understanding of the motivational factors and attitudinal characteristics that members of a given community harbor – it would be relatively efficient at gaining mass involvement. Consequently, by addressing those factors and formulating plans on the basis of such fundamental facets there could be an exponential rate of success for such programs. Adding on to the literature and knowledge, which pre-exists within this domain, the subsequent research can aid in the better understanding of social perceptual phenomena and the successful implementation of programs related to campaigns addressing such issues. The study undertaken had a sample size of 1000 respondents.

The findings of the paper suggest that the cumulative assessment across the concerned thematic factors (political, social, environmental and communicational) apropos the initiative indicate an effective social (r)evolution with respect to the perceptual notions of the sample population involved.

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Introduction

Waste management has been an imperative and perennial activity. It has been prevalent in various permutations and combinations from crude disposal techniques – since ancient Greece – to complex technological advancements in today's modern world. This has been in practice for the ubiquitous – to keep waste at bay and in check.¹ Although, before the onset of the modern waste management systems and the municipalities being involved in the previously mentioned conundrum, waste management techniques were fairly unsophisticated. They ranged from landowners having the responsibility of solely (and merely) the space that lined their own; and people littering onto the streets of their community – garbage left on its own accord to amass and decay in the immediate circumscribing environment.²

Along with the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, there was an inescapable burgeoning of waste. Hence, as a repercussive response to this rapid expansion of waste, there was (and since has been) a managerial call to arms to handle the alarming augmentation of waste, which has led to the dawn of the so-called 'Age of Sanitation'.³ India has been hurtling rapidly towards large scale industrialisation and urbanisation, which has accordingly led to the escalation of population⁴; not only has this given birth to an immediate and incessant need to cater to masses with respect to housing and employment, but it has also given way to several crises as a consequence of the aforementioned population explosion. One such crisis being: environmental degradation.

Concerning its population, India ranks as the second most populated country in the world, following closely that of China, which is first according to the census bureau (2018). This unprecedented growth of population has led to a gargantuan strain on one's environment such, especially sanitation. Presenting, therefore, dire implications for the health of not only the people, but also the circumventing environment; as it becomes tougher to manage and implement appropriate measures.⁵ Moreover, within India, along with the rise in population, there has – in addition – been a steady shift and rise in the income and monetary lifestyles of the populace involved. This has led to an increased strain on waste generation and an inadvertent (and tectonic) swing in the waste constituency. That is, with the expected evolution of standard of living, the waste composition constitutes more of paper, plastic and metal elements⁶. Corollary to that, waste is, as a result, rather tougher to dispose, and thus more hazardous to its surroundings. In India the waste disposal activities fair on a moderately makeshift level, this involves incineration of chunks of waste in both rural as well as urban sectors. The predicament mentioned above is owing to the dearth of waste collection plans as well as the existent one's being veritably inadequate.⁷

In India the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEF), Ministry of Urban Development, Central Pollution Control Boards (CPCBs), State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) govern the management and parameters of health.⁸ Some of the provisional waste management programs introduced in India, within the past two decades, are as follows: National Waste Management Committee (1990), Strategy Paper (1995), Policy paper, Master plan of municipal Solid Waste (1995). All of these programs aimed at confronting the various realms of waste.⁹

The attitude of an individual, within a collective state, may reflect the attitude of the nationality one might associate with. The societal attitude in India is impacted and influenced by the caste system and economic status to quite a large extent which often inhibits the overall need for change.¹⁰ This complex and synergistic dynamic of religions and customs, which are rather politically charged, are often difficult to circumvent. This problem needs to be observed under the plight to reform the Open Defecation predicament, which, too, is religiously charged.¹¹ There were also sundry sanitation intervention programs introduced within India. In order to have a systematic way of not only making the masses cognizant about the dire consequences that unhygienic sanitary conditions induce, but to also make active efforts towards building a conducive environment to bring about change. One such measure implemented – which encompasses the protection of the health of the masses as well as the environment– with respect to hygiene and sanitary requirements, is Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) 2014.¹²

While people attempt to keep their households clean, the lack of ownership, accountability and responsibility of public spheres often leads to the littering of the same. It is then fundamental for communities to be conscious of the rationale behind SBA in order to realise the desired perceptual, attitudinal and consequentially behavioral change; which is why the Government of India has attempted to popularise SBA through modes of mass media such as social networking sites and the immanent influence of celebrities.¹³

The thematic focal point of the given research study was to assess the impact SBA had amongst the masses of Gandhinagar, in particular, with respect to their attitudes and motivational factors. With the sharp shift in the current contours of the environmental scenario vis-à-vis the modern world, it has become an imperative to harness the absolute power of mass momentum and not simply introduce sundry cleanliness campaigns.

Rationale of the Study

The study aims to examine the range of the conundrum, which is to assess the factors that are allegedly inhibiting the propagation, and the probable efficacious

enactment of the program. Correlating the expanse of it with key variables of the given study, which are: Societal Attitudes and Behaviours (attitudinal perception towards cleanliness campaigns aimed at environmental betterment), and Motivational Factors, which is corollary to the first variable. Under the above-mentioned variables, the study further probes the particular sub aspects that are associated with the said core variables, such as the openness that the masses hone towards certain plans and ideologies propagated and implemented for the improvement of the environment – under SBA. While taking into consideration the surrounding social, political and personal scenarios as well as narratives of people regarding the ones associated with the campaign and its implementation.

By analysing these variables, in context of cleanliness campaigns initiated by the government of India, the study aims to delineate why certain plans aimed at the betterment of the environment – which have calamitous consequences if not followed – are ignored by the masses. This study endeavors to examine the attitudinal differences, and hence motivational differences, if any, that occur within the sample population of the city Gandhinagar.

Potential Navigation of the Problem

Adding on to the subsequent research in this domain - this research aims to study the societal attitudes that invariably lead one to the motivational factors. Motivational factors, which either deter an individual from taking an active step, hence participation, or that which propel movement and action amongst the masses to actively participate, and endeavor to make a change.¹⁴

This study has been conducted vis-à-vis India's national movement – Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. By attitude, the study would aim at measuring the openness which the masses have been pertaining to the acceptance of an idea/movement in the direction of cleanliness management.¹⁵ By a nuanced analysis of the existing scenario of the country with reference to such campaigns, the study would aim to probe the dynamic of *Requirement v/s Delivery* within the city of Gandhinagar. With the help of analysing these variables, in the context of waste management, the study aims to understand why certain programs aimed at the betterment of the environment, and which hold dismal outcomes if not paid heed to, are neglected by the masses.

Objective of the Study

Waste management is an essential conduit towards the realisation as well as the actualisation of the goal of sustainable development. The two crucial components for its actualisation are: (i) application of regulations; and, (ii) engaged citizen contribution.

The need for comprehension of the populace perceptual lens as well as behavioral components – with respect to cleanliness and circumferential environmental health – is rudimentary in order for the latter to materialise the former mentioned component.

There is a configuration of hard built consumerism in the minds of people of this world. So much so that, there is a component of ‘benefit’ attached to each transaction and a self-satisfying purpose enlaced with each indulgence (of activity). Hence, there is an urgent need to make the aspect of private participation, especially concerning environmental health, attractive so that it is accomplished by a layered understanding of the psychological proceedings of the masses.

Urban regulations and policies have been in rotation for quite some time now, but most of them are known to tackle events and incidents in seclusion. There is a need to incorporate, include and assimilate the various aspects of what is known to be the environmental degradation and sanitation to have a holistic game plan.¹⁶

According to Venkateswaran (1994),¹⁷ there are sundry technological advancements that have set precedence for the way the conundrum of waste management system is (and should be) tackled. But the predicament of waste management is not simply confined to the superficial act of cleaning and/or the alleged semblance of cleanliness; but, also the additional componential factors that make up the issue: economical, political and social. One such development that is noticeable and praise worthy concerning SBA is that it seeks to integrate the different facets of waste management and include within it the awareness campaign – attitude (people) oriented.¹⁸ Swachh Bharat has kept in its repertoire an indicator to help set the parameters of the campaign and keep the objective in focus. It calls it the ‘IEC campaign’ (Inform, educate and communicate). This IEC is to be achieved through the dissemination of information via the mediums of mass media and interpersonal communication with the masses in order to activate them and their ideals (Urban Management Centre, 2014).¹⁹

The effects of the campaign in question and its impact are precisely what this paper seeks to study and comprehend within a nutshell. To elucidate further, the primary objective of the given study is to understand the penetrative power of the campaign ideals within the concerned community of Gandhinagar. Ergo, map effectively the attitudes and thus the motivation of the residents involved efficiently. Further, the secondary objective of the study is to suggest the key elements that set down the probable precedence for the future of cleanliness drives with respect to perception and attitude.

Methodology of the Study

The research methodology consists of an overview of the following components: Framework (design); measurement instruments; sampling & sample population.

Design

The design implemented for the following study was descriptive design. The hypothesis was built after the due assessment of the data collected. Data collection was observational in nature and included the utilisation of survey method in order to collect data.

Instruments

The study employed the following questionnaires:

1. Socio-economic Scale (SESC) by Kalia, A.K & Sahu, S (2012).²⁰ The self-report questionnaire was administered to the residents of Gandhinagar. The socio-economic scale is a 40-item assessment tool, which measures the socio-economic status of the participants across five parameters. Those parameters are: socio-cultural component; economic component; possession of goods and services; health component and educational component. The self-administered test takes approximately 20-25 minutes to complete (Kalia, A.K. & Sahu, S, 2012).²¹
2. Qualitative (apperception) measure to map perceptions on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was designed and administered to the subjects. The questionnaires were administered to respondents irrespective of age, the exclusion criteria being 13 years and below. Questionnaire preparation – the first questionnaire was an existent psychometric test, the third questionnaire was customized and formulated to capture the essence of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and were administered face-to-face.

Thematic Breakdown of Qualitative Measure

The developed measure consisted of 20 statements, which were formulated in sets of four componential spheres of evaluation (Political, Environmental, Social (Personal), and Communicational Activity), consisting of five questions each. The respondents were required to express their opinions towards the statements. The question sets probed the perception of masses chiefly to comprehend how the aforementioned individual components (parts), which were associated with SBA, had interacted and contributed in shaping public opinions towards the overall campaign itself.

The responses to each question were segregated into three broad strains that helped analyse and get an insight into the perceptual background of the concerned sample size. The three broad categories of measure for the responses of participants were divided into Enthusiastic Acceptance, Acceptance with Reservation, and Complete Rejection. An analysis group was formulated to comprehend the conclusions derived from the analysis of respondent's responses that were coherent and agreed upon.

Sampling and Sample Population

The sampling method applied was that of probability sampling called simple random sampling.

The sample size (n) was 1000 subjects residing in Gandhinagar. Random Sampling was chosen – with the prerequisite of them being residents of the city of Gandhinagar – care was taken to have appropriate number of participants from across various sectors of the city. The questionnaires were administered by the preferred method of face-to-face.

The sample included the average distribution of 512 males and 394 females, out of which 94 participants did not respond to certain sections of questionnaire set. The given sample varied across age, gender, family type, and educational qualifications. The sample population was then profiled on the basis of gender and the consequential perceptions with respect to the same. There were not significant distinctions and/or attitudinal differences found contingent upon gender and its contrasting social roles with respect to the environmental cleanliness initiative.

Inclusion Criteria

- (a) Participants residing in Gandhinagar
- (b) Participants above the age of 13 years
- (c) Vernacular – English & Gujarati

Exclusion Criteria

- (a) Age cap (max. limit) was undefined
- (b) Non-natives not considered

Discussion

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has been a pioneering campaign in laying the groundwork for many environmental pre-requisites since its initial introduction. Although, its impact seems to be intermittent and inconsistent when viewed from the pivotal point of active participation from respective masses. Mass

participation is an important precursor for attaining success in terms of *any* movement that is contingent upon community action: such is the case with most campaigns. The cumulative public perception towards a program is a compelling factor worth consideration that can help determine its subsequent success or failure. The barriers that pose a peril to the participative crucial constituent are those produced by either ignorant and/or erroneous judgment of the masses towards the components of the campaign or the entire campaign itself, or the ineffectual message dissemination from the campaign managers that includes the form of message propagation. While injecting campaigns of mass importance it is necessary to incentivize programs as well as provide people with a sense of accountability as well as responsibility in order to elicit active engagement.

Further, while evoking sentiments of onus upon the masses, it is necessary to take into consideration the preliminary perceptual background of the target populace - with respect to the given phenomenon/trend/objective – in order to estimate and appropriately customise a form of plan of conduct. Working according to which correspondingly helps drive the objectives and rationales of the concerned campaigns in a manner that seeks to mobilise the masses towards action - effectively. An erroneous/uninformative and/or even banal approach towards the same can lead to actions that are antithetical to the original sentiment of the mission. While assessing the perceptual background of the public involved can prove to be a tricky ordeal – owing to the subjectivity of the component – the enactment and subsequent consequences of actions (of the people) are indicators of the driving perceptions of the said populace: further used to circumvent the trend of common perceptions and confront them accordingly. During the assessment of perceptions of the masses towards Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, in the city of Gandhinagar, a string of common trends and opinions, with respect to the four different contributing factors, were cited repeatedly, which provided an acute insight into the reasons for its tremendous success within certain areas and its lack of thereof in the other.

Additionally, the propagation of these particular trend can be traced back to how a campaign, in general, is perceived. A campaign, when introduced, is seldom divorced from the various factors that construct it and/or drive it. The people connected to it, its objectives, its requirements, its rationale, its influence or impact – all these factors seem to build a communal perception towards the mission in the minds of people. A similar trend can be observed vis-à-vis the SBA, which was introduced by the Government of India in lieu of the deteriorating environmental scenario in context of India. People's perception towards the initiative was driven by the many factors (major themes) that

supported the campaign and its impact namely, their perception towards: (i) the promotional activities; (ii) the political affiliations;²² (iii) its impact on the environment; and, (iv) its impact on personal choices (peoples’ perception with respect to the overall societal change with regard to initiative). The perceptions towards these ideas were divided into three strains of ideas (sub-themes): Enthusiastic Acceptance, Acceptance with Reservation, and Complete Rejection as depicted in the tabular representation below (Table 1.0).

Table 1.0: Themes (of Campaign) and their Sub-theme Percentage Representation

<i>Thematic factors</i>	<i>Promotional Activities</i>	<i>Political Affiliations</i>	<i>Environmental Impact</i>	<i>Personal Choices</i>
1. <i>Enthusiastic Acceptance</i>	62.3%	54.19%	78.13%	88.4%
2. <i>Acceptance w/ reservation</i>	4.75%	11.43%	10.32%	4.6%
3. <i>Complete Rejection</i>	32.95%	34.38%	11.55%	7%

The table provides a descriptive depiction of the trends concerning people’s perception towards the initiative and its (4) components. These perceptions will further be classified as well as discussed below in detail by the aid of an illustration.

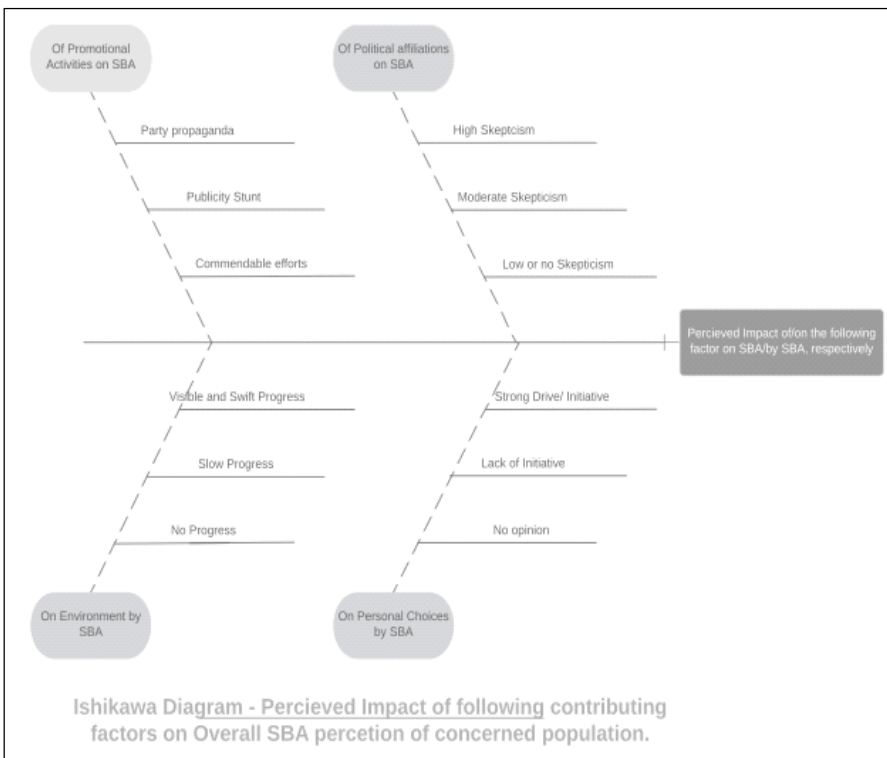


Fig 1.0: Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram

The Fishbone (Ishikawa) diagram illustrated below provides a brief overview of the relationships concerning the aforementioned factors (broad themes) and the most commonly occurring opinions (sub-themes) regarding each of them. These opinions of people, on a general spectrum, have a massive impact on the execution of the said campaign: SBA.

Views (beliefs and perceptions), with respect to certain phenomena, are seldom formed in isolation of an event, but are rather shaped and determined by the political, cultural, social, as well as identity-driven narratives. These factors have a strong influence not only on the creation of these perceptions, but consequently also have an impact on the receptivity of certain facts concerning the phenomenon.²³

From the diagram above, it can be observed that the overall perception towards Swachh Bharat Abhiyan mission was predominantly compelled by the perception towards political affiliations; the means and manner with which the sentiment of the campaign was projected; the impact on the environment since its introduction; and the impact on personal and societal choices after its introduction.

A process of identification and labeling of statements was performed – responses from sample population – which were exemplary of certain thematic ideas identified. Along the lines of the major themes – which the questionnaire probed – trends (sub-themes) were charted in accordance to the major themes to understand the prominent perceptions toward each. Such sub-themes were delineated by three streams, which grouped most responses towards the mission and its associated components.

The first theme explored (from top right) is that of promotional activities and their resulting impact on public opinion towards SBA. This thematic idea was sub- categorised into three prevalent trends according to the gauged participant responses, namely: *Party Propaganda*, – wherein subjects assumed that introduction of the campaign was a strategy by a concerned party to gain momentum and voters by capitalising on public favouritism. The second trend– *Publicity Stunt* – was observed as another major sub-theme estimated from the responses of sample population –this was with respect to many eminent personalities associated with the campaign to give impetus to and promote SBA and its cause. People’s perception towards the said celebrity involvement, trying to associate with an environmental cause, was that of an underhanded motive guided by a desire to gain for personal reasons in terms of attaining positive PR. The third perceptual trend spotted was that of *Commendable Efforts* by the government concerning the promotional activities conducted by them.

A positive response towards the governmental promotional activities, seen by the people, as an active effort towards mobilising masses as opposed to being a hidden agenda for other questionable reasons.

A possible way in which confidence of people might be attained and augmented, could be through co-creating the meaning of a campaign – in order to instill confidence amongst the masses and strive towards a successful implementation. Taking into consideration the *responsiveness* of the population, with respect to the campaign, whether positive or negative, traction towards the said campaign could be determined – which is important evidence to measure in order to discern the effects.²⁴ The value that it provides to its receivers is another important element that needs to be emphasised and addressed, to attract mass attention and participation to obviate negative judgments.^{25, 26}

The second theme explored was political affiliations and their consequent impact on public perception. Three principal sub-thematic ideas were observed with respect to that of political affiliations (attached with/to SBA); herein the sentiment (sub-themes) of masses ranged from High Skepticism, Moderate Skepticism, and Low and/or No Skepticism of the political affiliations. This reflected the opinions that the crowd held about their confidence in (governments) intent – the reasons behind the campaigns initiation, as well as the motives for realising its objectives. Within high skepticism, the involvement of any government official is viewed with great suspicion, owing to the belief that there was direct political connection with clandestine operations and/or propaganda of party propelling tactic. Moderate skepticism was a form of healthy skepticism, wherein the participants were not entirely skeptical, but were not all-too-trusting either. Low and/or No skepticism was a signifier of complete trust in the actions of Government and its officials and no reservations regarding their association with the campaign.

Perceptual biases are a common issue, which need to be tackled when employing a strategy that requires mass momentum – as they (biases) can distort the very inherent outlook regarding the action assumed. Perceptual biases are especially widespread in lieu of political discourse – there exists a negative associations attached with ‘politics’ as a terminology as well as an ideology.²⁷ This is especially true vis-à-vis the modern narrative of political discourse – where an air of cynicism is always dominant, and one common inference drawn is that of *corruption* – which is assumed to be “environmental phenomena” in terms of politics, perhaps due to the lack of credibility.^{28, 29, 30} There is a probability that if a similar initiation was undertaken by an NGO or other not-for-profit organisation, then it probably wouldn’t have had negative perceptual biases

adhered to it – which could be owing to having an anti-corruption outlook when the following type of organisations are in question. This could perhaps be an indicator of perceptual association germinating from, and rooted in, as a result of the influence exerted thus by the social institutions (and their established nature).³¹

The third theme explored was that of environmental changes and its impact on perceptions. According to an article published in Rajasthan Patrika (2019)³² – data interpretation attained from the people interviewed (residents of Gandhinagar) for the initial report from which this paper is derived - it was found that almost 70% people believed that SBA had shown tangible results concerning the surrounding environmental cleanliness. One of the trends observed from the participant responses was that of *visible and swift progress* achieved since the inception of SBA. Another trend observed was that of *slow progress*, wherein people stated that the progress was happening, but it was slow and sporadic in nature. The third sub-theme explored from the responses was people's opinions that there was absolutely *no progress* since its advent (of SBA), i.e. there was no tangible change seen in the environmental cleanliness.

The fourth theme explored was that of the impact on personal and societal choices, and people's opinions with regards to SBA as a result. The three sub-themes, most commonly surfacing, from the responses of the participants were that of strong initiative, wherein the subjects believed that there was a sense of durable effort towards the aims and objectives of SBA. The second common theme observed was that of lack of initiative and no tangible results observed thereby concerning the overall mass-mobilisation towards the materialisation of said goals of the program via the works of communal effort. The third sub-theme witnessed was a neutral (no opinion) stance. From the participant pool, sizeable portions of subjects were youth, and it was observed that most of them had been a part (concerning responses) of the first theme – *strong initiative*. When probed further it was attributed and supported by virtue of their own personal/individual contributions, which were by means of message dissemination by social media and its tools.

Personal traction and self-positioning one through the lens of social media is known to be a great precursor – in today's age – for motivating the current youth towards becoming more active on certain issues. This helps them in enhancing self-expression, forming of stylistic statement, success, and consequently towards self-identification and awareness of own abilities.^{33, 34} This has been observed as one of the many reasons for the youth in India being especially motivated in keeping a mindful presence on social media – by virtue

of its impositions. The youth is thus encouraged to voice concerns and opinions on current matters that aids in the effective diffusion of messages as well as help propel the cause further within the concerned focus group of one's unit.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The conundrum of unwarranted waste management has led India away from the conduit of achieving a clean and healthy society. SBA has attempted to make changes in the sphere of waste management – most predominantly open defecation and the efficient utilisation of resources, as the name suggests. Though the conceptualisation and formulation of intervention plans are the primary steps – the Praxis i.e. the practical implementation of the concerned drives is the primary concern for the Government of India too; for, if there is an inability to acquire involvement and participation from the masses, it hints at an inadvertent downfall of the respective program. Sustainable programs require a sustainable contribution.

Society functions on the postulates of structural functionalism, i.e. the various blocks of society need to function in consolidation and unison in order to foresee constancy and camaraderie. In pursuance of the former, there is a need to break the bounds of theoretical considerations and move towards the realm of practical implementations. The objective of Swachh Bharat is far from its point of culmination, but it is on the path of a steady ascent, which is towards the dream that Mahatma Gandhi once mapped. There needs to be a call to action towards the betterment of the societal conditions that we now live in.

As more than half of the Indian population is youth, and the youth is the future of a concerned country at any given point of time, it is an imperative to build upon and fundamentalise the environmental education of students in and outside classrooms – to assist in charting a future towards improved and wholesome ecosystem.³⁵ Although, one issue that seems to persist and will continue to, if not dealt with suitable regulations, is that of implementing the Swachhta index amidst the gaping aspect of measurement for alleged improvement. Thus, the difficulty is setting the occasional un-realistic (and idealistic) parameters of cleanliness, and the obscurity in achieving it.³⁶

There is an initiative that has been launched by NITI Aayog, which is an urban management program. This initiative seeks to implement measures for “Urban rejuvenation” in three key areas, one of them is urban solid waste management. It is in partnership with Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE). The primary agenda of this collaboration was to take the professional assistance of experts from Singapore – in a plight to improve and face challenges that are

plaguing India in the aforementioned arenas. One particular key take away from the seminal dialogue between NITI Aayog and SCE was the recognised need to structure PPP (Public Private Partnership) within the Indian context vis-à-vis solid waste management. That is, to have the private sectors take upon them the onuses to manage the technological game play as opposed to the Government (Public) sector.³⁷

According to Delmon (2015),³⁸ the management of waste and environmental cleanliness is an imperative that needs an impetus and a colossal shift within the very manner in which it is dealt with. He proposes a phrase: “Turn trash into treasure.” He propounds that revenue opportunities can be generated by the in-cooperation of trash, i.e. by imposing tax on corporations and companies that produce waste, or Energy fees, Recycling fees – to provide value for recycled goods in markets where they can be employed and are useable.

There are sundry promising ways in which waste can be managed and the sanctity of sanitation levels within the country can be maintained. A time bound planning and implementation of regulations on the basis of analysis and active citizen participation – which is tackled with the help of behavioral understanding – is the need of the hour.

Limitations

The research does not take into account the various religious connotations, which are *one* of the most important, if not *the* most important, aspects of understanding perceptual notions towards (the delineated) phenomenon – especially among masses of India. Additionally, the study’s purview is concentrated and limited to that of one city as opposed to that of the entire nation. As India is a diverse country, it would be of great significance to conduct similar analysis pan India.

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China and BRICS: Dealing with Power Asymmetry in a Multipolar World

Abstract

A distinctive feature of the rise of the multipolar world order in the 21st century has been the proliferation of multilateral institutions. While the raison d'être of these institutions essentially remains elevating multilateral interests, as opposed to unilateral or even for that matter, bilateral interests, national interests continue to remain paramount. Even within multilateral institutions, states undertake various approaches to secure their own national interests over and above that of others. BRICS, a multilateral grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, in its conception is targeted towards reforming and filling up the space left by the West dominated structures of global governance. However, the power asymmetry inherent among the BRICS members creates traction that the Chinese require to wield the kind of influence that should concern other members, and certainly India. The dilemma of balancing common interest and national interest within multilateral organisations like the BRICS will be an eminent feature of the varied and multiple interest sets that countries have in an interdependent world. While countries will still find purpose, in the membership of multilateral institutions, the challenge of managing power asymmetry within those organisations will mean that countries find leverage through their engagement with countries outside those groups.

For China, the heavyweight within the group, BRICS has multiple purposes, one of them being the elevation of Chinese interests of opposing Western hegemony. However, for India, for which the grouping remains of pertinence (given its stress on addressing emerging and important global challenges such as those of economic development and sustainability) taking a position against the so-called dominance of the West or aligning itself with any particular country or group that stands in opposition to others is a dilemma.

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Introduction

Debates on the emerging multipolar structure of the international system have been synonymous with the rise of China. The discourse on America's relative decline and the rise of new power centres has been dominated by China's rise and the geopolitical implications it has had. A distinctive feature of the rise of the multipolar order in the twenty-first century has been the proliferation of multilateral institutions. While the *raison d'être* of these institutions essentially remains elevating multilateral interests, as opposed to unilateral or even for that matter, bilateral interests, national interests continue to remain paramount. Even within multilateral institutions, states undertake various approaches to secure their own national interests over and above that of others. BRICS, a multilateral grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, in its conception is targeted towards reforming and filling up the space left by the West dominated structures of global governance. However, BRICS grouping also has another equally important objective; which is to elevate the respective positions of each of these member countries' position in the international system. As such, BRICS faces a conundrum: how can it balance common interest with competition and power play within the group?

The BRICS countries clearly have a significant role to play in the emerging multipolar world order. The BRICS countries, in the last decade have contributed to 50 per cent of the global economic growth. India and China, have the highest growth rates in the grouping, and despite several avenues of disagreements in the bilateral relationship, they find ample scope for cooperation in the BRICS. However, the power asymmetry inherent among the BRICS members creates traction that the Chinese require to wield the kind of influence that should concern other members, and certainly India. China also intends on using the multilateral organisations like BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to sync them with larger objectives in projects like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Moreover, there has been a clear divergence between India and China, when it comes to countering terrorism, as Beijing often turns a blind eye to terrorists targeting India, emanating from Pakistan. Moreover, increasing U.S.-China strategic competition, the trade war between the two, nosediving U.S.-Russia relations and better ties between India and the U.S. creates a geo-political situation bringing Moscow and Beijing closer. China's opposition to India's candidature as a veto-wielding member of a reformed United Nations and India's membership shot at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) further create divergences between India and China beyond the existing tenacious boundary dispute.

Hence, China's position within the BRICS by dint of being the largest economy within the group remains an issue of policy concern that merits a conceptual analysis and assessment. This article attempts to carry out a conceptual inquiry into the notion of multilateralism and multilateral institutions as a feature of the emerging multipolar world order. Countries like China and India have openly projected that their interests will be better served in a multipolar world order. However, the practice of multilateralism through multilateral institutions in a multipolar world does not preclude the notion of power asymmetry. In case of multilateral organisations like the BRICS, China's economic size lends it a playing field, which could eat into the means by which other members would protect and promote their interest. As such, the article attempts to juxtapose the conceptual background with an empirical understanding of why China needs BRICS, how and why China dominates the BRICS and what it means for India. Last but not the least, the article also attempts to argue as to what all these mean for the future of BRICS multilateralism.

Incentivising Cooperation amidst Competition

How do countries like India and China whose interactions are usually identified with competition, if not conflict, incentivise cooperation? Besides their bilateral interactions and a number of confidence building measures, specifically over their border dispute, how do they use memberships and partnerships in multilateral institutions for building habits of cooperation? Are these efforts successful and how do they play out in the midst of strategic rivalry? Do multilateral institutions necessarily provide a way out from the security dilemma inherent in the relationship between India and China?¹ Multilateral institutions and multilateral ways of interstate arrangements have become the catchphrase of the emerging multipolar world order.² Robert Keohane defines multilateralism 'as the practice of co-ordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions.'³ According to him, institutions are a 'persistent and connected sets of rules, formal and informal, that pre- scribe behavioural roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations.' Multilateral institutions, Keohane says are, "multilateral arrangements with persistent sets of rules; they can be distinguished from other forms of multilateralism, such as ad hoc meetings and short-term arrangements to solve particular problems." At the heart of institutions is also bargaining among the members of those institutions to align interests and common objectives. While bargaining may be geared towards a win-win scenario, the role of power in the process is undeniable.⁴

Since cooperation in a multilateral institution is not guaranteed but has to be negotiated at all times, to what extent influential members in a multilateral

institution might be able to and willing to negotiate the terms of arrangement to their favour and to the detriment of others remains a matter of discourse.⁵ The debate on an emerging multipolar world order has gained momentum in recent times. Though multipolarity comes with the notion of multiple centers of power, giving more space for creating leverages to protect and promote one's interest, it also does not prevent stronger powers in the system from using their predominant powers to advance their interests at the cost of others.⁶

Such predominance is also reflected in multilateral institutions, where a country that has contributed more material capabilities as opposed to other members might create more leverage for itself.⁷ Multilateral mechanisms and memberships in multilateral institutions are means in which countries create value out of cooperation. However, the paradox remains that countries, after all, are self-interested actors who would either spearhead the creation of certain multilateral institutions, or seek membership in them, only if it serves certain purposes.⁸ However, what are the circumstances in which the predominance of a country in multilateral institutions start diluting the multilateral ways of the institution? Does power asymmetry and the intentions of the leading country; limit the traction of other members? In what ways a predominant country set the agenda favourable to its own interests, and how conditions of power asymmetry constrain the negotiating space of other members?⁹ What are the incentives that a country, like China, with a substantial power of the purse, can give to other member countries in a multilateral set-up?

It is also fair to say that an aspiring hegemon would want to engineer various multilateral institutions and spearhead the decision-making, to make easier compliance and cooperation with other countries. Sustaining hegemony would require the maintenance of various multilateral mechanisms like the way the Americans spearheaded the Bretton Woods institutions post World War II. The farsightedness of a hegemon would not be in amassing power alone, but in managing the power through effective public distribution of goods.¹⁰ The leadership of multilateral institutions could be seen as a way to create legitimacy for predominance in the international system. The assumption that multilateralism naturally leads to cooperative behaviour and win-win outcomes has to be critically questioned in the context of the existence of power asymmetry within the institutions, and how stronger countries utilise that asymmetry. China's engagement in multilateral institutions reflects its pragmatic and realpolitik considerations. If multilateral organisations like the BRICS are the order of an emerging multipolar world order, then China's perception of BRICS as a major component of its rise and its external engagement is reflective of its intention to use BRICS to institutionalise its economic leadership of the global order. In an

increasingly interdependent world, multilateral organisations like the BRICS are imperative to coordinate the convergent interests and manage divergent ones. However, the efficacy of such institutions to generate “mutual benefits” is not preordained and China’s capability and intention to influence multilateral organizations like the BRICS to serve its own national interest will create more complexities for other member countries like India, which shares complex dynamics of competition and cooperation with China.¹¹ The following section will delve deeper into the question as to why China needs the BRICS.

China’s Prominence within the BRICS

China holds sway over all the other countries, be it in terms of its share in world trade or in terms of its GDP. A cursory look at statistics from WTO and IMF from 2017 reveals that while China’s share in world total exports was 12.77 per cent, Brazil’s share was 1.23, while it was 1.99 percent, 1.68 per cent and 0.50 per cent for Russia, India and South Africa respectively. In terms of GDP (purchasing power parity), Brazil’s was USD 3.240 trillion, Russia’s was USD 4.007 trillion, India’s was USD 9.459 trillion, South Africa’s was USD 765 billion, while China’s stood at the highest amongst the five at USD 23.159 trillion.¹²

In fact, China has just about enough money accumulated on its international reserves to equal the economic output of Brazil, Russia and South Africa.¹³ Its state owned enterprises (SOEs) have the funding to buy strategic assets abroad like water, oil and gas infrastructure. Brazil’s dependence on China has been revealed by an examination of the bilateral trade between the two countries. Overall, trade between China and Brazil has seen a positive evolution in the decade 2006–2016. From a trade volume of approximately US\$ 20 billion in 2006, trade increased to approximately US\$ 68 billion in 2016. This means that, from 2006 to 2016, the volume of trade between the two countries more than tripled.¹⁴ Agribusiness is one of the largest sectors of the Brazilian economy. The country leads the rankings in soybean exports and is known worldwide for meat and oil exports.¹⁵ Brazil is immensely dependent on China for its soybeans and iron ore exports. In fact, in May 2017, the two countries launched a joint investment fund to increase productive capacity, and the fund reportedly will finance investment projects in Brazil that are of interest to both the sides.

China is already Russia’s largest trading partner, offsetting any impact of geopolitical uncertainty from the West. Bilateral trade grew from US\$ 69.6 billion in 2016 to US\$ 107.1 billion last year, with China as Russia’s largest individual partner in both exports and imports.¹⁶ President Xi Jinping has visited Moscow more than any other capital since he assumed power. Last June, he awarded Russian President Vladimir Putin China’s first-ever friendship medal,

honouring him as “my best, most intimate friend”.¹⁷ Commodities supply, opposition to what they perceive as attempts at Western hegemony, and a purported desire for a multipolar world are the commonalities driving the bilateral engagement between Russia and China. India’s imports are heavily dependent on China, and the bilateral trade in 2017 rose by 18.63 per cent year-on-year to reach USD 84.44 billion.¹⁸ South Africa is China’s biggest trading partner in the African continent and it needs Chinese investment and Chinese buyers for its raw materials, and China is its biggest export market, accounting for around USD 12 billion.¹⁹

Therefore, the economic clout, which enabled China’s rise at the international stage, is the same factor underlying China’s preponderance within the BRICS, which enables it over others to steer the direction of the BRICS as per its worldview. However, for a country like India, which has its own perception of global politics and is an important pole in the current international order, such preponderance of China has implications, which might not be in the positive. The following section looks at the implications of Chinese preponderance in the BRICS has for India.

Why China Needs the BRICS?

An observation of China’s membership of organisations reveals a sharp contrast between the initial decades post liberation, and those of the 2000s. By 2000, China had become a member of over 50 intergovernmental organisations and 1275 international nongovernmental organisations, and this was in sharp contrast with the situation in 1966 when it was a member of only one intergovernmental organisation and 58 international nongovernmental organizations.²⁰ This change in membership has been underlined with China’s changing attitude towards international organizations. China formally recognises international organizations as subjects of international law, but does not accord them a supranational status, in the way a political entity would have it. An example of this lies in the way China rejected the Hague Tribunal’s ruling on China’s aggressive claims in the South China Sea, and China questioned even the basis of existence of the tribunal.²¹ However, at the same time, China is increasingly acquiring memberships of international, regional and multilateral organizations. It has even been creating organisations to rally around causes that it deems fit for lobbying in the international arena. Therefore, on the one hand, China looks to organisations to confer international prestige, status and domestic legitimacy, while on the other it prefers to usage of bilateral mechanisms for the resolution of interstate or intrastate conflicts,²² viewing international relations from a realist perspective over a liberal one.

The interesting aspect about China's attitude towards organisations can be seen in the ones that it has created and is the most powerful member of in the grouping. An example of this is the BRICS grouping. While the origins of the grouping go back to 2001 when the economic growth rates of the member countries were the highest in the world, fact remains that the five countries have nothing to bind them together. They are in four different continents, have different political as well as market structures and are no longer the fastest growing economies in the world. Growth rates of these five countries' economies have slid from over 8 and 9 per cent to a best case of slightly above 6 per cent to a worst case of under 4 per cent.²³ In 2015, Goldman Sachs itself folded its BRICS fund into a general emerging market fund on the grounds that this fund lost almost 88 per cent of its assets since a 2010 peak.²⁴ At best, the group has become a multilateral forum for China to establish some form of new global order. For China, the Bretton Woods institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) represent the status quo, which is why it has been actively promoting multilateral forums like the BRICS.

A closer look at the 10th edition of the BRICS summit held in 2018 as well as the 11th edition held in 2019 reveals how the BRICS is an important platform for China. The BRICS countries, at the end of the three-day summit in 2018 stated that they want a fairer and more representative global order in diplomacy and trade.²⁵ They also stated that they seek reforms at the United Nations, UN Security Council (UNSC) and the IMF for better representation of developing countries and have asked that the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), including the US abide by its rules. The organisations wherein changes have been sought are all Western ones.

The 11th BRICS Summit's declaration is no different, and it uses the exact same words regarding reforms of the UN system as had been in 2018. The statement pertaining to the reform of the UN is as follows:

We recall the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and reaffirm the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more representative, effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of the developing countries so that it can adequately respond to global challenges. China and Russia reiterate the importance they attach to the status and role of Brazil, India and South Africa in international affairs and support their aspiration to play a greater role in the UN.²⁶

However, despite reiteration of the same fact year after year in the BRICS Declarations, ground realities remain different. Even though China also calls

for a reform of the UN, the irony lies in the fact that it actively blocks India's candidature at the UNSC and there are reservations in both China as well as Russia regarding an expansion of the UNSC to include more developing countries, which will make the UN more representational.²⁷ The tone in BRICS declarations has been heavily weighing in favour of the agenda China. In 2018, the BRICS summit was taking place with backdrop of the trade war between the U.S. and China, because of which there were repeated references made to the necessity for free trade. 2019 was no different and at the 11th BRICS Summit held in Brasilia, veiled references to the U.S.' withdrawal from multilateralism was evident. In a separate section titled 'economic and financial cooperation', the 11th BRICS declaration mentioned how since the last meeting, global economic growth has weakened and downside risks have increased as trade tensions and policy uncertainty have taken a toll on confidence, trade, investment and growth.²⁸ Out of the five countries in the grouping, the country that has benefited the most from an export led growth model and international trade is China. Therefore, even though the other four have been impacted by the slowing economy and the US' attempts at import substitution, China has been hit the worst. Therefore, being the most dominant member of the grouping, its concerns come up more often than those of the others.

Free trade again ironically is something that China does not really permit when it comes to imports in to China, as revealed by the IMF's annual report card on the Chinese economy, which criticises the pervasive role of the state in the economy and the restrictive trade and investment regime of the country.²⁹ Nevertheless, through the BRICS, China signalled to the world that it is building a coalition of emerging markets that seek to defend the current multilateral trade regime.

In the summits held earlier, as stated by Martyn Davies, managing director for emerging markets and Africa at Deloitte, there has never been an agenda before, and BRICS as a group talking about liberalised trade has never been witnessed.³⁰ Now trade is at the front and foremost. The full text of the declaration mentions the terms "free" and "trade" the maximum number of times over and above the others.³¹ The case is the same even in the 2019 declaration. Therefore, even though the BRICS is a symbol of multilateralism, it is clear that even within multilateral organisations, there is bound to be the preponderance of the most powerful countries- in the case of BRICS, it is China. The point to note nevertheless is that this is not the first time that the declarations have political underpinnings.³² Even in the past declarations, what has been witnessed is an inclination to counter the Western dominance in global institutions. However, over the years, China has loomed large over the content of the declarations.

For example, stated already, 2018 and 2019 have been characterised by the trade spat between the US and China, which is why the reference to free trade in the BRICS declaration. The previous year, China called for the inclusion of more like-minded countries in the BRICS grouping.³³ While expansion of the grouping helps China enlarge its group against Western institutions and in tilting the balance of power in its favour, fact remains that for members like India, expansion of the grouping is not of much pertinence. Therefore, until the previous summits, the grouping was of use for China for the formation of an anti-West coalition, which as seen in recent summits has now also become about agenda setting. The question, which emerges from this, is how China comes to be the agenda setter or have a more prominent stature within the BRICS over the other members.

Implications for India

India and China are the two lynchpins of the BRICS grouping in terms of economic growth rates and trade. However, the relationship between these two countries is fraught with tensions. To begin with, while China emphasises on free trade, Indian products in China suffer enormous tariff as well as non-tariff barriers and despite decades of calling China's attention, the balance of trade continues to weigh heavily in China's favour.³⁴ For China, ensuring its continued economic growth is essential, given the fact that its clout in the international system is based on its economic might. Therefore, continued as well as larger access for Chinese products in different markets across the globe is of utmost importance for China. For India, which is attempting to unleash its manufacturing prowess through programmes such as Make in India, similar access for Indian products is essential. However, most markets are saturated with Chinese products, and within the Chinese market, Indian products suffer trade distortions.

Additionally, while at BRICS summits, China speaks of a more just international order and reforms of institutions, fact remains that it actively blocks India's participation at forums such as the UNSC or the NSG. This actually symbolises Chinese double speak and the lack of a suitable Indian response so far to counter the double speak.

China's ability to steer the entire BRICS discourse to an agenda that it deems fit is also of concern for India. For example, the anti-West stance taken by the BRICS, spearheaded by China at last year's summit is not something that works perfectly for India. For India, a strong working relationship with the West is critical to its autonomous material development, and for furthering its regional and global aspirations. Similarly, the idea of BRICS plus floated by China at last year's summit would negatively impact India, as the BRICS

grouping would lose its focus after expansion and it would get reduced to a political platform for furthering Chinese global aspirations! While China expands its influence by inviting its allies, India would not just endanger its friendships in the West due to the increasingly anti-West stance Beijing would propagate, India's role and voice within the grouping itself also might get lost.

As has been previously witnessed, China's clout within the BRICS has led to India's concerns being swept under the rug. Despite the rhetoric on counter terrorism, India's efforts to call out China's all weather friend Pakistan for its anti-India terrorist outfits at the international stage has often met the Chinese wall.³⁵ Another example where Chinese influence within the BRICS has not worked to India's advantage is that if the New Development Bank. Even though it was India, which proposed the idea of the Bank under BRICS, China through some hefty diplomacy was able to get the Bank established in Shanghai. A hegemonic status of China within the BRICS clearly does not cater well for India and in no way can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes. The need is that the BRICS countries pin down China on long terms norm based values, ideas and concrete proposals and programmes for the mutual benefit of the constituent member states!³⁶

Wither BRICS Multilateralism

The Chinese government has often promoted multipolarity as an order more commensurate with a 'harmonious world' as opposed to unipolar dominance by the United States. China's support for a multipolar world order has been seen as reflected in its promotion of multilateral institutions. However, as argued, the overwhelming volume of the Chinese economy compared to the other BRICS member countries including India, portends a strategic concern for India. China espouses a harmony between its support for multilateral institutions and a 'fairer' world order. However, many view China's approach as one that emphasises the promotion and protection of its national interests over anything else, which entails more bargaining power for itself, improve its economic profile and contain the predominance of the United States, more particularly in the economic domain.³⁷

While China, by dint of the sheer size of its material capabilities, is taken as an inevitable member of many multilateral institutions in the world, its intention to be a responsible player in regional and global agenda setting is still viewed with scepticism. Its intransigent approach towards the contentious South China Sea dispute, its hesitancy to take efforts to correct the imbalance in its bilateral trade with India and its constant refusal to support India's candidature for a permanent seat at the UNSC raises a number of questions on China's approach

to multilateralism and multilateral institutions. There is no doubt that a member of any multilateral organization such as the BRICS would do their own cost-benefit analysis of what they give and get by becoming a part of such groups.

However, the dynamism of the differing capabilities and the power asymmetry it creates within those groups presents a foreign policy dilemma for the weaker powers. Rising economies like India and China do have a convergent interest in making sure that the global financial structure does not remain dominated by the American and Western European economies. However, for India, a global financial structure dominated by the Chinese economy will not augur well as far as maintaining India's independent decision-making is concerned. The Chinese government propagates its support for multilateral organisations like the BRICS as being in commensurate with its notion of 'peaceful rise'.

Member countries like India have found it difficult to negotiate its own influence in the international system through the BRICS forum; as in the case of China's reticence to discuss the issue of UNSC reform with permanent seat aspirants like India and Brazil.³⁸ As such, there is an apparent dilemma of managing power asymmetry in multilateral organisations, which is palpable in terms of China's position within the BRICS. The dilemma of balancing common interest and national interest within multilateral organisations like the BRICS will be an eminent feature of the varied and multiple interest sets that countries have in an interdependent world. While countries will still find purpose, in the membership of multilateral organisations, the challenge of managing power asymmetry within those organizations will mean that countries find leverage through their engagement with countries outside those groups. This is clearly reflected in the limitations of India-China cooperation within the BRICS and India's engagement with a country like the United States, whose dominance in the global financial structure, groups like the BRICS wants to challenge.

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***Turkmenistan's Positive Neutrality and its
Bilateral Relations: Special Focus on India***

Abstract

Turkmenistan is a Central Asian country which largely depends upon agriculture and is enriched with natural resources like natural gas, petroleum, salt and sulphur. The country has the sixth largest natural gas reserves. Since its independence in 1991, the country follows 'positive neutrality' policy to avoid external interference in their domestic affairs. The country always acts as a mediator to maintain peace and stability. During the period of Niyazov, he used this neutrality policy to enforce his control over the country and isolate the country from rest of the world. With the entry of Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow into the power in 2006, he tried to liberalise the economy as well as maintain the neutrality policy. So the 'positive neutrality' adopted by Turkmenistan have had different impact on its economy during different periods. Along with the isolationist policy on one hand, Turkmenistan also emphasizes on maintaining bilateral relations with other countries.

This study is an attempt to analyse Turkmenistan's 'positive neutrality' policy and its bilateral relations with the other countries with a special focus on India.

Introduction

Central Asia is a new geopolitical creation which has an important strategic role to play in coming future. It is in the middle of three super civilisations — the Islamic, the Christian and the Buddhist and is observed by many experts as one of the most vulnerable areas in terms of instability amongst them. It can become a natural, historically formed buffer zone as well as might be a hub for Islamic extremism. Being in the middle of the Eurasian Continent, it is also one of the most convenient routes of transit. The land is rich in minerals especially

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hydrocarbons. As a consumer market it still remains unexploited. All these factors lead to increasing interest in Central Asian Republics for various countries. Experts point out that in the 21st century, Central Asia will become an important region.

Turkmenistan, one of the geographically significant countries of Eurasia, is now gaining its strategic importance in the world economy. It is a landlocked country of Central Asia bordered by Kazakhstan to the northwest, Uzbekistan to the north and east, Afghanistan to the southeast, Iran to the south and southeast, and Caspian Sea to its west. The country is enriched with various natural resources like natural gas, petroleum, salt and sulphur. Recently, the world turned its focus towards Turkmenistan because of its abundant oil and gas reserves. It has one of the largest reserves of natural gas as it borders Caspian Sea, which ranks sixth in the world's largest natural gas reserves. According to the data in 2013, gas production of the country was 62.3 billion cubic meter and oil production was 11.4 million tonnes per year. Other than natural gas, the country is deeply engaged in agricultural production, especially of cotton. It is majorly produced for export purposes and the country is placed in the top ten cotton producers of the world. In 2019, cotton production of Turkmenistan was 1000 1000 480 lb. Bales, which is of a 9.89 per cent increase from the past year. Other than cotton, the country is also involved in minor production of wheat, pomegranates, olives, dates, sugarcane and so on.

Until the disintegration of USSR in 1991, Turkmenistan was part of the larger Soviet Union. The government and economy of Soviet republics were highly centralised. Moscow did not do much for the development of Central Asian countries. Turkmenistan too was amongst the neglected republics. There were only a few industries or infrastructural development undertaken in the country during the soviet period. Once the countries got independence they started to focus on different strategies to develop their economies. Amongst the five Central Asian countries, Turkmenistan has the least changed economy. The country still sticks to strategies followed during the soviet period. After independence Turkmenistan declared itself as a neutral country i.e. the country will not join any alliances or side any party during conflicts. They will always act as a mediator. It is the first and the only country recognised by the UN as having a status of permanent neutrality (The Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan, 2015). Even though Turkmenistan is not a member of World Trade Organization (WTO), they are still a part of Economic Cooperation Organization which provides a platform to promote trade among member nations.

Since 1991, the government of Turkmenistan isolates the country by using its neutrality status. Turkmenistan opted neutrality policy to avoid excessive

interference of major powers as well as any kind of involvement in the armed conflict between states (Saima Ashraf Kayani, Raja Qaiser Ahmed, 2018). Usually, a country having a closed economy did not benefit much like an open economy. The country which follows an open economy policy has lot of advantages such as economic growth, lower cost, availability of goods and services, research and innovation. But the case of Turkmenistan is quite different. Even though, the country follows isolationist policy and has a closed economy, it still is one amongst the fastest developing countries and ranks second in the region. Turkmenistan's neutrality does not mean that the country will never have any relation with other countries. The country always engages in making peaceful foreign relations but does not allow any external powers to control their internal affairs. Turkmenistan has commercial relationship with various countries mainly Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, US, Turkey and India. Its foreign relations are mainly based on its energy sector. One of the most important initiatives to strengthen the regional relationship is the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI) to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to all these countries.

Following is a table showing the GDP growth rate of all the Central Asian Republics from 2010 to 2018.

GDP Growth (Annual %)

<i>Country</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
Kazakhstan	7.3	7.4	4.8	6	4.2	2.034	1.1	2.668	4.1
Turkmenistan	9.2	14.7	11.1	10.2	10.3	6.5	6.2	6.5	6.2
Tajikistan	6.521	7.401	7.486	7.4	6.706	6.008	6.873	7.617	7.3
Uzbekistan	8.479	8.281	8.18	8.026	7.179	7.448	6.094	4.46	5.133
Kyrgyzstan	-0.479	5.956	-0.2	10.9	4	3.9	4.3	4.7	3.5

GDP Growth (Annual%), 2018.

The data has been taken from the World Bank which depicts the GDP growth rate of all the five Central Asian countries from the year 2010 to 2018. From this table we can easily compare the growth rate of Turkmenistan with the other countries in the region. As per the data of 2018, GDP of Turkmenistan is \$40.761 billion, which comes after Kazakhstan (\$170.539 bn) and Uzbekistan (\$50.5 bn). Whereas, Kyrgyzstan is \$8.093 billion and Tajikistan is \$7.523 billion. The data in the table shows that Turkmenistan is one of the fastest growing economies in the region. The GDP growth rate of the country increased in the year 2011 and there was a slight decrease in the rate. From 2015 to 2018, Turkmenistan maintained a constant growth rate.

This paper mainly focuses on the 'positive neutrality' policy of Turkmenistan and the country's bilateral relation with India, particularly the TAPI project.

India as an extended neighbour of Central Asian Republics has major geo-strategic and economic interests in this region. The future prospects for cooperation between Central Asia and India in the field of energy security seem to be extremely important. Cooperation in energy sector, especially the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project, forms a key pillar of economic engagement between Turkmenistan and India.

For any country, a particular policy not only depends on a single factor but also it greatly relies on numerous determinants such as geography, natural resources, population, history and national interest. While analysing a policy of the country we should also look into other factors; and the most important is the history of that particular country and also the personality of its leaders. Historical experience does influence the policy decision making process. This paper is developed on the hypothesis that Turkmenistan's 'positive neutrality' policy plays as a catalyst in the development of the state. The first part of the paper analyses the Turkmenistan's policy during the period of 'Turkmenbashy' Niyazov and the current President Berdimuhamedow. The second part looks into the bilateral relation of Turkmenistan and India with a special focus on TAPI.

Positive Neutrality of Turkmenistan

Timeline of Turkmenistan can be mainly divided into three periods to get a better understanding of the policies followed by the country: period of Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, Niyazov era and Berdimuhamedow era. The current policies of Turkmenistan have evolved through all these three stages. Hence, it is essential to be aware of all these stages to analyse the impact of the positive neutrality policy on Turkmenistan's economy.

Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (Turkmen SSR) was formed in 1925, which was earlier known as Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Turkestan ASSR). It existed as soviet republic from 1925 to 1991 till the disintegration of Soviet Union. During the period of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), communist ideology of Moscow was against the religious beliefs and practices of Turkmenistan. They attacked and banned all kind of religious activities followed by the nation and they brought atheism to sequester Turkmen from other Muslim communities. This also acts as a barrier in the development of Islam in the region. All these policies were part of Russianization, through which the Russians prompted other communities to follow Russian culture and their language. Moscow wanted all other republics under their control. Through Russification, Moscow ensured its complete control over others. Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) spread Marxist-Leninist

ideology in Turkmenistan, which was then governed by the Communist Party of Turkmenistan. This in turn firms Moscow's dominance over the nation.

This period can be notably marked as Brezhnev period, who was the General Secretary of CPSU from 1964 till 1982. He gave prior importance in bringing stability in the Soviet Republics. Placing this as an ultimate aim he reshuffled the leaders of the Republics and replaced them with his better known people. One such replacement was the appointment of Muhammetnazer Gapurov as the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Turkmen SSR in 1969 by changing Balyš Ovezov who acted as the First Secretary till 1964. The period of Turkmen SSR can be characterised as conflicts between the inner elite groups. The settlement of problems between these elite groups was the main reason for the replacement of Ovezov (Horák, 2017). Gapurov was a strong proponent of Russianization and strengthened the Russian culture in Turkmenistan.

Starting of 1990s was a period in which Turkmenistan faced a transition from Soviet planned economy to an independent economy. This transition was completed with the demise of USSR and by gaining independence in 1992. This was a clear transition to totalitarianism in which the First Secretary of the Turkmen Communist Party Saparmurat Niyazov from 1985-1991 took over the control of the country since the independence and continued in the position for next 15 years until his death in 2006. Even though as a successor of Gapurov, Niyazov was a strong follower of his policies, Niyazov brought out changes in the internal matters of the country as well as the Turkmen diplomacy. The significant changes implemented by Niyazov government are the 'Positive Neutrality' and the 'open door' policy. Since the independence in 1992, Turkmenistan under the Niyazov government encouraged building foreign relations, but the external influences were limited with the positive neutrality policy. They always prioritise in building healthy and equal relationship with major powers such as United States, China, Russia and European Union. Turkmenistan is also interested in building relations with the regional powers – mainly India, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey (Saparmurat Turkmenbashi The Great (1940-2006)). The country opted to be neutral during the time of conflicts to establish peace and stability in the region. By citing the neutrality policy, Turkmenistan decided not to be part of any multilateral organisations. Marked features of the positive neutrality given by the President Niyazov are respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states, non-interference in their internal affairs, using no force in interstate relations, superiority of the UN in international affairs, strengthening of neighborliness and cooperation with all states (Saparmurat Turkmenbashi The Great (1940-2006)). This policy was finally recognised by the United Nations in 1995.

The principle of Turkmenistan's neutrality policy is to maintain a neutral position during the time of conflicts as well as in the times of peace. As per Article 5 of Constitutional Law of Turkmenistan on Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan, the country will never begin or enter into a war, other than in case of self-defense. This helps the country to prevent any kind of threats that affect the stability and the peaceful existence of the country. Article 3 of the Permanent Neutrality noted that the country always continues to follow the peaceful foreign policy and also respect the sovereignty of other countries. Since independence, Turkmenistan follows non-intervention in the domestic matters of other states and insisted other countries not to intervene in the Turkmen internal affairs.

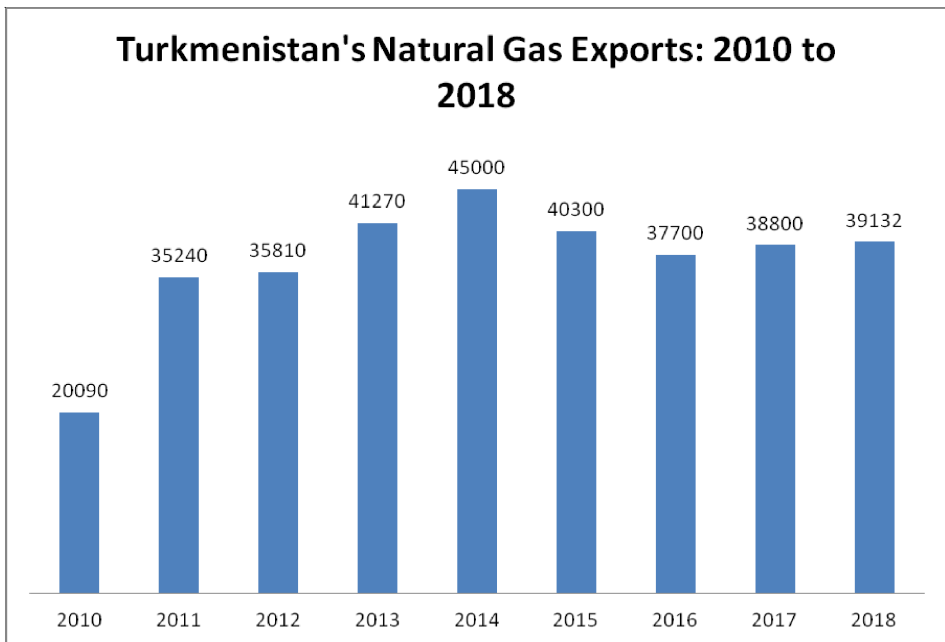
Though Turkmenistan follows isolationist policy, the country is always interested in making peaceful foreign relations. For more than two decades, neutrality policy holds an eminent position in the Constitution of Turkmenistan. Despite such a policy which isolates the country from external influences, Turkmenistan continually tried to build bilateral relations with all major powers. According to Article 1 of the Constitutional law of Turkmenistan on Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan:

Within the scope of realizing the integral rights of the sovereign state, Turkmenistan declares voluntarily about its permanent neutrality and will support it and put into practice consistently. The permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the basis of its foreign and domestic policy aimed at strengthening the stability and consent in society, developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with the states of the region and the whole world.

Holding 'positive neutrality, on one hand Turkmenistan also carries 'open door policy' on the other hand. This shows the country's interest in building relationship with others without bothering its internal affairs. Through the 'open door policy', Turkmenistan encourages foreign trade and investments. This helped the country in making commercial relationship with many countries, mainly Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, US, Turkey and India. The foreign relations are mainly based on its energy sector. One such example is the TAPI pipeline project to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

Although the 'positive neutrality' of Turkmenistan was successful in maintaining peace and stability in the region, it has been criticised that President Niyazov used the policy to isolate the country from any kind of external influences and to strengthen his image as "Turkmenbashi".

After the death of Niyazov, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow was appointed as the second President of Turkmenistan in 2006 and still continues as the head of the state. He referred himself as ‘Arkadag’ which means ‘protector’ and took ultimate control over different facets of Turkmenistan. During the Berdimuhamedow period, Turkmenistan witnessed a sudden shift to a more liberal economy than during the Niyazov period. He implemented several reforms and changed various policies of Niyazov. But the isolationist policy implemented by the Niyazov still has its impact on the current Turkmenistan. It is during the Berdimuhamedow period, country started focusing on building further commercial relationships with rest of the world, especially in diversifying the country’s energy exports. At first, Russia had a monopoly over the Turkmenistan’s gas exports. It was later broke down with the pipeline explosion in 2009 and Turkmenistan started looking for other trading partners which attracted several countries from the East and West. He suppressed most of the ideologies held by Turkmenbashi and enhanced a reforming process in the political system as well as all other fields of the country. Turkmenistan’s foreign policy underwent major changes during his period in which he concentrated in enforcing the country’s relations with its entire neighbours and also with the major partners. Holding its relation with Russia, Turkmenistan also diverted its interest towards China, US and to the European countries. He referred this period as the era of “Great Renaissance” (Slavomir Horak, Jan Sir, 2009).



Turkmenistan Natural Gas: Exports, 2019

The chart shows Turkmenistan's natural gas export from the year 2010 to 2018. From 2010 onwards we can see continuous increase in the gas exports. In 2018, the export was 39,132,000 Cub m mn, which is more than the export reported in 2017 i.e. 38,800,000 Cub m mn.

Turkmenistan's largest natural gas reserves and its strategic position connecting west and east attract all the major powers into the newly developed landlocked country. Interest of major powers in Central Asia is evident since nineteenth century which is termed as 'Great Game' between Russia and Britain, the great powers of the time. Both the Russian empire and British India tried to expand its territory due to fear of each-other's presence in this region. The Great Game came to an end in 1895 with the signing of Pamir Boundary Commission Protocols (Gelb, 1983). Russia always had its interest over this region as it was once an integral part of the country. Later with the independence of Central Asian states, Russia became a significant energy trading partner. But this position of Russia was overridden by China and Iran. Turkmenistan along with all other Central Asian Republics was trying to diversify its market and break the monopoly enjoyed by Russia over their exports. Presently, China plays a significant role in the region both politically and economically. Turkmenistan's foreign policy also gives priority in making relations with the regional powers.

Turkmenistan – India Bilateral Relations

India is today one of the most dynamic and fastest growing economies of the world. It constitutes not only a vast and an ever growing market, but also a competitive source of technology and knowledge based services. Countries across the globe are beginning to witness India as an indispensable economic partner and also seek to build mutually rewarding economic and commercial links with its emerging economy. Today, India has good relations with the Central and South Asian nations. There are various common grounds for building Inter-regional Cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia, like economic power, diplomacy, energy projects, transport communications and improved modern technology capabilities constitute India's main strengths for promoting Inter-Regional Cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia.

India as an extended neighbour of CARs has major geo-strategic and economic interests in this region. India-Central Asia relation is not a newly developed relation. It can be traced back to the Soviet period. Since that time, India has continued to maintain relations with Central Asian region through Moscow. Hence, even as independent states, Central Asian Republics were not new to India. India and Central Asia are connected both historically and culturally. There was significant cultural exchange between both the regions.

Buddhism went to Central Asia from India and Sufi Islam came to South India from Central Asia. Likewise, the strong relation between both the regions had a great impact on their poetry works and literature. Some of the major examples are works of Firdousi, Amir Khusro Dehlevi and Biruni. (Ahmar, 1992)

The future prospects for cooperation between Central Asia and India in the field of energy security seem to be very important. Peace and stability in CARs and Afghanistan seem to be the most crucial factor for India's security (Nasir Raza Khan, 2013). There is an existing realisation by world powers of the danger posed by religious extremism and terrorism. In fact, the problem of terrorism is not only being addressed at the bilateral level but also at various regional forums like Shanghai Five and Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA). Shanghai Five is a forum, which unites Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

There is enough satisfaction at the continued development of bilateral relations between India and Turkmenistan based on deep-rooted civilisational, historical and cultural linkages and a shared interest in international as well as regional peace and stability. The rapid spread of international terrorism in recent years poses one of the most serious global threats today. The leaders have resolved to deepen ongoing cooperation in countering various security threats. They have also agreed to step up efforts against cross-border threats such as terrorism, organised crime and illegal drug-trafficking. Despite a steady increase in bilateral trade over the last few years, the trade volumes between the two countries could potentially be increased manifold to the mutual benefit of both countries (David Lewis, 2008). Towards this end, the leaders of the respective Governments have agreed to actively work towards rapid enhancement in the levels of bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation. Resolution to increase cooperation in various sectors and fields of identified energy, petrochemicals, transport, communications, information and technology, textile industry, chemical and pharmaceutical industry, construction and agro-processing as potential areas for cooperation between the two countries. Creation of favourable conditions and promoting participation of private companies from both countries, inclusive of joint ventures in various infrastructural and investment projects in the two countries (Nasir Raza Khan, 2013). Cooperation in energy sector, especially the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project, forms a key pillar of economic engagement between the two countries. The implementation of the TAPI project would have a transformational impact on trade between the two countries and measures need to get in place for early implementation of this important regional project. Enhanced bilateral cooperation in the field of chemicals and petrochemicals.

Reaffirmation of the countries and their intention to work together in exploring alternative transport corridors for additional connectivity options between the two countries. The significance of Turkmenistan as a gateway to other Central Asian countries and the Caspian region as well as agreement to support each other's initiatives in enhancing transport corridors and infrastructure to facilitate movement of goods. President of Turkmenistan has appreciated Government of India's efforts in promoting International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) for transportation of goods between India and Central Asia, including Turkmenistan and beyond and conveyed that Turkmenistan would consider becoming party to the above-mentioned Corridor. Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi noted that the recently inaugurated Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway line could be a linked corridor of the INSTC to streamline movement of goods and commodities between India and Turkmenistan. The air connectivity between the two countries could to a certain extent overcome this natural barrier of lack of direct surface connectivity that exists between the two countries. Despite a steady increase in bilateral trade over the last few years, the trade volumes between the two countries could potentially be increased manifold to the mutual benefit of both countries (David Lewis, 2008). Cultural exchanges have made an important and positive contribution to the development of comprehensive cooperation between the two countries and to deepening the bonds of friendship and mutual understanding between their peoples.

Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India Pipeline

The TAPI pipeline is a hallmark of Turkmenistan – India relations. The 1,680 km pipeline route will start from the South Yolotan-Osman field in Turkmenistan and will pass through Herat, Helmand and Kandahar in Afghanistan to Quetta and Multan in Pakistan, finally ending at Fazilka in India. The agreement signed among the four countries envisages the delivery of 90 million cubic metres per day (mmcmd) of gas from Turkmenistan to South Asia with 38 mmcmd (around 42 per cent) each going to Pakistan and India and 14 mmcmd (around 15.5 per cent) (Giampaolor Capisani, 2000), going to Afghanistan. Turkmenistan has sufficient reserves to supply the TAPI line. According to the BP Statistical Review 2011, Turkmenistan has 7.94 trillion cubic meters of reserves of natural gas ranking fourth in the world, after Qatar. The new South Yolotan-Osman field contains between 4 and 14 trillion cubic meters of gas based on an initial audit conducted by the oil advisory firm, Gaffney Cline & Associates. This field could produce about 70 billion cubic meters of gas a year which is approximately equal to Turkmenistan's current total annual production of gas from existing sources. The Asian Development Bank estimated the cost of the pipeline at

\$7.6 billion. *The Express Tribune*, Pakistan, recently reported that a formal offer was made by the ADB to work as the coordinator and financier of the project. The construction and maintenance of the project would be given to a consortium of private companies which will ensure the flow and supply of gas through Turkmenistan. ADB envisions this project to be completed by 2017.

TAPI pipeline is beneficial to both Turkmenistan and India. From the point of Turkmenistan, the successful completion and implementation of this project will have economic benefits for the countries involved. Turkmenistan has abundant gas but is land-locked with two energy giants—Iran and Russia as its neighbours (Devendra Kaushik, 2015). Its relations with Russia have cooled and the pipeline along with its other regional initiatives will help Turkmenistan diversify its markets. The pipeline provides Turkmenistan an opportunity to tap into India's large market base and would further deepen its ties with India. The support of the Asian Developmental Bank is beneficial as it represents a nod of approval from its member countries. ADB's involvement will help raise the finances required for the project and will help mitigate the political risks from an investment perspective.

For India, this pipeline will definitely be a cheaper and economically more efficient option to the import of LNG through the sea routes. The increase in natural gas supplies will help meet between 12.5-16 per cent of future demand. Also, if this project turns out to be successful, a parallel pipeline along the same route can be planned to increase the supply. The project has a special advantage as it provides a point of entry into Central Asia making it possible to have future energy deals or similar pipelines from the energy rich region. The pipeline could lead to a trade corridor between the four countries even extending up to Kazakhstan. Once a secure route and smooth functioning of the route is achieved, the same or alternate routes can be looked into building a trade corridor (Devendra Kaushik, 2015). The pipeline can play a bigger role in Afghanistan especially after the withdrawal of the NATO troupes. India can work with Afghanistan to help increase the security of the country and stabilise it. The pipeline provides a good opportunity to increase India's economic involvement with Pakistan. Perhaps TAPI can bring new energy in the relationship through a bilateral flow, where finished petroleum products can be exported to Pakistan from India and gas from TAPI can come to India from Pakistan.

India's land locked refinery in Bhatinda, Punjab can find a convenient market in land locked Lahore for its excess production. India can look at increasing trade ties and reviving negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement involving Pakistan, Afghanistan and perhaps expanding it to Turkmenistan. India can also

use it as a basis to be more involved in the development and capacity building of Afghanistan and Pakistan by extending credit lines and support in return for guaranteeing the safety of the pipeline. Despite the many benefits of this pipeline, there are some major obstacles, the solutions to which, though not impossible, are very difficult and require negotiations, sustained efforts, a strong will on the part of the individual governments facing the problems and a lot of time.

How TAPI Benefits Member States

This gas project can be of various privileges for the participating nations. The first and the most important benefit is of various positive economic advantages. In the first place, the project is tremendous and will create job opportunities and push down the unemployment rates in all the four countries. The project, some economists suggest, can push up the participating countries' gross national product (GNP). Amongst the three others, the economists add, Turkmenistan, in this case, can benefit the most.

Mohiuddin Nouri, the deputy governor of Herat, has pointed to the advantages Afghanistan can take from this energy project, adding that once the project is operational, the country can on one hand produce Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and on the other hand produce power. In the two cases, he continued, the industrial parks and gas and power consumers can enjoy cheaper energy. The same case is also true when it comes to Pakistan and India. Moreover, the TAPI-transferred gas will be cheaper than before. Additionally, the experts maintain that the Afghan government will make \$500 million per year from the transit duty.

Besides job creation, by facilitating a regional economic cooperation corridor the pipeline project will yield other achievements including regional partnership expansion, peace, trade and energy links between Central and South Asia. For example, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan can check further tensions between the three countries whose relations have historically been subject to persistent friction.

India's aspirations of establishing gas pipelines have remained pipe dreams, while China has made considerable strides in this area. China signed a deal with Kazakhstan in 1997 for an oil pipeline which was completed in July 2009. In December 2009, it tapped into Turkmenistan for a new natural gas pipeline travelling 1,833 km through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to reach western China where it will connect with the Chinese line east to Shanghai. Then in 2011, China commissioned an oil pipeline which will come through Russia. In addition to providing an energy source, these deals have helped China further enhance

their bilateral relations with the different countries. For example, along with the gas deals, China has deepened its economic engagement with Myanmar by offering lines of credit for trade. Similarly, TAPI is an extremely important, not only to meet some of India's energy needs and requirements but also to establish India's geostrategic presence (Devendra Kaushik, 2015). It could be a means of extending India's presence and improving relations with the Central Asian countries. Other than the energy resources, there are many other potential areas where India could invest such as transport, pharmaceutical industry, textile industry and India's agro industries have wide opportunities in Central Asia. Most importantly India and Turkmenistan can cooperate in defense sector to prevent the spread of terrorism and both the countries had a discussion on the matter during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Nerandra Modi in Turkmenistan in 2015. They also discussed all the possible sectors where both the countries can strengthen their relation. Even though India does not have a geographical advantage in Central Asia, India always tried to maintain healthy relations within the region since the period of USSR.

Conclusion

Central Asia is an important region in the world arena because of geopolitical location and rich energy resources. At the same time, the region is confronting a number of security challenges. Regional cooperation in Central Asia and Eurasia can become an important factor in the maintenance of peace and security in the region, which are necessary for stable economic growth and development. Prospects of economic and political cooperation, speed and scale of these processes will depend on the readiness of national economies to carry out the proper reforms and introduce the forms and methods of institutional, political and economic regulation adopted in the world practice. Different international experience in economic and political transformation is relevant for Turkmenistan. Central Asia republics such as Turkmenistan consider development of alternative regional transport communications as important for the national regional strategy and as results it developed new transport communication to the East and South and link it with the transport systems of neighboring countries. A well-developed regional transport system in Central Asia is potential for regional prosperity and good opportunity develops regional and international transport network and substantial trade relations and will facilitate foreign investment from foreign countries. Pursuing their mutual objectives of economic growth and stable neighbourhood, India and Turkmenistan, by deepening their partnership and understanding, can help bring stability in Afghanistan and emerge as two nodes connecting the peoples and businesses of Central Asia and South Asia to bridge the divide created by colonial-era policies.

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Book Reviews

Navroz K. Dubash, *India in a Warming World – Integrating Climate Change and Development* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019), ISBN: 978-0-19-949873-4, Price: Rs. 1,995.00, Pages: 576.

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It is undeniable as well as indisputable that climate change is a global concern. The debate now is about the climate actions taken by different countries all around the world. Managing climate threats necessarily requires global cooperation. In this book Navroz Dubash has brought to its readers various perspectives of different experts from the field of climate science and policy and created a comprehensive volume in order to understand Indian perspective on Climate Change. It is one such comprehensive and authentic compilation and also the first on this subject after the crucial Paris Agreement in 2015, comprising of different articles by various experts. Moreover, this edited volume is beyond scientific facts of climate change and comprises important angles of social, political and financial issues associated with global development in this domain. This book comprises of 29 articles in five sections *viz.* (i) Climate change impacts, (ii) International debates and negotiations (iii) Politics (iv) Policy and (v) Climate and development; focusing on climate change and India.

The editor in the introduction to India's evolving climate policy gives a clear understanding on journey of three decades since Rio Summit. It provides timeline on India's diplomatic stand to concerted policy decisions. Climate change is a complex subject and India is equally complex country as compared to any other peer nation. Pragmatically, India faces enormous challenges like mass poverty, access to health care, supply of water and energy to every citizen. At the same time aspirational requirements do not afford to neglect environmental concerns because development focusing actions are closely intervened with climate objectives. In this context India's choice of sustainable development is natural. Globally, India's contribution to the cumulative built-up of Greenhouse

Gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere is specifically little, but now it is the third largest GHG emitter after USA and China. India's per capita annual emission is 2.5 t CO₂, which is well below world average of 6.7 t CO₂. However, growth rate of India's GHG emission has been increasing in last few years.

In the impacts of climate change under India section, Srinivasan articulates about Indian Meteorological Department's weather data of 1000+ stations of past 120 years. These data derive that all India annual mean surface temperature has increased by 0.6°C during 1900-2010, most of which is observed in last 30 years. The change in mean temperature is primarily on account of a long term trend of increasing daily maximum temperature. It records increase in extreme rainfall events, which leads to urban flooding. In-line with global trends, there are clear evidences of increasing climate change impacts on India in the twentieth century and further acceleration in twenty-first century. The impact of climate change would be more on India because of higher population density, larger special and temporal variability of rain fall, high dependence on agriculture and vulnerable poverty ridden population. Achuta Rao et al. says anthropological causes have attributed change in temperature, humidity and ocean heat content thus, human actions are inevitable to control the climate change. Nagraj Adve in "Impacts of Global Warming in India" illustrates that climate change impacts are visible on the vulnerable strata of society. It highlights that understanding of equity and climate justice needs to take account of the vulnerable within the society, rather focusing on international framework which is divided between Global North and South.

The second section of the book deals on International Debates and Negotiations. Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain's paper "Global Warming in an Unequal World: A case of Environmental Colonialism" is one of the highly quoted paper on this subject which framed India's stand on International negotiations in 1990's and 2000's. To address the equity issue in long-term mitigation, principle of "Common but Differentiated Responsibility and Respective Capabilities" is introduced. However, its operationalisation is not happening even after efforts since 1990s. Tejal Kanitkar et al. doubts that the end result of on-going negotiation process is not moving into positive direction, rather it is contributing to a situation which would lead to "Global Climate Emergency". Sandeep Sengupta's article on "India's Engagement in Global Climate Negotiations from Rio to Paris" has given details about India's stand from 1992 to 2015.

India is an active player since the beginning of climate negotiation but was playing a defensive role initially which has now changed to a strong commitment

to environmental sustainability even when India's developmental aspiration is high as against loose commitments by other big countries like USA and China. Chandrashekhar Dasgupta has attempted to explain the genesis and working of the UNFCCC in "Present at the Creation: the making of the framework convention on climate change". Whereas Shyam Saran has explained the Copenhagen Summit of 2010 as turning point of Global Climate Negotiations. Ashok Lavasa in "Reaching Agreement in Paris" gives insider's view of the negotiations of COP 21 of 2015. D. Raghunanadan has summarised Indian stand during 1992 upto present "India in International Climate Negotiations". Articles on Paris Agreement by Lavanya Rajmani and Ajay Mathur clearly indicates India's changing role and leadership in global climate governance.

The third section on Politics starts with "Climate Change, Civil Society and Social Movement in India" by Pradip Swarnakar, which focuses on increasing role of non-state actors in directing climate debates. Shanakar Venkateswaran et al. explains the role of business and private sectors. Indian companies are increasing their responsibility towards environmental concerns and at the same time identifying economic opportunities in it. Ashim Roy et al. in "Energy and Climate Change – a just transition for Indian Labor" have explained about revised renewable energy targets by India and its implication on employment opportunities. Anu Jogesh in "Looking Out, Looking In – the shifting discourse on Climate Change in the Indian Print Media" provides details of coverage of climate issues in print media in order to track the sector and approaches.

In the fourth section, "National Climate Policies and Institutions" by the editor briefs on instruments like National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC); sectoral approaches in energy supply, energy efficiency, infrastructure, water, agriculture, renewable energy etc. and provides information on Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, Inter-Ministerial Coordination, actions at sub-national level. In another deliberation on State Climate Change planning by editor provides views on State level actions in India with specific case studies of States like Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim. The State Action Plans provides institutional platform to mainstream development planning aligning the climate targets, presently which is viewed as beginning of the complex process. In another paper on State Climate Change planning, Elizabeth Gogoi highlights issues like importance of local factors, political ownership, convergence, institutional capacity as bottleneck for desired results of such initiatives. Koyel Kumar has attempted to explain Climate Finance in Indian context. Merits and demerits of India's initiative like National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change; International Green Climate Fund;

bilateral funding like German Cooperation, UK Aid, UNDP's multilateral funding are interesting. Paper on "Managing the Climate Technology Transition" by Ambuj Sagar provides details of a key clause of Technology Transfer and its present status. Use of technology is the key to Sustainable Development, however, it is impenetrable to manage technology transition under climate accords.

The fifth section on Climate and Development starts with "Aligning Energy, Development, and Mitigation" by Ashok Sreenivas, it discusses India's GHG emission contribution by energy sector, evolving energy policy, increasing focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency measures, performance of energy distribution companies etc. Presently universal energy access is being promoted in India and at the same time focus on renewable energy is increasing, which has motivating consequences on GHG emission and per capita emission growth. Radhika Khosla et al. in their paper "Urban India and Climate Change" have dealt with climate related consequences of Urban Development in Indian context as cities are considered to be the major source of GHG emissions. K.S. Kavi et al. enlightens on mainstreaming climate adaptation in agriculture, where awareness of stakeholder is imperative. In order to achieve objectives of action plans, it is required to provide scientific understanding of climate change to farmers. In India, majority of vulnerability and poverty are associated with agriculture, hence, it is important to normalise climate adaptation in this sector. Rohan Arthur explains the defies associated with 6400 km long coastlines and hundreds of islands in India. Population congregate thickly within 100 km of the coasts. The impacts of climate change on coastal areas can be reduced through strategies like ecological solutions, disaster management.

This is a useful compendium for everybody dealing in policy, finance, governance related to climate change in Indian scenario. The book is effective in establishing that climate change is no longer an environmental issue or the mechanism of greenhouse gas emissions. But, it is an existential challenge for humanity and its acceleration is due to aspiration for development. However, India's commitments and climate actions in progressive direction is getting global recognition.

Alyssa Ayers, *Our Time Has Come: How India is Making its Place in the World* (New York: OUP, 2018), pp. 241, Price: Rs. 695.00.

Reviewed by:

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The book under review is written by Alyssa Ayers who has been privy to the rise of India since liberalisation and opening up of the Indian economy. It is a well written work consisting of eight chapters spread through three phases of ‘looking back’, ‘transition’ and ‘looking ahead.’ It encompasses interesting facets of how India has come out of morass of abject poverty and crisis of balance of payments to usher into an era of confidence, economic growth, stability, investment destination and prospects of being called upon to sit on the global ‘high table’.

The author has sought to provide her understanding and analysis of the ‘rise of India’ on the global map. She describes in an optimistic way the entire Indian foreign policy on the basis of India’s domestic capabilities. Besides, she reminds the readers about huge developmental challenges that India faces. As she observes: Many Americans do not yet realise the economic strength and strategic significance India has already acquired, though it still faces daunting developmental needs.... However, “India is steadily increasing its global involvement, with the ambition to be one among the major global powers.”

Ayers seeks to put forward the Indian view that by the strength of a majority that Prime Minister Modi has attracted the world leaders as they do see in him a person who can deliver on his promises. She opines that India now has “the first Indian leader in thirty years to win a single-party majority in national elections” and as a result the world is “looking at us with deference or as an equal”—resulted from the strength of his mandate.”

As a corollary to this observation, Ayers underscores limitations of the optimism especially due to the “domestic challenges India faces will not be overcome overnight, and it has many, spanning the entire range from infrastructure and economic reform to education, skills training and job creation, to managing the country’s great diversity, all the way to a stronger defense and national security capacity.”

With brevity, Ayers has put forward the crux of the Indian challenge: how to achieve high economic growth being saddled with thirty crores of poor people, education quality suffered badly because of reservation and population explosion, etc. On security front also the challenges are huge as no amicable solution is achieved yet on Indo-Pak conflict because Pakistan State Sponsored Terror continues to bleed India since the beginning of the Kashmir insurgency (1989). It has become worse as China supports Pakistan in spite of knowing that Pakistan has become a place that encourages terrorist groups by providing funds, weapons, training, etc. In this context the probability of a two-front war against India cannot be ruled out.

The author has enquired deep into Indian political history, analysed Nehru’s policies. She says: “despite the ups and downs of recent years, India has done comparatively well for itself and for its citizens, and that has helped boost its relative prospects at a time of great turmoil in the world.... His expansive vision, and the duration of his tenure, forged the country’s early institutions.... The practices he set in place for Indian diplomacy and its approach to the world had an outsized influence on the country’s foreign policy in the decades to follow.” Ayers also puts it well in terms of India’s immediate neighborhood when she says “Nehru’s specific imprimatur can clearly be seen in Indian foreign policy, and in how Indian citizens see their place in the world and the choices before them.”

Further Ayers says, “India can be quite forceful when it comes to the domestic politics of its smaller neighbors. India may steer clear of comment on Iraq and the rise of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, but it will press firmly on Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Maldives, where it sees its security interests affected. Here, the non interventionism of nonalignment gives way to a clear Chanakyan realism within India’s own neighborhood. And again, all parties have displayed this preference equally.” She has relied upon realism while evaluating India’s actions in the neighbourhood, for instance, India’s involvement in Sri Lanka under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by sending troops to Sri Lanka to ensure that the Chinese do not reach there.

The author also traces the genesis of Indian backwardness to the past and alludes to the Congress politician Shashi Tharoor's speech at the Oxford Union in 2015, in which he called for British reparations to India. As she observes: "At the beginning of the 18th century, India's share of the world economy was 23 percent, as large as all of Europe put together. By the time the British departed India, it had dropped to less than 4 percent.... By the end of the 19th century, India was Britain's biggest cash-cow, the world's biggest purchaser of British exports." This seems to be the context to possible role of the Indian economy in the world in as a throwback to "the loss of an earlier greatness that the West plundered." Ayers opines that since the Nehru's time "Permanent membership in the UN Security Council remains a primary focus for India's expectation that institutions of global governance should reform to reflect the world more equally".

According to new archival research drawing upon the correspondence between Nehru and his sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit—who led India's delegation to the United Nations and served as ambassador to the United States in the late 1940s and early 1950s—the United States proposed that India to take the permanent seat in the Security Council. (This was during the debate within the United Nations for recognition of the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government to replace the Republic of China Nationalists in Taiwan). Nehru took the view that "we are not going to countenance it.... India, because of many factors, is certainly entitled to a permanent seat in the security council. But we are not going in at the cost of China." Ayers observes that the "Indian governments have repeatedly pressed for a larger UN role befitting India's size, its democracy, and what they see as its special moral role in the world. The case India makes for why it should occupy a permanent seat in a reformed Security Council rests on both the recognition of significant change in world politics over the past sixty years, coupled with India's sense of its own important contributions to the functions of the United Nations."

Similarly, the author points out another struggle India has waged in the face of stiff resistance from the nuclear-haves. She observes that "The decision to stay out of the NPT also left India outside nonproliferation regimes designed to reward treaty signers with technology, and punish non-signatories by its denial. For three decades, India decided to furrow a lonely path, despite the costs to its defense programs and its advanced technology development". The Clinton administration's every effort to convince India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by banning further nuclear testing came to naught. In 1996, India effectively torpedoed the agreement by refusing to sign; the country's then ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, the late distinguished diplomat

Arundhati Ghose, became famous for this defiance. After India's 1998 nuclear tests, extensive negotiations, conducted over "fourteen times at ten locations in seven countries" by then deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott and then Minister of External Affairs Jaswant Singh, led USA to understand India's compulsions and positions. This engagement subsequently culminated in the George W. Bush administration's offer of a civil nuclear cooperation in 2005. India still has not signed the NPT, and it will not, but the world can now work with India on civilian nuclear energy.

On the issue of substantive performance of the Indian Economy, Ayers has taken a view that "Using another measure—purchasing power parity (PPP), which accounts for price differences across countries—India became the world's third-largest economy in 2011, surpassing Japan. As annual economic growth soared from 4 to more than 8 percent in the mid-2000s, crossing 10 percent by 2010, more than one hundred sixty million people moved out of abject poverty in the period from 2004-5 to 2011-2...." According to World Bank figures economic progress has moved India from a minor player on the international stage to a major one. The country's increased visibility has made Indian culture more familiar to Americans; Yoga is ubiquitous, and even Bollywood movies are getting popular. India's role as an emerging power and increasingly consequential actor on the world stage has happened in a less obvious and less discussed fashion. Ayers aptly describes this in the following words: "...In a world of low growth in the developed markets, India's large population and comparatively high economic growth rates have made it a crucial place to be for global companies, likely for decades to come."

It seems the growing profile and strength of the Indian economy and political stature has become an enabler to achieve strong position of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. Ayers has viewed this Indian posture positively that established Indian leadership in climate change though the United States has faltered and left behind.

Another strand of the Indian foreign policy Ayers has chosen to construe as Indian strength; quoting Fareed Zakaria, she has observed that "the world has new powerhouse economies now—China, and now India—which have grown large in the aggregate even while remaining comparatively poor. China's economic heft has given it the throw-weight to push what it wants either through inducements or assertiveness in a growing number of places around the world. India, by contrast, still lacks the deep pockets that have made Beijing a consequential sovereign investor, and it cannot necessarily determine global outcomes on its own".

The author has rightly felt that though India does remain ambivalent about pushing its own views, often preferring to remain quiet or offer carefully crafted positions, it aims not to offend anyone. Thus, 'caution' remains hallmark of the Indian foreign policy posture. That said, while India still remains far behind China in several respects, the days of India being seen as a overcrowded land of poverty are over. India's transition includes a self-belief that India's ascent to power on the global high table is well deserved considering its economic prowess, young population (work force), geostrategic location, strong democratic ideals and political stability. In fact, India has arrived in the world stage. In a 2015 speech delivered in Kuala Lumpur, Prime Minister Modi conveyed the arrival of India: "Now, it is India's turn. And we know that our time has come." This in fact did echo views expressed by his predecessor Manmohan Singh eight years ago. It is therefore, believed that it will realize its ambitions as a global power, likely in its own more cautious way, in the decades to come in a way that was unimaginable twenty-five years back.

Finally, the book is all about the process and transition of India making its place in the world. It is well researched, timely and rich in factual evidences supporting the prospects of the 'rise' of India that is often dubbed as 're-awakening of a giant'. Undoubtedly, Ayers has made a seminal contribution to knowledge on telling the story of India in her prolific and convincing style. It is an important reference for the world to view India's rise as global power in a very balanced way.

Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* (USA: Penguin Press, 2019), Pages: 246, Price: \$ 26.00.

Reviewed by:

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“Yes, there was a war. Yes, we came from its epicenter. In that war, a woman gifted herself a new name-Lan-in that naming claimed herself beautiful, then made that beauty into something worth keeping. From that, a daughter was born, and from that daughter, a son. All this time I told myself we were born from war-but I was wrong, Ma. We were born from beauty.”

It takes a while for readers to realise the note on which this book ends. All of us understand how survival, an integral part of the narrative is dealt with, in the novel. *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* traces the lives of three generations impacted by a war in Vietnam. But in doing so, Vuong tries to maintain a voice that is personal, disintegrating into memories at times, and at times, infuses hope without sounding deliberate.

Published on 04 June 2019, the words take us to different years, briefly letting us know how narrator’s family reaches United States of America, and reveals minute details about his life in the country. This is an epistolary novel, the letters of a son to his mother who doesn’t know English. While addressing these letters to his mother, he also believes that she might never read them. Thus, inadvertently, rendering him a safe space to talk about motherhood, motherland, mother tongue, sexuality, past and a spectrum of violence, things that are part of life, but don’t make it to our everyday conversations. The implication of the letters is precisely the silence that surrounds the past, the survival of a family.

There are no accusations in the text. It however, opens a discussion about being misunderstood in the context of where one belongs in terms of nationality, language and gender. As the narrator’s mother doesn’t understand English, just

like everyone in the narrator's family grapples with the needs of living in a new country and the narrator's struggle with loss, abuse and homosexuality.

“Because I am your son, what I know of work I know equally of loss. And what I know of both I know of your hands.” What the narrator makes clear from the first paragraph of the book is that even if there is bravery in coming to terms with a notion of life that means financial strain, it takes its toll on a person, it changes them as parents. Parents who fail to understand that their war is different from that of their children.

There is a question raised by the author throughout the book. How do we let Art save us when the language in which we talk about, changes frequently, and not always for good? How do we now begin to talk about art in a way that does not take away from its healing attributes? An example given in the text itself is using the term “killing it” when someone is doing well at a form of art.

The narrative is crafted out of little things; there are intricate yet tiny details that have stayed with the narrator, which we are informed about at a crucial moment in the book. For example, Lan's Purple feet while dying remind the narrator about the Purple flowers that had fascinated Lan one day while walking back home from work. There is no clarity as to how important an event is to the narrator, what we see is its relation to the situation as it is being told to us now.

“Monkeys, moose, cows, dogs, butterflies, buffaloes. What we would give to have the ruined lives of animals tell a human story-when our lives are in themselves the story of animals”. How does one deal with a profoundly real aspect of History through fiction? Vuong presents to the readers atrocities against the animals, their tendencies and their vulnerability in the face of nature. Buffaloes follow their ancestors, even if it means death, butterflies migrate and it takes a lot of time before someone from them manages to come back to the homeland, all of these, and a haunting description of the experiments done on monkeys by those in power, create an imagery that is beautiful and disturbing at the same time. There is something terse about blatant description of animal brutality in a book that tries to tie survival to beauty without romanticising grief; however the readers also realise that this wouldn't be possible without clarity about just how difficult survival was for all those who weren't in power.

The conflict of every character in the book is that of homelessness within a home, what the readers notice is that over a period of time there is a hardening towards violence. Lan is used to the bullets in her backyard, the narrator is used to the cruelties of his mother brought about by her exhaustion, women are used to violence just like a war-torn country gets used to death and formulates its own way of dealing with it.

Vuong does not implicate anyone in the story, what comes about is a narrative that focuses on the life of those on the fringes of the white community in USA. The reader might say that the story isn't tightly packed, but the reason for the abrupt nature of narration is insecurity, the uncertainty that those away from home have to deal with a country like USA.

Set in New York, the book is filled with the experiences of a boy from Vietnam as he struggles with both his identity as well as sexuality. Even as everyone interprets a work of literature in their own way, I see a sense of urgency in the tone often taken by the author. There is an attempt to establish that all those living in one house maybe dealing with more than one hierarchy in a neighborhood, a city, a country. What is unsettling is the impact of the perceptions of those around on the narrator and his family, the lack of acceptance for anything that looks different from the rest is exhausting, and attacks the spirit of those who are already suffering from financial disparity as well as violence within a household.

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