LIBERAL STUDIES

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PDPU has been promoted by partnership of Government, industry and energy to create a world class University in energy education and research with special focus on the oil and gas sector. The university has further expanded its programs to address the need for trained human resource in the domains of engineering, management and humanities. It intends to broaden the opportunities for students and professionals to develop core subject knowledge which are duly complemented by leadership training interventions, thereby helping the students to make a mark in the global arena.

This objective is being further addressed through a number of specialized and well-planned undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral programs as well as intensive research projects.

PDPU has been established by Gujarat Energy Resource Management Institute (GERMI) as a private university through the State Act enacted on 4 April 2007.

School of Liberal Studies (SLS)

PDPU has launched School of Liberal Studies which currently offers degree programs in UG, PG and Ph.D. that equips a student to develop an array of intellectual skills, a variety of methodologies and ways of understanding our changing world, and a broad base of varied knowledge. In turn, such a Liberal Education establishes an invaluable foundation for more specialized study in one's major or in one of the professions, and for a life-long affinity for learning and continuing intellectual development.

The course imparts classical education in various fields like art, literature, languages, music, dramatics, philosophy, politics, history, law, mathematics, science, business, commerce, communication and general studies. It emphasizes on the need to seek knowledge for promoting intellectual growth, creative expression and rational thought.

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Concept Note

Covid 19 has been affecting our lives since the almost a year now in terms of physical, financial, educational, commercial and mental health concerns. If all have borne the brunt can sports be far behind. Covid 19 has posed long term challenges the world over and the year round sports that we had pre –covid had come to a stop. Sports is a major contributor to the economy the world over and the impact of Covid 19 has been felt by governments and sportspersons all over. Due to social and physical distancing guidelines there are hardly any competitive sports happening and the sportspersons have not been able to practice properly and display their skills. Many also fear the risk of losing professional sponsors thus causing major losses, however it is now making a slow recovery.

This issue of the *Liberal Studies* journal carries a discussion on the challenges the sports industry faces and the way forward. Savio Mascarenhas, Sports consultant for F1 in schools India with Time of India Sports; Sports youtuber on channel Esporte Savvy talks about the financial losses incurred during Olympics 2021 since it was held a year later. Since spectators were not allowed therefore the host city was hit hard due to complete or partial refund of sold tickets to the public. Revenue losses meant that the players directly took the majority hit by means of a pay cut. The article also discuss about Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 being cancelled midway, BCCI took a huge hit. Another key concern that has been discussed is about the timeline that each sportsperson has in his/her mind in terms of his physical form. The delay of the events forced many sportspersons to hang their boots unceremoniously. The article also throws light on the job losses observed in the age group between 20-40years. In the article Mr.Savio has discussed about several other sports like, football, basketball,

cycling, marathons, F1, Lawn Tennis, Chesss Indian Super League, and Golf , also the toll the pandemic has taken on all of these. However some positive changes that pandemic brought was players focus on internal fitness, changes in some rules to provide the much needed rest, lowering of transfer fee in football. Also the television and social media industry faced a boom. TV viewership was at an all-time high for IPL 2020. More and more people started consuming content on their smartphones driving demand for mobile phones, the internet and other accessories. Fan engagement rose through the roof for teams and athletes on social media. Offline marketing was replaced by digital marketing. This meant that athlete-driven advertisements were viewed by more consumers on Instagram & Facebook rather than the traditional TV. eSports has emerged as the winner during this period and has grown exponentially.

Upasana Purohit talks about the emergence of Sports tourism pre-pandemic and its impact on the mega sporting events. Pre Covid it was considered to be one of the fastest growing sectors which has been terribly impacted. Another segment which has suffered a massive hit is the sports merchandise and garment section which was a major employer and exporter too. The arrival of various sporting leagues in India has welcomed a new era in the Indian sports industry, with job growth of 13 per cent. According to DataPOWA, a sports & entertainment sponsorship and digital marketing agency; the Indian sports industry is growing at the rate of 15 per cent which is regarded to be one of the fastest-growing industries in the world! She has a positive outlook towards the role of Government in trying to nurture grass root talent through the 'Khelo India' program and looks at it as a turning point in making India a great sporting nation.

She also echoes how corporates have pumped in money and taken up sports as one of the areas of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The participation of many private companies, who specialise in athlete management, sports operations and much more; have changed this sector and made it into a profitable growth industry.

Upasana goes on to discuss the digital trend in the industry in terms of online payments, code scanning at the venue and biometric identification that has become hassle free for both the organisers and the fans. Thus although this pandemic has brought challenges, yet the future of this new emerging and budding sports era looks bright in terms of sports management, sports science, sports law and sports medicine.

Trishla Surana has attempted to focus on the challenges faced by Chess players amid pandemic and the strategies adopted for making improvements. Several prominent Chess tournaments were cancelled the world over and it

posed huge psychophysiological demands where players were exposed to higher levels of stress and cognitive load. But as in other sports Chess.com an online platform facilitated interaction, gaming and helped solve numerous puzzles. The pandemic saw significant decrease in physical activity but an increase in chess training of the players. This allowed the players to focus, provided room for interaction and an ideal way to improvise their games thus alleviating the anxiety levels. . Thus it can be said that though most of the sports suffered in terms of physical activity during the lockdown, but chess players could manage their game fairly well because of online gaming platforms. Many players did gain significantly in terms of experience and skills.

COVID 19: The Disruptions and Challenges in Sports

*Savio Mascarenhas

Sports consultant for F1 in schools India with Time of India Sports; Sports youtuber on channel Esporte Savvy

PANDEMIC & LOCKDOWN were chosen as Word Of The Year 2020 by two of the most referred dictionaries; Merriam-Webster & Collins. These two words sum up to what has been the state of every individual, organization and country in the year 2020.

While it was gloomy all over the world, especially in the healthcare sector, loss of life was compounded with low income, dwindling businesses and shortage of cash. Not only did the common man had struggle to survive hand to mouth, even big corporations and industries endured a financial crunch. Because of the complete lockdown all over the world, Industries that took most of the brunt included travel, tourism, aviation, railways, education, manufacturing, production, entertainment, etc. Another industry that took a big hit and is still trying to recuperate is the Sports industry.

Most countries tried getting their revenues up and running by reviving various sectors and domains. However, sports do not come under the umbrella of essential services and also to some extent under important sectors. Still few countries and organizations resumed games/matches by the end of 2020 with an altered schedule.

The pandemic disrupted sports in all possible ways; whether it was postponing/rescheduling of events, changing rules to get a game started or even ensuring that the mass public is devoid of any live in-stadium entertainment.

Let's look at how the Covid-19 Pandemic disrupted the sports sector.

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*   The author is Sports consultant for F1 in Schools India with Time of Sports and: Sports youtuber on channel Esporte Savvy.

1. Financial Loss throughout the Industry

The highly debated 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games which was supposed to be the highlight of the year suffered immensely due to the pandemic. The estimated final operating cost came up to 15.4 billion dollars. (Forbes July 21) It is said that the budget shot up by almost 50% due to the postponement. As per one report, cancelling both the games i.e the Olympics & Paralympics would have cost an overall loss of 17billion dollars compared to the loss of holding the event a year later (58 billon dollars). It made sense to host the games in 2021 but incurring an additional expense of $5 billion really hit the host city hard. On top of it, local residents were not allowed inside the stadiums. This meant more than 9Lakhs purchased tickets to be completely or partially refunded to the public by the organizing committee.

According to a report in Forbes, Major League Baseball (MLB) of the USA saw a reduction in revenue by over 60% from approximately $10.5 Bn to $4Bn. The National Basketball Association (NBA) National Hockey League (NHL) too suffered huge losses running in millions of dollars of revenue but not to the extent of MLB.

Revenue losses meant that the players directly took the majority hit by means of a pay cut. Player salaries are always the biggest expense on any team's Balance Sheet. NBA stars took a pay cut by almost 20-30%.

Postponement of IPL2020 from its scheduled month of April to September, further holding it in the UAE meant BCCI had to face losses in hundreds of crores. Most of the loss came in the form of Gate Revenue as spectators were banned.

Similarly, with Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 being cancelled midway, BCCI once again took a huge hit. Although the second half was shifted to UAE, abandoning an established set-up and relocating to a new one was a logistical nightmare. There was only one window available to play the remaining matches which were between India's England tour & the T20 World Cup scheduled for mid-October 2021. If the tournament was not completed within this timeframe and that too in the UAE, then Board of control for cricket in India (BCCI) would have incurred huge losses. On the other hand, with limited fans being allowed for matches in the Emirates, it helped in partially compensating for the extra expenses incurred. The only bright side of playing the second half of IPL in the UAE before the World Cup was that the players were now familiarized with the climate and playing conditions better than the other countries who arrived later for the T20 World Cup.

Talking about mass running events, 4 out of the 6 Major Marathons were cancelled in 2021. Only Tokyo & London were able to conduct the event in different halves of the year (March & October respectively). The Boston Marathon, which was initiated in 1897, survived both the World Wars, the Great Depression, a Cold War era and so many obstacles for over 100 years but was cancelled in 2020 for the first time due to this one invisible virus, creating history for the wrong reasons.

2. Rescheduling of Mega Events from 2020 to 2021 - Summer Olympics & UEFA European Championships

Summer Olympics are considered to be the biggest stage for any athlete. Athletes work hard for 4 years just to make a mark on this global platform. When the International Olympic Committee (IOC) finally took the inevitable decision of shifting the Tokyo Olympics from 2020 to 2021, there were 3 types of reactions.

First: It was of relief that although the pandemic is bad, the Olympics are not cancelled, just pushed a year back. This meant that an athlete must have thought that his hard work preparations, training, sacrifices would eventually be realized, just that he had to keep following this routine for another year.

Second: Every sportsperson has a timeline in his/her mind. They know when to stop and when to continue. They are also very much aware if they are in prime form or not at that particular moment. Some of the Players who were on a roll in early 2020 certainly lost out as many found it difficult to keep up same form and fitness for another year due to several personal and health reasons. Many athletes around the world who were in the twilight of their careers chose to bring down the curtains as a year latertheir bodies surely wouldn't have gotten any younger. It is being speculated that Dhoni's retirement from T20 cricket was likely to be due to the disruption caused by Covid-19.

Third: Few lucky individuals who knew that 2020 was not their year and needed an extra year to achieve something. The best example in the world right now is Neeraj Chopra. Neeraj underwent a knee surgery in mid-2019. He even missed the 2019 World Championship. Had the Olympics taken place at its scheduled date, he wouldn't have been fully fit for it. German Johannes Vetter who was Chopra's rival in Tokyo and failed miserably at the Games was in prime form in 2020 and most probably would have been the gold medallist in the same year.

Coming to football; the rescheduling of Europe's biggest tournament- the Euro2020, was inevitable. When the world stopped in fear of the novel coronavirus, many national European leagues too came to a halt by mid-March. There was a

sense of fear that the leagues would end prematurely, incurring huge financial losses to the national football associations, football clubs and broadcasters. Hence, there was a consensus that Euro2020 should be postponed by a year.

The 2020 season concluded after a break of 3-4 months. The next season (2020-21) also did conclude as a short season and players had time to prepare & play in the Euro2020, which took place in June 2021.

3. Reduction of matches, Non-spectator events

With Covid-19 striking teams and players, many tournaments reduced their number of matches. Also, new rules like quarantine and bio-bubble meant players spent more time in isolation than practising and playing. Most of the reduction in the number of matches took place at domestic levels and in qualifier events. The 2020 US Open (Lawn Tennis) was one such international event where the qualifiers were totally scrapped for that particular edition.

Our very own Indian Super League (ISL) also revamped its format and played all the matches in Goa across 3 stadiums. Also, they ensured the event took place behind closed doors: that means a strict NO to spectators. The tournament organizers found it easier to manage when it the matches were held within a state. This helped in maintaining the integrity of bio-bubble. This arrangement was made common across all sports. NBA games and international cricket test matches also followed suit. But with spectators not being allowed in the stadiums, the TV viewing experience was diluted and hence broadcasters innovated & adapted. They started playing previously recorded spectator sounds for TV viewers and the same was played out on loudspeakers on the ground to keep the energy levels of players high.

The annual Formula1 season usually starts mid-March. When the whole world quarantined , this was the only sport (along with MotoGP) that didn't commence the season. F1 was staring at a huge loss as there would be no revenue at all. However, instead of having planned 22 races, F1 managed to hold 17 of them with consecutive races taking place on the same track on 3 occasions.

The usual pre-race drivers' parade was called off, and half of the races had no spectators. The most innovative thing that took place in Formula1 was the trophy presentation. 2020 was a year to bring more technology to a sport that is completely driven by technology. The trophies were handed to the drivers via a remote-controlled stand which carried it to the drivers.

Tour de France, the premier global cycling event, did not undergo major changes. The event being an outdoor competition was postponed by 2 months.

Fans were asked to stay at home but as the competitors cycle across the length and breadth of the country, it was impossible to maintain zero spectators. The only major change in the schedule of the Tour was that all the stages were completed in France itself. Because some did argue that if the name suggests Tour de France then it should take place in France. However, every year there are a few stages which take place in nearby European countries like Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Monaco, Luxembourg and even in the UK. In 2020, there were no such international stages. For 2021, the tour managed to have a few days in the neighbouring country of Andorra.
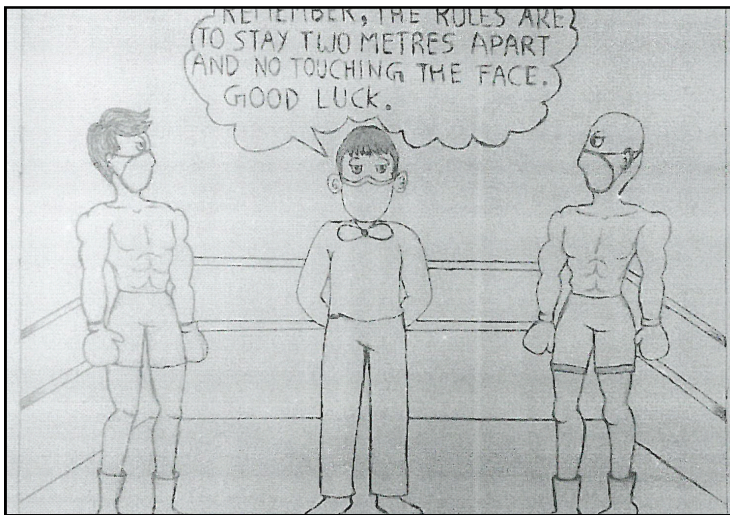
4. Domestic Structure & Mass Job Loss

At one point everyone wanted international sports to resume as that is where the cash is. Getting the domestic structure up and running was not much of an incentive. Best example is our country. We still haven't heard anything about the Ranji season (as of September 2021) returning to the domestic circuit since it was stopped in March 2020. But T20 tournaments are taking place all over, with the sole excuse that it doesn't stress the time limits of everyone involved. Test matches are five day events and all resources are required to be at the ground for almost a week.

Looking at franchise-based leagues, apart from the IPL & Indian Super League (ISL) others were not as lucky as they did not get as quick a start. Premier Badminton League (PBL) Pro Kabaddi, and many others suffered a year of absence. Although it is not a domestic event, the professional Association of Tennis Professionals ATP tour event organized by the Maharashtra Lawn

Tennis Association in Pune, the Maharashtra Open (earlier called Chennai Open) was cancelled in February 2021.

Going through' the same heartbreak is the Indian Open, the premier Golf tournament which has now been cancelled for two years in a row.

A single sport event endows employment & revenue to the hospitality sector, food & beverages suppliers, medical staff, travel agents, on-ground/venue workers, housekeeping staff, marketing and branding agencies, merchandise suppliers and match officials. More the spectators in an event, more manpower is required to cater them from start till the end. Hence, if spectators were banned then there was no need for such personnel. Not having any sport event for the majority of 2020 added a huge chunk to the list of unemployed people. Those who managed to retain their job or contract had to be content with a big pay cut just to keep themselves on the other side of unemployment.

Job losses were mainly observed in the age group between 20-40 years as the younger generation is more into sports, unlike the previous 40 plus age group who took up traditional jobs like manufacturing and government sectors in the last century. An online survey done by **Global Sports Jobs** which had participants from over 90 countries pointed out that at least 65% of people in the sports industry have lost their jobs. Those who still have their jobs intact feel the future is not so bright and maybe fired sooner or later.

Apart from sectoral employees, even highly experienced coaches in India are finding it hard to get their jobs back which they lost last summer. Coaches, are mostly former players who spend their time and money to get a professional certification done in their favourite sport. Since they have taken sports as their livelihood and with most centres and schools still shut these coaches are finding it hard to earn their livelihood.

Future Events & Rule Changes

Since 2020, planning a sports event has turned out to be more tedious than before. Earlier, the events were planned keeping in mind 'Rest Days' and 'Training Days'. Now the norm is to have a compulsory Quarantine Period especially if it involves international travel. Apart from the constant harassment of dope testing hampering the schedule, athletes now have to undergo regular Covid tests too. And in case, one fails the test, complete isolation is required for the athlete as well as for all the primary contacts of that individual. This throws off the entire routine and itinerary of the athletes and their team members.

The pandemic was so bad that even a game like Chess had to alter its schedules and rules to suit the players and officials. However, this sport adapted

quickly and organized its first-ever online chess Olympiad for 2020 which commenced on July 24th and India-Russia were declared as joint winners. The online Olympiad was a one-off event to substitute the 44th Chess Olympiad which was supposed to take place in Moscow in 2020 but now has been shifted to 2022. But most sports require the physical presence of the player and hence it's not possible to play it online.

FIFA has already incorporated a major rule change since the sport returned mid of last year. In a globally followed rule of football, only 3 player substitutions were allowed in a match. This number has since been increased to 5. The substitution rule has been extended till the end of 2020, which means it will include the 2022 Football World Cup in Qatar. With the resumption taking place in the midst of the European summer of 2020, a drinks break was also introduced in between both the halves.

ICC also banned the use of saliva on the cricket ball which is common practice to make the ball swing to arrest the spread of Covid among the players.

Positive Changes brought by the Pandemic

Keeping aside all the negatives, the Covid-19 pandemic brought in a drastic but positive change in the mindset of athletes and everyone involved in sports. Players were now more focused on improving internal fitness. Some of the players even cancelled their off-season holidays to provide the body much needed time to rest and recover. Players focussed more on family time rather than having an adventurous vacation.

The 5-substitute rule in football made sure that important players could now be rotated conveniently, providing them the necessary recovery period and saving them from unwanted and untimely injuries caused by fatigue. A very important change that took place in football went unnoticed. Till 2020, player transfer fee between clubs were on a meteoric rise. The transfer of a footballer was only governed by the money involved. Now with the majority of the football clubs trying to keep their expenses column to the minimum, inter-club player transfer fees have come down considerably. According to a study conducted by Klynveld Peat Marwick and Goerdeler **(**KPMG), the aggregate value of a player in the top European football leagues decreased by 6,600,000,000 euros or 17.7%, due to the remaining matches of the 2019-20 season being played behind closed doors. Guessing that the concept of over-priced players will take a backseat for a while.

With the spectator ban in place, the television and social media industry faced a boom. TV viewerships were at an all-time high for IPL 2020. More and

more people started consuming content on their smartphones driving demand for mobile phones, the internet and other accessories. Fan engagement rose through the roof for teams and athletes on social media. Offline marketing was replaced by digital marketing. This meant that athlete-driven advertisements were viewed by more consumers on Instagram & Facebook rather than the traditional TV.

One new sports division took advantage of the situation and is a very lucrative arena for players, organizers and sponsors. eSports has emerged as the winner during this period and has grown exponentially. Even F1 started live-streaming its gaming tournaments and had a virtual championship with backing from actual F1 teams.

Notes

*   Massive costs behind Olympic games;Niall McCarthy, Forbes, July 21

https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2021/07/21/the-massive-costs-behind-the-olympic-games-infographic/?sh=3,8d3955046b0

Major sports leagues lost-Jaw dropping amount of money in 2020, Justin Birnbaum, Forbes, March 21

https://www.forbes.com/sites/justinbirnbaum/2021/03/06/major-sports-leagues-lost-jaw-dropping-amount-of-money-in-2020/?sh=50677cb569c2

**   India Today magazine Webdesk, May 4 2021

https://www.indiatoday.in/sports/ipl-2021/story/ipl-postponed-bcci-loss-excess-rs-2000-crore-revenue-broadcast-sponsors-1798877-2021-05-04
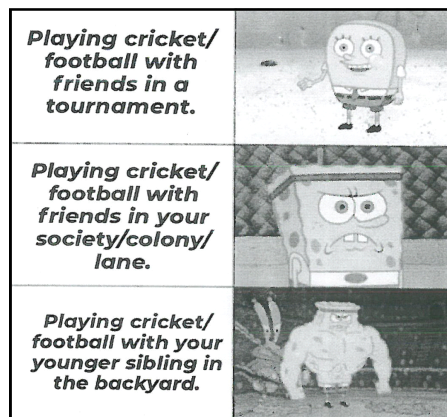
The Growing 'Sports Industry' in India

*Upasana Purohit

Unlike the 'Film Industry', the 'Sports Industry' is still considered to be at its initial phase in India where not many are familiar with it.

Being a sports management student, as well as having had a humble experience of working with a few of the esteemed organisations, my father can still not relate to the term 'Sports Industry' and refused to accept it until I mentioned and questioned him about the film fraternity being an industry too.

Introduction to the 'Industry'

Although, India has witnessed a boom in the 'sports sector' in the last decade with various sporting leagues, like Indian Premier League (IPL) getting laurels on international platforms, this 'industry' is still very new to many. Not only this, cricket majorly dominates the sporting arena and the viewership in India. It was noted by GroupM ESP that, "Indian Sports Industry in 2020 is estimated at Rs. 5894 Crore, with cricket claiming 87% of the sports sponsorship pie".

But, what do we mean by, when we say sports industry? In simple terms, it is the commercialisation of sports, keeping aside all the international tournaments that India participate in, that as funded by the government and the sports ministry. People follow different sports, majority of them even have their favourite team, sport as well as a few specific players; various industries and companies use this as a platform for promoting their products/services, that fits the brand requirement and the athletes personality. These firms organise advertisement campaigns around the tournament or ask an athlete to endorse it. It creates a win-win situation for both, brands get the required podium along with a varied audience, in terms of age group, location and other demographics; and athletes or the leagues/tournaments get extra financial resources. It also creates a proper exposer for both.

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Although cricket has been the dominating sport, it is good to see the sports ecosystem in the last 5-6 years making way for other sports. Sports sponsorship and endorsement is just one of the sector under the umbrella of the entire industry, that includes multiple varied segments; like, sports tourism, where people travel to be a part of, along with experiencing live tournaments in the stadium or at times just prefer having a stadium tour. Due to COVID-19, there is a definite dip in travelling right now, but previously, before the pandemic, sports tourism was on the rise with all the mega sporting events playing a big role. It is considered to be a fast-growing sector and equates to around $7.68 billion. Another segment that is on the rise is sporting merchandise, which includes manufacturing and retail, along with sporting garments. This division in the sports industry is said to employ around 5 lakh people. Punjab and Uttar Pradesh have the major hold, with almost 81 per cent of India's total production. The sporting merchandise and garment segment has seen a momentous growth in its export as well. Finally, the most popular section of this industry is the opportunities and growth in the sporting management arena. The arrival of various sporting leagues in India has welcomed a new era in the Indian sports industry, with job growth of 13 per cent. According to DataPOWA, a sports & entertainment sponsorship and digital marketing agency; the Indian sports industry is growing at the rate of 15 per cent which is regarded to be one of the fastest-growing industries in the world!

One of the key reasons for this steep growth is the rising consumption of sports content. A report of BARC (Broadcast Audience Research Council) mentioned a 90 per cent increase in the viewership of sports in the last four years; and as it is a known fact, viewership directly or indirectly influences a lot of aspects like sports advertisement, sponsorship and much more, including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

This Industry might be new for people in India, but is well-established, deeply rooted in most nations like The United States of America, Australia etc. It is regarded as one of the largest industries around the world, that generates revenue and employment. When looked at globally, it is a multi-billion dollar industry with enormous growing consumer demand. It was reported that the global sports industry as a whole estimate to be approximately $600 billion and contributes to 0.5 per cent of the world's GDP, this ranges to some counties contributing to a staggering 5 per cent as well; whereas in India the contribution is hardly 0.1 per cent of the GDP.

Involvement of the Government

Let us not get disheartened, as various private organisations as well as

government has been working hard to uplift this segment. Apart from the private organisations which cater to various sports-related facilities, even the Indian Government has started taking a keen interest and is giving more attention to developing the sports sectors by creating jobs, generating revenue, attracting more investment, nurturing and recognising sports talents. The federal government also allotted a budget worth Rs. 1,756/- Crore for the development of sports from the grassroot level by introducing a program like 'Khelo India', for the year 2018-20. Development with a systematic build in sports grassroots will shape the eco-system that was missing in India. The Khelo India Program as proven to be one of the most all-inclusive yet wide-ranging sports policies that India has ever seen. The motto is to 'revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country and establish India as a great sporting nation' became the turning point. It is divided into 12 different verticals that focused on multiple divisions like increasing rural sports awareness, strengthening infrastructure on a national and local level, honing talents, increasing participation and competition. It might not be wrong to say that the existence of the Khelo India Program is "industrialising" sports and can prove to be an apt balancing boost to the ecosystem.

The government also has planned to professionalise the management of elite athletes by remodelling the sports bureaucracy. They have started the initiative called TOPS, which is the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, which is a flagship program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports that attempts to assist India's top athletes. This scheme will keep a proper track of their performances and will fund them for their development and growth, keeping in mind of gaining a medal prospect for Olympic Games in Paris in 2024 and Los Angeles Games in 2028.
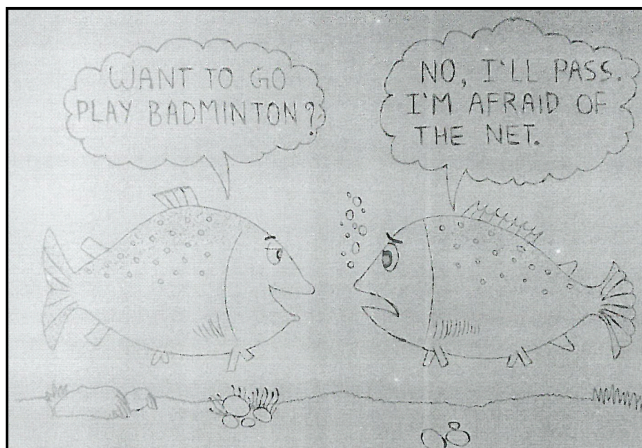
Private Sector

The private sector is not behind in encouraging sports in India. Although the 'sports sector' in India was historically government-led; the private or public-private partnerships was restricted to only the development of the infrastructure and academics. This balance has been shifted now, the participation of many private companies, who specialise in athlete management, sports operations and much more; have changed this sector and made it into a profitable growth industry. Multiple big companies currently dominate the sports industry in India, like IMG Reliance; which has been renamed as RISE, Baseline Ventures, JSW Sports, Sporty Solutionz, IOS Sports and Entertainment, Procam International, Sportz Village and Cornerstone. Work commissioned by India Economic Strategy Secretariat mentioned how the sports market in India grew by almost 10 per cent between the year 2013 and 2015, from $870 million to $950 million. Apart from the companies who are dedicated and working for sports, other major corporates and companies with fixed assets of more than Rs 10 Crores, are now spending 2 per cent of their earnings on CSR (Corporate Social Responsibilities), where one of the categories include sports. It was noticed that several corporates spend CSR on holistic sports programs, professional leagues or even athlete funding, to support increased participation within the community. Apart from this, the success of the Indian Premier League, have encouraged various other private sports organisations and sporting foundations to start their own sports league. This has given rise to an array of sports leagues such as Indian Super League, Pro Kabbadi, Ultimate Table Tennis League, Premier Badminton League, Big Bout and others.

COVID-19 Standstill

In November 2019, the first case of coronavirus was reported, and on the 11th of March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. This resulted in a complete lockdown and a standstill in almost all countries around the world.

Coronavirus affected the lives of countless people inclusive of various major industries. The sports industry was also enormously affected. Tournaments got cancelled, stadiums were empty, Olympics got postponed; sports shops, manufacturing units and tourism, all of it came to a halt. In a report by GroupM ESP the entertainment, sports and esports dropped by 34 per cent in 2020. With no sporting activity taking place, companies started to lay off their employees, resulting in an increase of 11 per cent in job searches by August 2020, even the posting for these vacant positions were declined by 25 per cent. Thus, there turned out to be a huge scarcity of jobs in this industry. For all the major sporting

events there are three primary sources of income; starting from the match day revenue in terms of sales, the advertisement and sponsorship revenues and finally the broadcasting revenue. There were a couple of leagues who tried to hold 'closed-door' tournaments like the Indian Super League, 2019-20 held their finals without any fans and audience, and so did the Indian Premier League, but it affected their revenues big time in terms of sales of their tickets. As no tournaments were taking place, the on-ground and athlete sponsorship also experienced a huge dip. The sponsorship saw a reduction of 2.2 per cent in the year 2020 and a 3.4 per cent dip in licensing and merchandising. Before the Indian Premier League shifted to UAE, the broadcast also was seriously affected as there wasn't any fresh, new content or live tournaments.

When considered worldwide, many flagship tournaments and leagues had a huge setback. Tokyo had to invest US$26 billion for postponing the Olympics in 2021, just 122 days before the grand opening. Likewise, the UEFA Euro Championship was also shifted to 2021, which was going to be held across multiple European countries. Other major tournaments that people and players look forward to also experienced the pause, like the four Grand Slams in Tennis, NBA, FIFA, F1 and so many more. Finally, after three months the German Bundesliga was the foremost major football league to restart, post the suspension due to the pandemic, followed by The Premier League and La Liga.

Even though multiple international tournaments have resumed and are in full form in 2021, including NBA, F1, Tennis Grand Slams and even Olympics, India is still struggling to get back on track. Indian Premier League 2021 was the first major event that happened in India post the lockdown and also experienced a record high of registered 6.62 billion viewers per minute per match in the first 17 matches (reported by Barc India), sadly it had to be stopped mid-season for safety purpose as multiple players were tested COVID-19 positive.

When looked at the e-Sports industry, it recorded an increased sales and participation during the pandemic. There was an increase of 50 per cent for e-Sport games like DOTA2, PUBG and Call of Duty in India. An average time spent on these e-sports went up by 50 per cent with players and fans consuming e-Sports at a growth rate of 11 per cent. Several online competitions were being held, and these were also broadcasted on YouTube and even on channels like MTV.

India vs World Sports Scenario

Compared to other major countries, that have sports embedded in their culture, like in Australia or the USA, by introducing and promoting it at a very young

age; unifying the power of sports in India is quite far behind. India has a rich and varied culture that has given rise to multiple indigenous sports like Kho Kho, Kalaripayattu, Pachisi and Moksha Patam, but unfortunately, what India did not do is glorify or continue the legacy of these sports at a higher platform. There are so many religions, culture, states and some may even say economic-social problems; that has proven to be extremely difficult, for people in India to glorify the sporting abilities to the masses. It won't be wrong to mention that India has been the powerhouse of cricket for so many decades now, with many even considering it as a religion and players as their God. However, barring cricket, for a sport to become famous and recognised to all, in terms of increased viewership, in India, a player has to perform and win at an international level tournament.

The Indian Sports Industry in 2020 was estimated at INR 5894 Crores. On the other hand, the global sports market saw an increased CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 3.4 per cent since 2015 and was valued at approximately $3.88.3 billion in the year 2020. When looked at geographically, the largest region in the global sports market in North America accounts for 35 per cent of the total in the year 2020. This was followed by Western Europe, Asia Pacific and the other regions. South America and the Middle East are considered to be the fastest-growing sports market, with a growth rate of 12.1 per cent and 11.3 per cent CAGRs respectively. This is followed by a CAGRs growth of 10.5 per cent and 10.4 per cent in Eastern Europe and the Asia Pacific respectively.

Recent Trends in the Sports Industry

Digitalisation in sports has revolutionised the industry, and it is pleasing to see how various sports companies, leagues, teams and players have adapted to it. The changes in technologies have created newer trends, that are elevating the fan experience. Starting from Social Media, which has become the centre of our lives; leagues, teams, players; everyone has a dedicated and separate department, where people work towards curating relatable content, where they can interact and inform their fans about all the recent updates, statistics, facts and so much more. It has helped the sports organisation/club to interact with their fans. Companies and brands even pay these clubs and players for endorsing their products/services. Major sporting events, live stream internal functioning, apart from the tournament, that makes the fans feel more involved. The new wave of sports enthusiasts want to know how their favourite player is training, where the tournaments are held, what activities are the club they support are performing and a lot. In a study, it was found that 83 per cent of the fans, while watching a sports tournament on their television, are constantly accessing their

social media. As the consumers and fans becoming more content-driven, the quality of photos, videos in their posts have tremendously improved. Sports companies are investing heavily in Social Media Marketing and Search Engine Optimisation so that they are easily accessible for people who wish to interact with them.

Another domain that has seen a spike is the fantasy gaming sector in the sports industry. In a Fantasy sport, the consumer has to predict the game online and put together a virtual team that consists of real sports players. Multiple international tournaments have their fantasy gaming, like The Premier League, F1 and many others. In India, cricket again dominates the fantasy world. There are fantasy gaming mobile applications like Dream11, MPL, My11Circle, MyTeam11 and so many more, in India. A report by FICCI-EY recorded that the online gaming sector was worth Rs. 6,500/- Crore in 2019 and is expected to touch Rs. 18,700/- by the year 2022. As per Klynveld Peat Marwick and Goerdeler (KPMG), $1 billion will solely be the worth of the IPL fantasy league. Dream11 raised approximately $225 million in September 2020, and 90$ million was raised by MPL. In India, 50 per cent of the marketing of fantasy gaming went on educating the customers, that this platform was legal, and now when they have finally achieved that, enormous growth has been seen in terms of their users.

Finally, what has changed the game in the digital trend in the industry is the concept of mobile ticketing. In the entire sports industry in India and across the world, teams, organisations that hold the tournaments are moving away from the traditional way of paper ticketing. Quick online payments, code scanning at the venue and biometric identification, has made ticking a lot easier and quicker. Not only this, unlike the traditional ways, fans can directly buy the ticket without standing in long queues or paying the middle man extra to avoid the hassle.

This entire digitalisation has redefined the sport's relationship with its fans. Not only this, the data analytics have also started playing a huge role in the performance analysis of an athlete or the entire team. Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and Mixed Reality (MR) now play a vital role. It has played an important role in scouting new players for a team, analysing player and team performances, maintain a track record of athlete's health and fitness and finally proving to be extremely profitable for broadcasting by maximizing advertisement effectiveness.
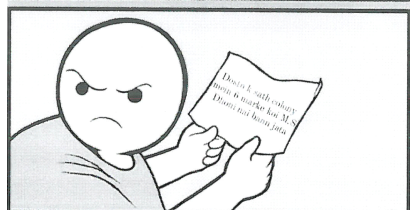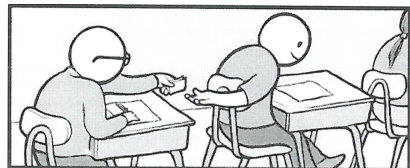
Conclusion

The industrialisation of sports has genuinely encouraged many to come on board and be a part of it, either due to passion or as a means of financial investment. Although this pandemic has brought challenges, yet the future of this new emerging and budding sports era looks bright. Some say its commercialisation of sports while those connected with this industry know what it truly is, which includes an array of departments, functions, activities, organisation involving promotions, on-ground operations and managing business enterprises focused specifically on sports and sportsperson. Apart from this, India's first National Sports University is also underway. There has been an increased awareness for various sporting degrees like masters in sports management, sports science, sports law and sports medicine. In a country, that has its own set of problems, an array of cultures, maybe this can be the binding force especially when the pandemic ends and we step into the 'new normal'. The initiative and efforts by the government, fans, private sports organisations and even the athletes will play a huge role in shaping this industry. This can happen by changing the mindset and welcoming sports in our culture, where parents encourage their children to get involved in sports, and give it the same attention as academics. Grassroots and youth development is the way head for this sporting industry of India. It will be interesting to watch how the sports industry will adjust to the 'new normal' and grow post the pandemic.

Types of Headache

Migraine

Hypertension

Stress

Playing in Bio bubbles
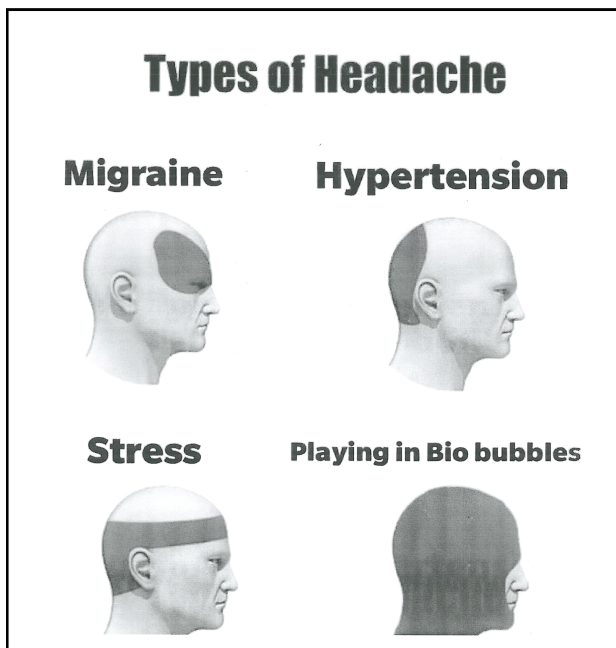
The Ebbs and "Flow" of Chess Amid Pandemic: A Psychological Take

*Trishla Surana

Onset of covid-19 pandemic posed a huge threat to the human kind and quarantine had to be imposed to stop the spread of the disease as far as possile. COVID-19 confinement has led to many negative psychological effects, including anxiety, depression, stress, anger, fear, frustration and insomnia. Athletes have suffered enormous consequences of this pandemic. For example, International Chess Federation (FIDE) canceled the World Candidates Tournament 2020. Chess, is presented not only as a game, but also as a sport (due to its competitive element), an art (due to the beautiful permutation and combinations it permits) and a science (due to the systematic way it is studied). It lays huge psychophysiological demands where players are exposed to higher levels of stress and cognitive load.

Past neuropsychological studies have shown the benefits of chess practice in various cognitive functions such as executive functions, facilitating the adaptation to complex or not routine situations, decision making, memory, ability to see from other people's perspective and creativity; Therefore chess players demonstrate an excellent ability for planning, having a sense of control, well developed coping mechanism, or problem-solving.


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Looking from a different lens, Chess.com, an online platform where in people can play chess and interact with others and improve their game by solving numerous puzzles, which was co-founded by international master Daniel Rensch, received 1.5 million new subscribers in April 2020. This shows peoples' increasing interest in chess. It has allowed people to socialize in a unique way amid the loneliness casted by Covid-19. In this article, we will aim to investigate if there was an effect of covid pandemic and confinement on chess players, differing on the level of chess they play. We want to understand if it confinement was a blessing in disguise which aided their practice or had a detrimental effect.

A recent study by García and his colleagues described chess as a sport of high psychophysiological demands as it requires long training durations, tournaments which often lead to stress and anxiety. They studied the effect of pandemic confinement on psychological and training patterns of chess players, based on gender, education qualification and level of chess game (professional, high-performance, competitive and amateurs). Results indicated that a significant decrease in physical activity but an increase in their chess training. There could be few possible explanations behind this finding, such as playing chess provides a sense of control amid the chaos, one remains occupied & focused, it allows a room for interaction or the confinement provides them an ideal way to improvise their game. In this study, players reported moderate level of anxiety which may stem from having no control over the pandemic, non-voluntary lockdown, fear of infection, frustration, boredom and inadequate information despite of having no physical activity. The reason behind this could be that, according to the researchers, high performing athletes have better cognitive resources and experiences as they have been in anxiety provoking context like competitions. One may also want to consider how chess can help a person achieve "Flow" which alleviates one from their anxiety. Flow theory, proposed by renowned positive psychology professor Mihaly Czikszentmihaly, is referred to as a "state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter, the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost for the sheer sake of doing it." In this state, one intensely concentrates on an activity or object, has clear goals, has their perception of time altered and loses their consciousness. We have often heard athletes refer to flow states as "being in the zone". Neuroimaging studies have noted heightened theta waves in EEGs when people are in a state of flow. Gracia and colleagues also conducted an EEG study on chess players. They found experienced chess players had high levels of theta waves in frontal, central, and posterior brain regions during increasingly difficult chess matches which indicates that players were experiencing flow state. Moreover, Garcia and colleagues discovered that professional and high

performing chess players were high on extraversion and neuroticism compared to amateur players. This finding is in contradiction with the popular beliefs and studies that have claimed chess players to be introverted, shy, orderly, suspicious and reserved. Social alarm factor can be explained with high need to control environment or circumstances which was found much higher on amateur players. Cognitive inflexibility was not noted in this study, which demonstrates that chess practice promoted complex or novel situations, which are not routine and demand control mechanisms to resolve effectively. Also, the psychological inflexibility was related to neuroticism, a **trait disposition associated to experience negative affects which** includes anger, anxiety, selfconsciousness, irritability, emotional instability, and depression, this indicated a detrimental effect on mental health of players who had higher level of education.

In a nutshell, Chess has many cognitive benefits which have aided the chess players to adapt to covid-19 and confinement that comes with it. Players have had a negative effect on their physical activity but increased their mental activity during the chess training period online. They also reported moderate level of anxiety. Chess players, especially those playing chess at higher levels, might have had an aggravated psychological challenge due to confinement, but demonstrated high levels of worry due to decrease in physical inactivity. Education also seemed to play an important role as higher academic level caused higher levels of personal concerns, anxiety and lower psychological inflexibility. Novice players could have really enjoyed playing chess as it allowed to have social interactions and a good way to pass their time. Thus it can be said that though most of the sports suffered in terms of physical activity during the lockdown, but chess players could manage their game fairly well because of online gaming platforms. Many players did gain significantly in terms of experience and skills.
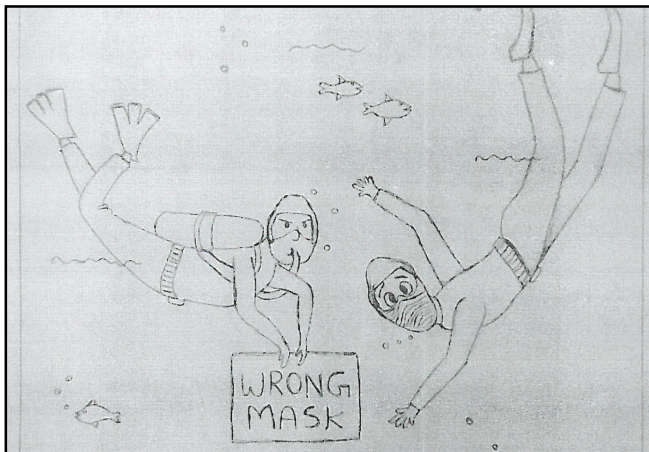
$\boxed{\textbf{\textit{Articles}}}$

Hitakshi Joshi*

Cultural Diplomacy: A Strategic Asset for India in South-East Asia

Abstract

The impact of cultural diplomacy on the foreign policy of a country is believed to be consequential. Over the years it has also been observed that many times it is used as a tool for soft power politics to serve national interests. This article aims to explore cultural diplomacy as a strategic asset for India in Southeast Asia, while analysing India's individual relationship with the countries Brunei, The Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Singapore and Laos; which dates back to the pre-colonisation era. India has practised and promoted cultural diplomacy extensively over the years and in this regard also set up the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in 1950, undertaking several bilateral agreements and implementing cultural exchanges between the partner countries through the organisation. Diaspora, sports, education, festivals, connectivity and music are some of the factors that play a significant role in enhancing socio–cultural engagement between two countries. This has been used extensively to India's advantage through its Act East and Look East Policy in the form of cultural diplomacy.

India's Act East Policy, which is already in place, will act as a stepping stone for the country's engagement in the region, along with the increasing influence of Asia and Southeast Asia in global politics. With an increase in globalisation and the constantly evolving dynamics of world politics, it will be interesting to see how things play out in Southeast Asia with India gaining traction and recognition on a global scale. It also remains to be seen how the power politics between India & China will affect their relationship with the countries in the region.

Key Words: *Cultural Diplomacy, Soft Power, South-East Asia, Act East Policy, Diaspora.*

Cultural Diplomacy aims to initiate dialogue based on culture between countries. India has promoted and practised cultural diplomacy, and in this regard set up the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in 1950, and since has signed 126 bilateral

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cultural agreements and is implementing 58 cultural exchange programmes with several countries[1].

Cultural Diplomacy is widely believed to be a tool for Soft power politics and is increasingly being used by countries to reach out to the global arena. The underlying idea behind cultural diplomacy is to foster national interests through mutual understanding by promoting various cultural activities such as cultural events, art exhibitions, and other international cultural exchanges such as student exchange[2]. Soft power is a medium of exercising power through various different factors. It reflects the ability to co-opt and attract, and not coerce. Joseph Nye's pillar of soft power comprises three aspects- political values, culture and foreign policy[3]. India boasts of immense soft power resources like culture, foreign policies and political values. that can be used to reach out to countries that share a similar foundation of history and culture with us. In the past few years, India has been recognised and associated with various soft power tools such as Yoga, Cinema, Sports including cricket, and art and heritage, religion, literature amongst many others[4].

'Project Mausam' is a Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Society of India project with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) as its Research Unit. This aims at re-establishing connections and communications with the countries of the Indian Ocean world, and will also focus on understanding national cultures in their regional maritime environment. This project was launched in 2014 by India in partnership with its member states, and has taken several steps in the direction of furthering its goals and objectives, with 39 countries being identified under Project Mausam[5]. The project is an example of cultural diplomacy with an aim of putting to efficient use the soft power resources of India especially in Southeast Asia.

Act East Policy and Role of ASEAN:

The Act East policy, originally the Look East Policy initiated in 1994, provides an opportunity for India to interact and communicate with the South-East Asian countries surrounding her. India's Act East Policy was unveiled at the 12th ASEAN-India Summit in 2014 held in Naypyidaw (Capital of Myanmar), by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India and ASEAN co-operate in several securities related fields which include Maritime Co-operation, Cyber-Security capacity building and Counter-Terrorism[6]. However, it also strives to promote cooperation in the areas of commerce, culture, economy and connectivity through soft power diplomacy.

The Delhi Declaration of 2018, which commemorated 25 years of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations, aimed at taking certain steps forward where cultural

relations are concerned. According to the declaration, India and ASEAN will work together on several fronts like political security, economic, social and development cooperation. to strengthen the socio-cultural relationship between India and the South-East Asian countries. The proposed actions included promoting cultural links by setting up think tanks and forums for dialogue such as the ASEAN-India network of think tanks (AINTT) and ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Lecture Series (AIEPLS) and continuing the Delhi Dialogue. It also emphasised on setting up exchange programs for students and training courses for media, farmers and parliamentarians. The other areas of interest and co-operation included providing platforms for knowledge exchange amongst policy-makers, academicians relating to cultural heritage. It also includes intensifying efforts to preserve and protect the cultural and historical structures and monuments that are a symbol of the relationship between ASEAN countries and India. The aim is also to strengthen cooperation where education and youth is concerned by introducing scholarships and training centres, and if possible, universities and student exchanges. India's proposal on mapping inscriptions along the Mekong river was appreciated and set the stage for bilateral dialogue and action based on Cultural and Civilizational Links between India and ASEAN[7].

With the help of ASEAN, India also aims at improving connectivity with Southeast Asia through railways, roads and maritime links, which shall help in the economic upliftment of the north-eastern states of India and shall also establish physical connections with the neighbouring countries of the region. Mr. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India has said that India's Act East Policy is shaped around ASEAN, and the importance of the regional organization is holistic in terms of economic, cultural and political impacts in and around the region[8]. India's want to augment engagement in the region could also be perceived by the reformation of QUAD with India, USA, Australia and Japan, as India looks to increase its presence in the maritime domain especially with the help of the South-East Asian nations[9].

India and South-East Asia: A Journey

Indian influence on the South-East Asian countries especially Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam can be perceived from the spread of languages such as Sanskrit which is one of the languages of communication in several of these countries. The trade of spices across the sea also creates similarities between the type of food and cuisine that is shared across borders and the exchange of semi-precious stones is an important factor to consider. Religion has always played a significant role in creating a common

ground for India and her neighbouring countries. Buddhism is a testament of history and a proven fact of the transfer and influence of cultures between India and the South-East Asian countries[10].

The history of India and South East Asia can be traced way back to during the pre-colonization era, wherein that entire region was referred to as "Further India" or "East Indies". The climatic conditions were similar and this helped in the prosperity of trade, and Indians were not seen as "outsiders". This was the peak of smooth bilateral relations with countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, based on culture and history[11].

The term 'Indianisation' is used to reflect the influence of Indian culture on other countries, which according to several theories has been attributed to traders who established outposts in several parts of South-East Asia. However, it is observed that the 'Indianisation' has taken place not only in coastal areas accessible to traders, but mountainous interior regions as well, which means that trade influence is not the only answer to the phenomenon of influence. For the people of South-East Asia, Indianised culture includes literature and the Sanskrit language, distinctive art style and religion including Hinduism and Buddhism[12]. A defining characteristic of the cultural link between India and Southeast Asia is the spread of Indian Vedic and Buddhist culture and philosophy, along with the Pali and Sanskrit languages which created a unity between the cultures of these countries.

The north-east region of India is strategic for engagement in South-East Asia, as it is a medium of transcending physical boundaries. The people of both regions play an important role in this co-operation as the language and culture are similar. Its favourable geographic location surrounded by Asian countries like Myanmar, China and Bangladesh, and the Himalayan range, Bay of Bengal, makes its position a core part of India's gateway to South-East Asia. This role will also help in improving the general condition of these states with connectivity, pipelines, communication and trade[13]. Thus, cultural proximity is a necessary aspect for India's policy and action in South-East Asia.

India's bilateral relations with each South-East Asian country has been closely and carefully developed over the years, and recently with a new focus on culture and history. Ever since launching the Act East Policy in 2014, Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi has visited almost each country of the region implying that India is taking the action of 'Act East' sincerely and will continue to do so in the future.

India's relations with *Vietnam* have stemmed from a common struggle against colonialism and is based on years of historical and cultural relations

dating back to the second century CE. The first Indianised state of South-East Asia was Funan which is now present-day Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. The spread of culture can be attributed to Indian merchants travelling to the region for trade and commerce and in the process spreading literature, philosophy and religion. The Geneva Conference of 1954 was an important milestone between India and Vietnam and set precedence for bilateral relations between the countries post the Cold War[14].

India and Vietnam are partners of the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation and Vietnam has backed India in several endeavours such as a permanent position of the United Nations Security Council, joining the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and its enhanced role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Cultural relations between the countries are stronger than ever, with India extending help and training to Vietnam in the field of education-scholarships are given to students with an opportunity for training in higher education such as a PhD or Master's Degree. Indian government has decided to double the number of scholarships that they offer through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programs. India has also announced a US$3 million project for conservation and restoration of temples at My Son, along with plans to open a cultural centre at Hanoi, which can promote Indian cultural and educational activities in Vietnam[15].

Cultural links between India and *Malaysia* date back to centuries with history and tradition playing a significant role. The Indian Cultural Centre was set up in 2010 with classes being conducted for Yoga, Hindi, Kathak and the musical instrument Tabla. This centre is also actively promoting Indian culture and art in other parts of Malaysia and collaborates with other cultural institutions across the country while doing so, which helps in spreading the message as well as intent. Malaysia is the tenth largest source for tourists visiting India, while India is the sixth largest source for tourism in Malaysia[16]. Every year nearly 2000 students go to Malaysia to study and India offers almost 30 scholarships for Malaysian students to come study in Indian Universities. The Indian community in Malaysia is large-numbered and vibrant and in this regard the 'Festival of India' was held over 100 days with 45 events in 2015, in joint partnership with the Ministry of Culture in India and the High Commission of India in Malaysia[17]. In Malaysia, which has the largest population of Indian origin, Islam is the state religion. Hindus make up just over 6% of its population, Muslims nearly 62%.

Thailand plays a significant role in India's Act East Policy as a huge population of Indian diaspora living and working in the country for centuries now. India and Thailand have embedded cultural relations with a shared link of

Buddhism, Indian culture and history that reflects in Thai architecture, art, scriptures, dance, drama and even languages which are influenced by Sanskrit and Pali. India and Thailand also cooperate closely in several organisations such as ASEAN, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Mekong - Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and the IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association). An Indian Cultural Centre was opened in Bangkok in 2009. A number of Indian Studies Centres are operational in Thai Universities. Regular visits of Indian cultural troupes are organized, in addition to Indian film and food festivals. The Embassy of India organised the first Incredible India Photo Contest where contestants were asked to post their pictures taken in India. The contest was a huge success with the winner of the contest being awarded an air ticket to India. During 2017-18, the Government of India offered 75 scholarships to Thai students under its various schemes, under a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in 2005. The Festival of India is celebrated every year to mark 70 years of relations between the two countries[18].

India and ***Cambodia*** relations go back to the 1st Century AD, and since then both countries have maintained warm cordial relations. Indian culture influence can be seen in the grand temple of Angkor Wat and several other monumental structures all across Cambodia like the Preah Vihear, Angkor Thom, Bayon, Ta Prohm, Sambor Prei Kuk. India has also undertaken restoration and conservation work for the Angkor Wat temple, some parts of the Preah Vihear temple and the Ta Prohm temple as well. The International Day of Yoga is celebrated every year, and several other cultural and educational programmes are undertaken by the Embassy to revive the cultural links between the two countries. A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between India and Kingdom of Cambodia was signed in 2000 which has been renewed from time to time, and is currently renewed till 2022.

The Indians based in Cambodia have formed an association called the Indian Association- Cambodia and are highly active in catering to the Indian diaspora in the country. The Cambodian society is predominantly Buddhist but is highly influenced by Hindu culture and many of the rituals resemble those of Indians. The Indian community in Cambodia has blended well with the locals and celebrate the festivals of Holi and Diwali. Also, through the help of technology and communication media, the Indians can be up to date with everything happening in India and this reflects a cultural link that is predominant between both the countries[19].

Myanmar is geographically the closest South-East Asian neighbour of India, the proximity of which is optimal and is easier to maintain a smooth cooperative

relationship. A warm and cordial relationship with Myanmar will also help in normalising India's north-eastern side, which in turn can be beneficial in countering China's domination in the region. India and Myanmar's cultural linkages date back to 2001 when a bilateral cultural co-operation agreement was signed and since then through various cultural programmes and exchanges, the historical links have been held up. The organisations on both sides of the border that have played a significant role in promoting these relations are the Union Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) in coordination with the Indian Embassy at Yangon, the Myanmar Embassy in New Delhi, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), North Eastern Council (NEC), and the three north-eastern state governments[20].

India was one of the few countries to recognise **Singapore** in 1965. The history between the two countries dates back to the time of the Cholas and India's colonisation by the British. Ethnic Indians constitute about 9% of the Singaporean population, with Tamil being one of the four official languages and Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati being taught in schools. Intergovernmental cooperation included a MoU signed in 1993 in the field of culture including Arts, Archives and Heritage. Executive programmes and cultural activities are carried out regularly by various community organizations in Singapore. The ICCR and National University of Singapore signed a MoU in 2010 for establishing a Chair on Indian Studies in the South Asian Studies Programme at the University. Bilateral relations between India and Singapore are warm, cordial and regular with state visits taking place often and the heads of state/government interacting with each-other[21].

The bilateral relationship of India with **Brunei**, one of the oldest monarchies, is based on civilizational links which has transformed into a traditional relationship between the two countries. Brunei is particularly supportive of India's 'Look East' policy and was also the India-ASEAN co-ordinator for three years (2012-2015). India and Brunei developed friendly political and diplomatic relations only after the 80s, and since then there have been several ministerial visits between the two countries. In 2016, the then Vice-President of India, Mr Hamid Ansari visited Brunei at the invitation of the crown prince. Even though the Indian community in Brunei is quite small, the Indian culture is quite prominent because Indian movies/cinema, music, and various Malay customs are similar to those of Hindu rituals. The Brunei India Friendship Association (BIFA) was launched in 2009 to further cultural engagement between the two countries[22].

Indonesia has a sizable Hindu community of approximately 4 million and this goes to show how the Indian diaspora has more reach and connectivity

outside of the Indian subcontinent (Jonah Blank, 2015). Indonesia is said to be India's second-largest trading partner in South-East Asia and this opens new avenues to attract Indonesian entrepreneurs towards India, which shall further enhance economic ties between the countries with already rapidly advancing cultural ties[23].

Diplomatic and political relations between India and ***Philippines*** were established in 1949 after both the countries became independent. Furthermore, due to strengthened ASEAN-India interaction, it has facilitated dialogue between both the countries. The Philippines is also one of the beneficiaries of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Program (ITEC) and Colombo plans, and the two have a MoU for a Cultural Exchange programme and an Executive Programme on Cultural Exchanges. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations is extremely active in the country and regularly organises cultural events in Manila at local Indian clubs which cater to the Indian community in the Philippines.

Both the countries actively participate in ASEAN Summits and dialogue meets which builds co-operation and facilitates people-to-people interaction within both the communities. The Indian community is active and celebrates various festivals and rituals. The Philippines is also fast becoming a destination for students to pursue higher education especially in the field of Management and Medical courses. There is more scope for both countries to integrate culturally and economically with India's increasing role in Southeast Asia and have the Philippines backing her in the region[24].

Laos' geographical location is beneficial to India as it is strategically placed, close to China's border. Bilateral relations between both the countries are cordial and deeply rooted in tradition and culture, with Laos being supportive of India's international endeavours including a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council.

Political relations between the two were established in 1956 with consequent high-level visits taking place over the years and most recently in 2016 when Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi visited the land-locked country in 2016. India and Laos first signed a cultural agreement in 1994, and subsequently have signed several more which focus specifically on the cultural development of both the countries. A MoU was signed in 2007 for restoration work of the Vat Phu- an ancient Shiva temple, also a UNESCO World Heritage site, the work for which began in 2009. India also provides 140 scholarships annually to Laotians under various schemes, and set up the Centre of Excellence in Software Development and Training (CESDT) in Vientiane, which has a course for training

in India for 6 months. The Indian community is strong and active and are engaged in various fields of work in the country, and Indian associations such as the INCHAM – the Indian Chamber of Commerce. ASEAN India Business Council (AIBC) based in Malaysia has now got a Chapter in Laos, playing an important role in the country[25].

China's Role in the Region

China's influence in South-East Asia is and has been very prominent for quite some time now. China and India are not a part of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) and yet their significant role in the region has never been questioned or doubted. China's influence and control over the region is expanding and in this regard it has taken the first step by establishing dominance of the South China Sea (or also popularly known as the Indo-Pacific). By doing so it has also indirectly proved to establish power over countries such as Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, who are laying stakes and claims to islands in the Indo-Pacific that China is claiming to be hers 'historically'. Along with aiming to secure maritime superiority in the Indo-Pacific, China is not holding back when it comes to land dominance either. China introduced the idea of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 when President Xi Jingping proposed the large-scale infrastructure project which aims to promote connectivity between markets in Eurasia and South-East Asia and enhance communication and accessibility through railways, pipelines and highways. Till date, more than 60 countries have agreed to participate in the project or showed an interest in doing so. The secondary reason for China wanting to extend the BRI Initiative in Southeast Asia is also to extend influence in the region and to some extent create dependency on the countries[26].

The response thus, to the Belt Road Initiative has been mixed in the region with doubts arising over the strategic implications of it, and China using it as a medium to centralise and economically integrate the South-East Asian countries hampering the unity of an ASEAN-centric region. It is feared that China using its 'debt-trap diplomacy' will make the countries economically dependent on her. The national security implications of the clashes that may arise over territorial disputes in the South China sea where China has laid stakes and claims and several of these countries such as Cambodia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia are refuting it[27].

Several relatively poorer countries of South-East Asia still depend on China for imports and this is what makes it relatively influential in that region. China's trade agreement with ASEAN (The ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement of 2010) has been facing a deficit lately and this raises a political issue which has

been raised several times. However, one thing is sure that the general dependence of South-East Asian countries on China for imports, exports or both has invariably reduced, but an unfavourable trade balance might not be the best scenario in this case[28].

The Mekong river, also referred to as Asia's Rice Bowl, is the source of livelihood, food and energy for five countries in the region where it flows namely Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and China. However, its reasons for importance vary- Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar depend on it for livelihood and it is associated with a cultural heritage and identity of these countries which date back in history. For China on the other hand, the Mekong is an opportunity to have access to these regions to build dams, power plants, harbours and factories, and fast-track development in the region. The Mekong is an all-encompassing region of human and ecological biodiversity, a striking history dating back to the time of The Khmer empire and the beauty that is now the temple of Angkor Wat, which provides a fundamental identity to the people of the region[29]

. Mekong is an important aspect of history and culture of the region and has recently become a hotspot for engineers and businessmen all around the world to tap its resources for hydropower and energy-producing factories to be set up in the region. It is an example of a part of history being lost in transition to urbanisation and political objectives along with the glaring environmental concerns to biodiversity that arise from such actions. China's behaviour and intemperance over the past few years in South-East Asia and globally has raised concerns over how certain issues and bilateral cooperation will be worked out, and thus some ASEAN countries rely on India to act as a countervail in the region to diffuse some of the tensions[30].

Cultural Engagement in South-East Asia

India has always had an extraordinarily rich cultural heritage and this has resonated in every sphere of engagement by an Indian. Politics and Diplomacy too have made use of this culture to engage and further the country's foreign policy. South-East Asia has always been a familiar ground for India and even in the future, it is important to ensure that the connections that we establish with these countries are deeply rooted. Cultural Diplomacy is one such medium. It is true that culture is a strategic asset that can be used for deepening engagement in South-East Asia, but the crux lies in its execution. The Modi government has, since its election in 2014, focused on this aspect of foreign policy, with Yoga playing a central role in helming a major international phenomenon.

Where the South-East Asian countries are concerned, there is further scope for widening horizons to include cinema, social media, sports, diaspora, education, tourism, language, art, architecture and cuisine, as a part of the cultural phenomenon. India's role in the furthering of this cultural phenomenon can be extended through the activities of ASEAN and its significance being placed over and above the influence of China in the region.

Indian diaspora plays a specific role in catering to specific interests, and also helps in reflecting India's interests abroad with a view to raise India's capital and credibility and most importantly fraternity[31].

India has been particularly active in the Mekong region with special involvement of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. With an aim to increase engagement in that region, when it signed the 'Mekong-Ganga Cooperation' with 5 countries namely Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand in 2000, as a 'Look-East' Policy initiative. The visible manifestation of the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation is the MGC Museum of Traditional Asian Textiles at Siem Reap, Cambodia, established with Indian assistance in April 2014. Under the MGC and the ASEAN-India Co-operation Fund, there are several steps being taken to improve cultural and bilateral relations and enhanced cooperation (Singh, 2015). India also launched the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway in November 2016, which is expected to be completed 2022.

Apart from the Trilateral highway other projects to be undertaken include the Kaladan Multi-modal Trade Transit Project, and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) which are projected to not only increase mutual economic productivity but also promote peace and prosperity in the North-east region of India and South-East Asia. Many countries of the region have also backed the re-establishment of Nalanda University, which stands as a testament of the long-lasting relations between India and South-East Asia.

In order to improve trade relations in the South-East Asian region, India signed the ASEAN-India free trade agreement and agreed upon an ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA). This shall prove to be beneficial as India is now ASEAN's fourth largest trading partner and ASEAN accounts for nearly 12.5% of investment flows in India since 2000. India and ASEAN also aim to increase tourism as a means for cultural engagement, as they have moved on from being dialogue partners to strategic partners in the region.

The Prime Minister Mr. Modi also offered to set up digital villages in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam by utilising India's $1 billion line of credit to ASEAN for 'connectivity, culture, and commerce'[32]

Conclusion

Culture is a mirror of society, and sometimes the most defining or prominent characteristic of the society. India has always taken pride in its culture, historical roots and age-old traditions. To make use of this aspect of society and reach out to other societies is an important part of India's foreign policy. Soft power diplomacy is a stronghold for India when utilised wisely, and India should continue doing so. Cultural diplomacy is a historical tool for India's foreign policy ever since Independence and is now being expanded over to South-East Asia. The relevance of South-East Asia in today's global arena is immense. Asia and South-East Asia are expanding with prominent dominance from China and India too isn't far behind. When China is using military, trade and maritime superiority to dominate, India can boast of using soft power resources like culture and diaspora to reach out to a majority of the countries. How successful and efficient this shall prove to be, only time will tell, however where South-East Asia is concerned, it is an important way to go. Reaching out people-to-people is effective and creates a community which in this day and age of connectivity and communication goes a long way. The Indian diaspora is India's strongest soft power tool. A cultural linkage of two countries is binding with common ideas and thinking of the people of the society, holds true for generations to come, while causing large scale welfare development and a long-term impact on both the countries[33]. The onus also lies on the leadership of each country to nurture and maintain relations that establish a foundation for a long-lasting fruitful dynamic. With globalisation rapidly gaining pace, and technology and innovation at its peak, reshaping ancient cultural relations has immense scope. Even though strengthening and highlighting the social aspect of the country's foreign policy is not the only focus, it is definitely something. India is still growing as an economy and has miles to go before all the internal issues of the country are resolved, and having cultural and social backing can go a long way in diplomatic and bilateral relations.

India's cultural engagement in the region is important, however; culture and historical relations is not the only way to connect in the region. It may act as a medium for achieving a larger goal, to serve India's best interests in South-East Asia. India is going to play a significant role in South-East Asia in the years to come and ASEAN will have a hand in it, but cultural ties will only strengthen the relationship, while economic, military and diplomatic prowess shall push India through.

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Ryan Mitra*

India's Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2020 and beyond

Abstract

India's traditional position as the regional hegemon in South Asia in maritime affairs is well-noted and the peninsular State continues to possess a versatile maritime arsenal to protect its littorals and maritime interests. But since the start of the current century, China's emergence as an expansionist and revisionist power has raised concerns amongst scholars and policymakers alike regarding its encroaching influence within India's 'back door'; the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, the larger nexus of Indo-Sino relations and rising hostilities between the two superpowers in the mountainous Himalayas threatens to spill over and affect the State's maritime security. In consideration of this bilateral reality, India finds itself in an interesting position, where China's adversarial behavior in the Indo-Pacific region has brought various stakeholders closer and created space for strategic maritime partnerships. The adoption of the Indo-Pacific construct into India's maritime strategy has opened up various avenues for multilateral maritime governance, and burden-sharing in the Indian and Pacific oceans. This paper will identify the strategic objectives of India's maritime policy in 2020 in the Indo-Pacific region-mainly in South and Southeast Asia, and the role of larger multilateral groupings within the same. It will contextualize its findings against India's Maritime Strategy document published in 2015 to analyze its maritime preparedness in achieving its contemporary maritime security objectives. The author traces India's current policy and articulates its possible evolution in the context of trade, sea lanes of communication, multilateralism, and maritime security while noting the possible impact this evolution may have on fundamental tenants of Indian Foreign Policy-strategic independence, economic and national security.

Keywords: *India, China, Indo-Pacific, Quad, Maritime.*

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Introduction

India's destiny has been strongly influenced by its peninsular form. Being surrounded by water on 3 sides in a region that is actively turning into the center of global geopolitics has proven to be, both, a boon and a bane, for the South Asian State in the 21st century. The maritime domain is a critical variable in India's national security, a fact that has been reinforced throughout modern history. Being the regional hegemon in South Asia in this domain, India has actively served the role of a net security provider to all States within its ambit and around its littorals. Furthermore, it has presented itself as a benign maritime power with no offensive realist ambitions and supported the rule of law and institutionalism in the Indo-Pacific. Yet, India boasts one of the most formidable navies in Asia and plays an active role in the peacetime military exercises with other major powers in the region. Captain Gurpreet S Khurana contextualizes India's latest maritime security strategy where the shift in perception has occurred in New Delhi; India is now looking to be a "provider of net security" rather than a "net provider of security."[1] This signifies of a very subtle but consequential shift in India's maritime posturing in the Indian Ocean Region, and the Indo-Pacific at large.

India's vision in the maritime domain, and the Indo-Pacific more specifically, is best captured by Prime Minister Modi's address at the Shangri La Dialogue in 2018. In his speech, the Prime Minister had called for a 'free, open, and inclusive region'.[2] These three words individually, and collectively consummately surmise the philosophy behind the Indian maritime strategy. It is imperative to note that India's substantial naval capabilities have not blinded New Delhi to the competition it faces in this domain and other interconnected ones. India's maritime strategy like a lot of other domains is governed in an interdisciplinary manner and is subject to domestic political currents and international relations. Noting the fairly hostile region, the State is situated in; a disgruntled neighbor in the West, and an encroaching revisionist power in the East, India has had to finely balance its power projections, national security, trade, and diplomatic relations vis-à-vis these States, and all other regional and extra-regional stakeholders.

India's foreign policy during the Cold War was fairly compartmentalized on the basis of narrow regions, and different governments had prioritized different compartments. Looking back, due to its own security concerns coupled with the lack of external capabilities and international political posturing, former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his successors, including his daughter Indira Gandhi chronically chose not to militarily engage with South-East Asian

States like Singapore, despite these States displaying signs of eagerness to break-through into a politico-military dimension of their bilateral relations.[3] Indira Gandhi and her administration were actively seeking warmer relations with occidental States and the USSR, and sidelining South East Asian States to tertiary levels of consideration.[4] But the liberalization of the Indian economy and the end of the Cold War changed this approach, and India figuratively began to 'Look East'. Modi upgraded this to 'Act East' in 2015. This approach essentially entailed bringing the South-East Asian States bilaterally and multilaterally closer to India, and foster warmer and mutually beneficial relations on a strategic, and economic level. Trade, finance, exchange of human resources, education, infrastructure and investment, disaster assistance, and mutual maritime security were actively featured in the dialogues and negotiations between these States and India. Thus, this region due to its geographic configuration and its economic and strategic value began to play a critical part in India's maritime strategy that had previously principally been compartmentalized around its own littorals.

The Indo-Pacific discourse in US foreign policy began under the Obama administration in 2010.[5] And this discourse has enabled further bilateral cooperation between the two maritime powers, consequently creating space for multilateral cooperation as well. The renaming of the US Pacific Command in Hawaii to the US Indo-Pacific Command by the Trump Administration was simply more than a speech act.[6] It was the first concrete indicator of the convergence of India's interest with that of the United States on a policy level that not only had domestic backing but also bilateral approval. Furthermore, the passage of the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act in 2018 underlined Washington's commitment towards serious engagement in the Indo-Pacific.[7] This was a proven measure that could alleviate India's perennial concern around extended Indo-US cooperation in the maritime domain. But a true analysis of India's maritime policy or India's outreach in the Indo-Pacific, or India's maritime cooperation cannot be done so without considering the China factor. While India has actively hedged between the United States and China, the geopolitical events of 2020 have arguably deeply impacted the Indian equation that balanced its relations with these States.

In light of this, the author will be analyzing India's Indo-Pacific maritime policy in 2020 and beyond on three accounts:

- India's strategic objectives and maritime preparedness
- India's maritime partnerships
- The possibility of 'narrowing' India's maritime outlook

In a conversation with a former senior government official, the author noted a key factor in interpreting one of the fundamental tenants of Indian foreign policy-strategic independence. While this tenant does have roots in India's long, tragic history of invasions and colonialism, it is important to note that this tenant was not formulated as a choice amongst many. Rather, it was the consequence of the hard realities in the immediate post-WW2 years which India as a newly independent State had to face; where no major State was actively willing to provide institutional (treaty-based) security guarantees. And the Indian State had to mold its foreign policy to substantiate its own security by its own means. These reflections are critical to the ensuing analysis where India's 'strategic autonomy' is not simply taken for granted or considered absolute.

India's strategic objectives and maritime preparedness

India does not have any overt objectives against another State in the maritime domain. Its driving school of thought, like in other domains, stems from a defensive realist position. The South Asian State doesn't perceive the Indo-Pacific to be a zero-sum, or an anachronistic notion of maritime competition manifesting into naval warfare. She rather calls for 'openness', 'cooperation', and respect for the high seas as a global common. The Indo-Pacific for India is a positive-sum game. But different arguments are put forward in regards to the compatibility of this philosophy with its robust naval capabilities and how its application must evolve in the context of the developing geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region, especially in regards to China's expansionist behavior in the North Eastern Frontier and in the South China Sea. One can divide India's strategic objectives on the basis of 3 spheres of influence: India's littorals in the Indian Ocean Region, South-East Asia, and Far East Asia.[8] It is to be noted that considering India does not have full-fledged blue water capabilities,[9] its unilateral influence as a net security provider diminishes the further the point of consideration is from New Delhi and its naval bases. The establishment of the Indo-Pacific as a construct acts as an overarching bridge between these three spheres, leading to a transregional visualization in India's foreign policy consideration. Therefore, for example, any development in the South China Sea, which was previously not considered as a principal area of concern, now has an increased impact on India's maritime points of consideration.[10]

India's strategic objective in the region can be traced along the lines of trade and sovereign protection. The Indian Ocean region itself witnessed approximately 90,000 shipments annually with around 40% of the global energy supply sailing through it as well.[11] For India specifically, around 95% of its trade sails through the region. In 2018-19, 64.9% of its foreign trade was

seaborne; 67% of the imports and 61.6% of the exports.[12] As a maritime trade-dependent State, India's trade interest is considered in a sovereignty context. Thus, contemporary shades of securitization are becoming overtly visible. The 2015 Indian Maritime Security Strategy titled *Ensuring Secure Seas* delineates the points of consideration and strategies that are primarily oriented around the protection of Indian littorals and Indian trade interests. The document also highlights the 'Strategy of Deterrence' and 'Strategy of Conflict' that indicate India's behavior in times of peace and in contrast in times of conflict.

There are two kinds of threats to Indian maritime interests: traditional, and non-traditional. The former emanates from other States in the international order, and the latter consists of Non-State Actors, piracy, and humanitarian and natural disasters. The Indian Navy has actively participated in tackling both these kinds of threats. There has been an increase in non-traditional counter-threat operations as seen in the anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in South East Asia, and counter-terrorist operations after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. Khurana also states that private military security companies (PMSC) have further exaggerated the non-traditional threat posed by non-State actors to India's regional and extra-regional interests.[13] But traditional threats continue to be the biggest point of consideration in maritime security for policymakers in New Delhi.[14] The rise of China as a maritime power and subsequent chronic incursions into the Indian Ocean Region,[15] India's frosty relations with the East Asian State in the Himalayas,[16] and the 'all-weather' amity between both of India's hostile neighbors[17] are all collectively having an impact on India's maritime strategy calculations. There has been no indicator that hints at this kind of threat subsiding or receding; traditional threats are still the principal driver of India's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Considering the voluminous maritime-trade the region experiences annually from different parts of the Indo-Pacific, it is fundamentally in its interest to ensure free and open Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOC) as has been agreed upon in international law. The 2015 maritime strategy indicates the South Asian States willingness to abide by the international legal regime established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas, and collaborate with other navies to implement its provisions.[18] In 2013, the Indian Navy also issued its legal doctrine for maritime operations, titled, 'Handbook on the Law of Maritime Operations'.[19] India unilaterally has a strategy of deterrence and strategy of conflict in place to exhibit its own maritime preparedness, and noting the current geopolitical developments is favorably looking at foreign naval collaborations to amplify the efficacy of peacetime deterrence against traditional and non-traditional threats.

Currently, India has 4 maritime commands:

Station	Command	Headed by
Mumbai	Western Naval Command (WNC)	Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, WNC
Vishakapatnam	Eastern Naval Command (ENC)	Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, ENC
Kochi	Southern Naval Command (SNC)	Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, SNC
Port Blair	Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC)	Commander in Chief, ANC

Source: Indian Navy

Under these commands, it has 3 combat platforms: Surface Ships, Naval Aviation, and Sub-Surface instruments. Within each platform, there are an array of different classes and instruments, ranging from guided-missile destroyers (Delhi Class, Surface Ship) to amphibious warfare vessels (Kumbhir Class, Surface Ship) to Boeing P-8i (Naval Aviation) to INS Chakra-nuclear powered submarine (Chakra Class, Sub-Surface). The Indian Navy in 2018 possessed a total of 137 instruments, including submarines, and is aiming to constitute 200 ships by 2027.[20] Having turned towards indigenous naval manufacturing and development, it is a similar trend to that of China but with different drivers and motivations.

This heterogenous versatility of the Indian Navy is reinforced horizontally by the number of instruments in possesses within each class, and vertically due to the State's substantial nuclear and hierarchical naval capabilities. This enables it to address controlled maritime scenarios while being able to tackle positions that risk escalation-either through the means of deterrence or self-defense. Furthermore, INS Vikramaditya, commissioned in 2013 provides the South Asian State the capabilities to conduct complex operations and maritime exercises well beyond its littorals. India is currently in the process of constructing its second aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant which is due for being commissioned in 2022. Recently, the Indian Navy indicated the possibility of constructing and inculcating a third aircraft carrier within the next 15 years.[21]

The Indian Maritime Security Strategy document identifies that traditional threats pose the highest threat levels, while non-traditional threats are more chronic while being lower on the threat spectrum. India's strategy of deterrence can be dichotomized on the lines of non-conventional and conventional. Non-conventional deterrence works under India's nuclear doctrine which espouses the no-first-use policy and non-use against non-nuclear States. Maritime preparedness plays a critical part in the efficacy of India's nuclear deterrent.

The infallibility of India's nuclear deterrence is centered around its credibility, effectiveness, and survivability.[22] To encapsulate these principles India has pursued the nuclear triad, in which its maritime nuclear capabilities are critical to its survivability. The nuclear-powered submarine carrying ballistic missiles (SSBN) which can remain underwater stealthily for prolonged periods of time ensures India retains its capability to employ its 'second use' policy as listed in its doctrine if its land-based launching capabilities are compromised or the response window is better suited for the maritime domain.[23] In regards to conventional traditional and non-traditional threats, India plans to exclusively operate on conventional lines and believes its conventional capabilities must further embolden its non-conventional deterrent.[24] While the South Asian State maintains its position as a law-abiding actor in the maritime domain, it acknowledges the various threats that are posed to it within the same. Therefore, its strategy to deter any actor from acting against its interest and exemplify the denial of desired gains if they were to proceed to act as so, needs to be supported by highly effective conventional capabilities. Therefore, the robust conventional naval preparedness as mentioned earlier has evolved in light of the evolving nature of all kinds of threats that are posed to Indian interests, and how high the bar for deterrence has risen or fallen vis-à-vis any adversarial actors. As the Security Strategy Document articulates, its conventional deterrence revolves around the following components:[25]

- Force Structure and Capabilities: *"At the core of the overall force structure must be the ability to deter and effectively prosecute high intensity conflict, even as the force levels and structures remain adequate to address the wider range of lower level threats."*

- Threat Assessment and Contingency Planning: "*Constant monitoring and assessment of the maritime environment, including threat scenario, potential adversaries' strategies and situations as they develop, will remain essential along with development of suitable strategies and operational plans to counter emerging threats. This is of as much value to deterrence as it is to conflict.*"

- Strategic Situational Awareness and Maritime Domain Awareness: "*Strategic situational awareness will require gathering and correlation of information obtained at all levels, and its analysis, to develop the strategic picture.*"

- Preparedness and Planning: "*The translation of the Indian Navy's combat potential into combat power will be enabled through preparedness and presence. The Indian Navy will maintain appropriate preparedness and presence in its areas of maritime interest, as per the*

threat assessment, with a forward deployed and ready naval posture to deter potential threats."

- Strategic Communication: "*Strategic communication is an essential component in any modern strategy, and is of particular relevance to the Indian maritime security strategy and its constituents. The Indian Navy will pursue strategic communication through the systematic projection of activities, in a linked, coherent and mutually supportive manner, to inform, engage and shape the perceptions of various stakeholders and audiences, for strategic purpose."*

The State's maritime preparedness specifically is exhibited by its range of missions, operations, and exercises while combining force capabilities, material readiness, and training. This is further emboldened when the navy engages in international maritime exercises with other navies which allows an exchange of military and technical expertise, domain knowledge, interpersonal culture, and projects an image of amity, cooperation, and mutual interest within the domain. These international maritime exercises, multilateral groupings, and maritime partnerships will be discussed ahead in the paper.

On the other hand, the Indian Navy's strategy for conflict is oriented towards the possibility of actors not being deterred against acting India's interests or potentially impacting the sea lanes of communication. For obvious reasons, specific parts of this strategy remain confidential, and only limited characteristics of this strategy can be interpreted from what is known about the State's naval instruments and strategy of deterrence. Fundamentally, this strategy will only be implemented in response to any actor that is actively militarily attacking or threatening to attack Indian interests. It is critical to note that the existence of this attack or threat does not necessarily have to be contained to the maritime domain, and its naval capabilities could be deployed in a synergetic manner to respond to a land-based or aerial conflict scenario. If a scenario does occur where India has to use force in its self-interest, the 2015 maritime strategy delineates in what manner the Indian Navy will undertake force projection:[26]

- Maritime Manoeuvre: "*Maritime manoeuvre aims to shock and disrupt the Information-Decision-Action (IDA) cycle of the adversary. The strategy for conflict will employ maritime manoeuvre in all its dimensions in a coordinated manner so as to achieve the desired objectives. The utilisation of manoeuvre will enable concentration of force at the required place and time, to counter surprise, gain the initiative, and obtain decisive results."*

- Maritime Strike: "*The Indian Navy will employ maritime strike to project accurate combat force onto a maritime or strategic target, at sea or ashore, with the purpose of destroying or damaging it. It will cover the range of combat strikes at sea, viz. anti-surface, anti-submarine and anti-air, with weapons launched from aerial, seaborne, underwater and shore platforms. In addition, maritime anti-surface strike will be undertaken by Air Force maritime strike aircraft and by Naval Coastal Missile Batteries, in coordination with the naval forces at sea.*"

- SLOC Interdiction: "*Interdiction of the adversary's SLOCs will be aimed at applying strategic leverage, including psychological pressure, against the adversary by disrupting his freedom to use the seas for military purposes. This would also hinder his efforts for movement of commodities required by his national strategy. The Indian Navy will target the adversary's use of sea routes for executing his operational plan and sustaining war efforts.*"

- Amphibious Operations: "*Amphibious operations will remain valid and valuable in the Indian context, due to the coastal terrain in our primary areas of interest and our many islands. Therefore, the Indian Navy, in close cooperation with the Indian Army and Air Force, will retain the capability and expertise for conducting amphibious operations, and will be prepared to undertake them as required for both defensive and offensive purposes.*"

It is to be noted that in case of aggression by an adversary, like China, on any frontier would most likely trigger a maritime response on the lines of SLOC interdictions. Noting the equidistance of multiple chokepoints in West Asia and South-East Asia from Indian commands, the Indian navy is in a favorable position to respond to any aggression by cutting off merchant and energy supplies either through seizure of goods in international waters or by blockading these points. While these could be contentious in international law; India may have to prove a state of War,[27] establish provisions for Prize Courts,[28] and also will have to manoeuvre the diplomatic and political contours of blockading chokepoints that fall within the sovereign maritime borders of independent States and also witness the passage of ships carrying the flag of States not party to the conflict. It is also to be noted that blockading has its own set of requirements under international law and the Law of Armed Conflict. The belligerent State establishing the blockade will need to declare the blockade, demarcating enemy waters from international waters. Furthermore, the traditional approaches to blockading are no longer feasible due to advances in naval technologies, and

the Indian navy will have to undertake its blockading objectives in the form of SLOC interdictions, which have been characterized as 'distant blockading'.[29]

Nonetheless, the immediate gain out of undertaking SLOC interdiction is the symbolic victory it garners India vis-à-vis an adversary such as China, and could even yield results in the denial of strategic commodities for sustaining the War effort.[30] The current orientation of the Indian navy is towards protecting its own existing sovereign interest and not pursue any expansionist ambitions, therefore any power projections within the strategy of deterrence need to be done so in a way that does not raise any concerns regarding this orientation shifting. Furthermore, the creation of the Andaman and Nicobar Command has widened the navy's primary areas of operations, and has reduced the distance to the South-East Asian chokepoints; the Malacca Strait, the Lombok Strait, the Sunda Strait, and the Ombai and Wetar Strait. The Maritime Infrastructure Perspective Plan-2025 that is aiming at transforming Indian island territories into fully functioning strategic hubs could prove to the necessary maritime fulcrum to help achieve the peninsular State's evolving strategic and security ambitions.[31] Yet, it will be infeasible for India to impose a prolonged blockade and continuously interdict shipments in the SLOCs of the region without international, multilateral cooperation. In light of this, India's peacetime maritime exercises, and growing maritime partnerships with foreign navies are critical to its Indo-Pacific strategy.

India's maritime partnerships

As earlier mentioned, India's position in South Asia is shifting towards being a provider of net security. This essentially entails, India not approaching maritime governance as a hierarchical authority; as a policeman but is looking to create an environment of peace, cooperation, and openness in the Indian Ocean Region by engaging with all stakeholders bilaterally, and multilaterally. This philosophy is further entrenched in its approach to maritime governance in other parts of the Indo-Pacific and is best seen in India's interaction with other major powers in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue aka 'The Quad'.

India's position as a major stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific region is well noted by various regional and extra-regional parties, including the United States. The 2021 White House declassified document on the US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific notes India to be a possible "counter-balance to China", and calls for deeper cooperation with the South Asian State for regional and domain-based governance.[32] A critical point to be noted with the United States, and the Quad as well is that it is not in India's interests to be drawn into US-Sino competition unless there are clear, tangible gains available in doing so;

reduction of the Chinese threat on the Himalayan frontier, devaluation of Pak-Sino amity, or reversion of Chinese maritime expansionist behavior. Rather, India could exercise this competition between these powers, and its noted position in the region for its benefit. There is space to mold the vision of the United States' Indo-Pacific policy to be compatible with India's as mentioned earlier. This aspect was also acknowledged in the 2021 declassified document.[33] The Quad's inception as a multilateral construct occurred in 2007 after the commendable efforts in HADR of the four States in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami.[34] Japan proposed this grouping for the purposes of maritime security in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean region. With India specifically in the spotlight, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's speech on 22 August 2007 in the Indian parliament specifically spoke about the "Confluence of two seas" and the interconnection between a "broader Asia" with the cooperation between India, Japan, Australia, and the United States.[35]

In regards to a security grouping and/or super-structure, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in 2020 has not materialized in a way that would be associated with it being an institution or organization. While China repeatedly has called the Quad as being an 'Asian NATO',[36] the drivers, interests, philosophy, and concerns of all the potential members and regional stakeholders paint a very different picture from that of the US-European security alliance. As of early 2021, no treaty or secretariat formalizes this dialogue into a formal institution. Even as an informal institution it has yet not met the various criterion.[37] But there have been certain developments that indicate that there is some consensus towards establishing some form of regularity and structure on the lines of this dialogue. The biggest development came in 2020 in the backdrop of the COVID19 pandemic and the Indo-Sino standoff in Ladakh.[38] For the first time, the Malabar Exercise included all 4 members of the Quad.[39] Previously, India had always been hesitant in inviting Australia for the exercise that has now come to include Japan and the United States. This is due to its reservations and the frostiness in their bilateral relations. While 2020's quadrilateral maritime exercise in no way consummates what the academic and political analysts characterize as the Quad, it was the pinnacle of developments between these 4 countries that has taken place in recent years. The conversation around the Quad in 2007 was forced to a stop after China issued demarches against the possibility of this dialogue materializing into a security alliance. The fragile US-Sino and Aus-Sino relations, in the end, took priority for the two States, who then pulled out of the conversation. The revival of the conversation surrounding the Quad, in academic circles, has been characterized as Quad 2.0. This revival had various triggers. Some were embedded within the bilateral

relations some of the members shared with China, and for some, it was the need for a larger security framework to respond to non-traditional threats and issues. The idea of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP) is central to this grouping.[40] While there are components to this idea that all member States have found consensus on, like the centrality of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Indo-Pacific construct,[41] and relating to the unimpeded movement of mercantile ships in the region's SLOCs, there are significant presuppositions that lie within this idea that not all the 4 States see eye to eye on. The premise in 2007 was around non-traditional security issues and in the backdrop of the 2004 HADR efforts of the 4 States. Since 2016, the premise of Quad 2.0, while in official statements relating to Indo-Pacific having been around non-traditional security issues, the backdrop is in light of increasing Chinese aggression against all of the member States' interests and sovereignty. The question all States and Stakeholders must ask while committing to and analyzing the Quad is that 'what is the existing threat to a FOIP that the Quad needs to securitize?'

In 2020 itself, there were major developments in India's policies that prima facie indicates a shift on the lines of favoring Quad 2.0. India established an Indo-Pacific division specifically designed to handle India's multilateral relations in the region.[42] If the Quad was to be institutionalized in the future it will fall directly under the mandate and scope of this division. In October 2020, for the second time, the four Quad countries held a ministerial meeting and publicly reaffirmed their commitment against non-traditional threats to the region's security.[43] In Tokyo, the four States also affirmed to hosting high-level ministerial meetings annually.[44] And, as mentioned earlier, the inclusion of Australia in the quadrilateral version of the Malabar Exercise in November 2020. But despite these different developments, there are fundamental differences in the visions of India and these States. Noting FOIP as a common theme, in 2018 Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore called for a free, open, and *inclusive* Indo-Pacific (FOIIP).[45] This is not only a part of India's hedging behavior but is at the core of its concept of the Indo-Pacific that is not centered around posing its strategy precisely around specific issues or players in the region but rather the positive-sum it wants to achieve by the endorsing every States' right to freedom of navigation and overflight in the high seas. India is very particular about the overt position it has in the region, and actively wants to maintain its image as a benign operator in the maritime domain. While India would appreciate further burden-sharing amongst the strongest stakeholders of the Indo-Pacific to tackle non-traditional issues, it has repeatedly indicated that it is not interested in multilaterally targeting any specific traditional threat.

The differing prisms of India and the United States of reading the geopolitical realities of the region have strongly inhibited the materialization of the Quad in an institutional manner. The South Asian State does not want to be drawn into a security and strategic competition between the US and China. Neither does it want to adopt the role of a maritime policeman where it is a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean Region. Its role in the region is evolving on the lines of providing net security within the scope of agreements it is achieving with other regional players. A positive change this is emerging is that the United States envisions India as a counterbalance to China and wishes to align its Indo-Pacific policy with the peninsular State and the other members.[46] India can exercise this position from a defensive realist position where it garners security guarantees from influential players in the region to increase the efficacy of its peacetime operations.

India has extended its operational reach in the Indian Ocean Region since the start of the century. Earlier, the Indian navy was oriented towards military diplomacy and naval visits to other States for cooperation and training purposes. But since 2017, this behavior has been replaced by 'missions-based' deployments.[47] India undertakes unilateral patrolling operations in different zones of the Indian Ocean for peacetime protection purposes against traditional and non-traditional threats alike. And sometimes, as will be portrayed in the following paragraphs, it coordinates with some neighboring States to undertake joined patrols along their international borders, and maritime exercises in international waters. To further peacetime cooperation, and maintain the bonhomie she has with many of the regional players, India undertakes these patrols and exercises annually. In 2020, the Indian navy 11 different kinds of exercises with various foreign navies:[48]

- SIMBEX-20 in the Andaman Sea (India-Singapore Bilateral Maritime Exercise).
- SIMTEX-20 in the Andaman Sea (India-Singapore-Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise).
- Indo-Thai Corpat along their International Maritime Boundary Line (India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol).
- Malabar-2020 in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea (India-Japan-US-Australia Quadrilateral Maritime Exercise).
- SLINEX-2020 off Trincomalee (India-Sri Lanka Bilateral Maritime Exercise).
- Indian Navy (IN) – Bangladesh Navy (BN) Bilateral Maritime Exercise in Bongosagar.

- IN-BN Corpat along their International Maritime Boundary Line (India-Bangladesh Coordinated Patrol).
- JIMEX-20 in the Arabian Sea (India-Japan Bilateral Maritime Exercise).
- INDRA NAVY-20 in the Bay of Bengal (India-Russia Bilateral Maritime Exercise).
- Naseem-Al Bahr Exercise off Goa (India-Oman Bilateral Maritime Exercise).
- PASSEX-20 in the East Indian Ocean Region (India-Australia Bilateral Maritime Exercise).

India in the previous years has also held exercises with Indonesia, Qatar, China, Vietnam, Myanmar, The United Kingdom in the Indo-Pacific region. But each undertaking has its own motivations and contours of cooperation with the participating countries. For example, India has undertaken exercises with Vietnam and China separately but doesn't envision both these States as similar kinds of partners in the Indo-Pacific. While Vietnam is a strong ally of India and provides India with a valuable strategic and political position in the South-East Asian Regional Complex (SEARC),[49] cooperation with China on the other hand is simply an outcome of India's prolonged hedging behavior and maintaining peacetime linkages with a State that may potentially turn hostile to Indian interests.

This network of cooperation is critical to increasing the tenacity and efficacy of the State's Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). MDA is a critical component of India's strategy of deterrence and will play an integral part if the South Asian State is in need to implement its strategy of conflict. For example, among the various instruments it has, the Boeing P-8i aircraft of the Indian Navy has enabled it to conduct regular patrols and flights in the Indian Ocean Region, allowing it to collect vast amounts of information to exert more control over the security of its littorals. To fortify this component, New Delhi has created an Information Management and Analysis Center (IMAC) which is expected to integrate and share information with Singapore's Information Fusion Center (IFC) and Madagascar's Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center.[50] It has also signed numerous white shipping agreements with various stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific, including with Singapore and Australia for the purposes of transparency in commercial and military shipping.[51]

The possibility of 'narrowing' India's maritime outlook

India, since the turn of the century, has favored maritime institutionalism and multilateralism. It is a staunch supporter of the principle of the high seas as a

global common and believes conflict mitigation in this domain is concretely possible through mutual cooperation and burden-sharing. Non-traditional maritime threats are an issue most Asiatic States face, and within this reality, India has actively looked to engage with many stakeholders in the region to create an environment of inclusivity. It has actively endorsed ASEAN's centrality within the Indo-Pacific construct. And the disposition of its capabilities towards maintaining the universality of the high seas of the region. India's principles and objectives can be surmised by its call for respecting international law and UNCLOS, open SLOCs, collaborating to tackle piracy and terrorism, and cooperating in HADR efforts.

But its maritime policies have been privy to criticism for not being specific or focused. James Holmes, the J.C. Wylie Chair of Maritime Strategy of the Naval War College, in 2015 had criticized India's 2007 maritime strategy for being too 'generic'.[52] He further went on to call upon India's new strategy to focused on an identifiable adversary in China to bring more coherence to its strategy for deterrence and conflict. While the 2015 strategy avoided mentioning the East Asian giant by name, it made not-so-subtle references to its activities in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean Region while articulating such activities as against Indian interests.

It is easy to call upon India narrowing its maritime outlook to the possibility of a traditional maritime conflict against China. But the realities in the maritime domain cannot be analyzed in a vacuum, and need to be configured into the great Indo-Sino equation. Secondly, it would be imprudent to project the Status Quoist-Revisionist competition between the US and China onto India's relations with China entirely.

It is a well-known fact that India and China are actively in competition both on land and sea. While the nexus of this competition is not centered solely on one of these domains, the Chinese possess great abilities to mobilize forces in Aksai Chin than they do around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Bay of Bengal. It is well noted that Chinese submarines have repeatedly been entering India's primary sphere of influence.[53] The creation of dual-use ports (civilian and military) along the Indian Ocean rim is a further cause for concern. Still, the Chinese lack significant operational capabilities to launch a sustained attack on the maritime front in the Indian Ocean Region. India's strategy of deterrence is well-founded in practice in terms of the littoral capabilities it holds, and the increasing number of naval instruments it is adding to its arsenal. Furthermore, the creation of the ANC and MDA collaboration with various like-minded States, including the United States has allowed India to be privy to early warnings to

traditional and non-traditional threats alike. Adding to this, India does not desire to actively pursue conflict against a greater power like China within any domain. Every international armed conflict India engaged in with China has been on the lines of enforcing its right to self-defense. Even more so, she has repeatedly espoused the principles of co-existence vis-à-vis China, and if possible, wishes to include the East Asian State in the affairs of the Indo-Pacific. For this, China will have to concede its current vision for the region and abide by the existing regime of international law, which in accordance with current geopolitical trends seems highly unlikely. In light of this, the possibility of land-based conflict affecting maritime security, and China's military strength, India's maritime strategy of deterrence needs to maintain the stakes really high to reduce the possible gains in the Indian Ocean region to close to negligible. This can be pursued on two accounts: by expediating the increase of its own naval capabilities and/or garnering security guarantees from other powerful, like-minded stakeholders within an institutional architecture. But the question remains, is the principal motivator of such decisions around the competition with China or for the purposes of maintaining Indian interests?

Considering the seeping rigidity in Asian geopolitics, India's maritime security must not be apathetic to the region's politics. While actively expanding its naval capabilities may further embolden its strategy of deterrence and conflict, it may have undesired implications on India's image as a regional player and further deepen the security dilemma. India is perceived as a benign player by South Asian and South-East Asian State that is actively operating as a defensive realist State that has slowly opened up to maritime institutionalism. But its increase in instruments needs to run parallel to its philosophy of deterrence and self-defense. If India is to maintain this image, it must increase its capabilities on the lines of 'what is necessary' rather than 'what is needed', it is necessary for India's maritime capabilities to be robust enough to protect its trade and sovereign interests both of which are oriented inwards. Increasing capabilities to a point beyond necessity under the guise of 'what is needed' will most likely have a detrimental impact on India's image in the region. Similarly, India's prowess in the Indian Ocean Region has attracted powerful players in the Indo-Pacific. But pursuing a 'minilateral'[54] amongst the four in a way that isolates other States or does not take into consideration their positions will affect India's position unilaterally as well. She shouldn't enter into a security grouping that is simply an appendage to the US-Sino competition. But should continue pursuing its principles of rule of law and FOIIP via multilateral institutions. Noting the increasing hostility of China against Indian sovereignty in the Himalayas, India must strengthen its strategy of deterrence for maritime security but must do so

in a manner that does not isolate her other allies in the SEARC. Moving forward, if the Quad was to institutionally materialize, India's prerogative should be to engage all other regional stakeholders to undertake collective operations under non-traditional issues, especially focused on terrorism and piracy. Furthermore, creating a coordinated system of HADR in light of the impact of climate change on island countries in the region. Collective security against these threats will lower the threshold of concern other States may have of India joining a group that is increasingly being touted as an anti-China collective. It is important to note that China has in the recent past acted as an aggressor, but at the same time, many of the economies in the SEARC are dependent on Chinese investment, aid, and resources. And a linear, anti-China posture, even under its strategy of deterrence during peacetime will not be completely appreciated or supported by the allies it will be attempting to bring closer within its orbit by this hypothetical posture. India should not narrow its maritime outlook down to being in a security competition with a specific entity, especially China. But rather narrow its outlook on what the future of its multilateral engagement in the Indo-Pacific is going to look like moving forward. Clarity on India's aspirations will allow the State to lead a coordinated and clear effort to build confidence and chart out the path forward in a region that is rapidly becoming the epicenter of politico-military dissonance.

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Paras Ratna*

Four Musketeers: Quad and the Indo-Pacific

Abstract

With the geopolitical construct of the Indo-Pacific gaining traction, the quadrilateral security mechanism involving the US, Japan, India, and Australia, i.e. 'Quad' has become a new buzzword in the strategic community. The article analyzes the implications of Quad as a regional architecture in the broader geopolitical framework of the Indo-Pacific. While doing so, it argues Quad to be a structural necessity for managing the volatility in the increasingly 'multiplex' world order. In doing so, it also explains the constraints and the subsequent need to manage expectations within the Quad country. Further, it interrogates the ideational and material underpinnings behind the increasingly popular phrase of "free and open Indo-Pacific" esp. in the wake COVID 19 pandemic and brings to fore the interplay between values and strategic interest of the stakeholders. Further, the research engages with the concerns of undermining ASEAN centrality often attributed to groupings like 'Quad'. It argues that instead of undermining Quad, it has the potential of being an anchor for ASEAN's centrality in the Indo-Pacific region. It concludes by suggesting possible avenues of collaboration among the member states in the Indo-Pacific.

Key Words: *Indo-Pacific, Quad, politics, strategic.*

1. Introduction

Regions in international politics are political constructs. World geography has always been a site for power contestations leading to the emergence 'new' regions and/or fading and/or reinforcing of existing regional conceptualizations. As noted by Amitav Acharya "The term Asia was first used by Herodotus to designate Anatolia in modern Turkey in the context of the Greek-Persian wars… when the Economist magazine launched a new weekly column in April 2009 called 'Banyan', it reminded readers that the Magazine itself had, as recently as in 1987, written about Asia as a 'geographic accident'. While today there might be a growing 'search for an Asian Identity', the 'suspicion lingers on that Asia is a Western construct"[1]. Amitav Acharya goes on to cite several works and

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literature to dispel the notion that Asia was purely a western construct. However, he goes on to say that regions are cumulative imaginations of people living both inside and outside it[2].

The metaphorical conceptualization of confluence of two seas as was referred by Japanese PM Shizo Abe could be traced to Mughal prince Dara Shikoh's 'Majma-ul-Bahrain'(confluence of two seas)[3]. Indo-Pacific as a region was first used by Kalidasa Nag in his work 'India and the Pacific World' in 1940s[4]. The current terminology of the Indo-Pacific was popularized by Capt. Gurpreet Khurana in his paper titled "Security of Sea Lines: Prospects for India-Japan cooperation". The term was used in the context of sea trade and corresponding threats to the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC)[5]. It was observed that the increasing salience of maritime geography, ranging from the East African littoral to North East Asia due to geopolitics and geo-economic reasons, has led to an intensified deployment of the term 'Indo-Pacific'[6]. US secretary for state Hilary Clinton for the first time used the term 'Indo-Pacific' in 2010 in Honolulu to elucidate the importance of the Indo-Pacific basin for global trade and commerce signaling the intent to move beyond Asia-Pacific[7].

The Asia-Pacific was an extension of East Asia to the shores of the Pacific. After the Cold War, the triumph of capitalist and liberal values over communism openly encouraged the onset of economic geography in the form of Asia-Pacific. Dirlkik (1998,10) sees Asia-Pacific construct as a capitalist project symbolizing an attempt on the part of world economic powers like the USA and Japan to define, institutionalize and control the area. This idea, as noted by him, was to be one in which the so-called First World supplies capital while the so-called Third World supplies the labor. In this, however, one could see the absence of local/Pacific voices in the imagining of Asia-Pacific as a regional construct[8].

Academic disciplines like Area Studies, which gained prominence during Cold War and were encouraged heavily by the American geopolitical interest to study non-western worlds, led to new forms of knowledge constructions and classifications of the non-western world[9]. The "powerplay"[10]of the US alliance in the East Asia, famously referred by then secretary of state John Foster Dulles as the "hub-and-spoke"[11] system, marked the most significant and enduring aspect of regional security architecture in East Asia.

The rise of China and the associated anxieties, coupled with the apparent decline of the US[12], have brought the 'hub-and-spoke' [13]system and the dominance of the US in the East Asian region under duress. Swaine & Fravel (2011) define Chinese assertiveness as "official or governmental behavior and statements that appear to threaten U.S. and allied interests or otherwise challenge the status-

quo in maritime Asia along China's periphery, thereby undermining Asian stability and causing concern to the U.S. and other Asian leaders"[14]. In contrast, what we are witnessing in America is an inward focus and a trend of retrenchment in its foreign policy;[15] his has led to apprehension about America's willingness and capability to defend the 'liberal order[16]'

It is not that the USA was not aware of the ripples it was creating. While the US continued to look inwards, the US under Obama administration launched pivot to Asia in 2011[17]. A significant dimension of it was to rebalance the hub-and-spoke alliance system by strengthening the economic and military relationship, particularly in the Asia-Pacific[18]. This region comprises of established and emerging markets like South Korea, Singapore, and Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia, which as such provides a strong economic rationale for the American pivot. However, the pivot met with little success. As a result, Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)[19], failed to find any support within the Trump administration and was subsequently shunned. All this while, China has emerged to be far more assertive, breaking the perceived caution of pre-2008[20]. East Asian states like the Philippines, Cambodia, and Malaysia have increasingly following close links with China due to their own security and economic concern.[21] In fact, the pivot led to what Elizabeth Economy terms as "assertive authoritarianism"[22], which she defines in terms of foreign policy as "Xi's vision of China-centered Asia-Pacific through China funded infrastructure project, maritime cooperation, regional trade, financial cooperation. Simultaneously, expanding and enforcing its sovereignty claims, rewarding those who fall in line and punishing those who don't"[23]. Today, the enhanced Chinese military capability is being leveraged by Beijing to coerce neighboring countries like Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan, India, Philippines, and others[24].

China's undertaking of land reclamation projects in the South China Sea, transgression in Doklam, and dismissal of International Court of Justice's ruling in favor of the Philippines points to the intensification of the unilateral assertion[25]. The 'responsible stakeholder'[26] thesis based on the premise that China's rise and subsequent integration into the world economy will lead to greater compliance with international norms and rule-based order has not been realized as the ongoing US-China trade spat is showing. Notwithstanding the initial signs of rapprochement[27], Trump administration soon realized the limitation of the liberal belief and in October 2017, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson started using 'Indo-Pacific' as a concept which promoted the vision of free and open Indo-Pacific[28].

The National Security Strategy released by Trump administration describes Indo-Pacific region as a "region where geopolitical competition between free

and repressive visions of world order is taking place"[29]. In the same breath, it envisages close quadrilateral cooperation with democratic states like Japan, Australia, and India, which are commonly referred to as 'Quad'(in-the-making)[30]. The rise of China has been accompanied by the rise of other Asian powers like India and Indonesia. This has led to what TV Paul notes "a soft-balancing coalition, relying on diplomacy and institutional cooperation, and a limited hard-balancing coalition, that is, strategic partnerships short of formal alliances"[31]. The quest for Quad and subsequent free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) needs to be seen the same light. It is pertinent to note that different actors have their own conception of the geographical expanse of Indo-Pacific. While for the US it extends from the western shores of the United States to the west coast of India; Japan and India believe it to be extending from the eastern coast of Africa to western shores of America[32]. The paper adheres to Japanese and Indian definitions of Indo-Pacific. In the following sections, the paper attempts to elucidate the emerging dynamics accompanying the geopolitical construct of 'Indo-Pacific'.

2. Whither Quad in the Indo-Pacific?

The idea of quadrilateral security mechanism known as 'Quad'[33], which includes democratic countries namely India, the US, Australia, and Japan, is gaining momentum alongside the construct of 'Indo-Pacific'. The origins of Quad dates back to 2004-05 when officials from the aforementioned states coordinated as a part of 'Tsunami Core Group' for relief and rescue operations in the Indian Ocean region in 2004[34]. The concert/grouping of democratic nation-states resonated well with Washington's policy-making circles. In fact, John McCain outlined his vision for "league of democracies"[35] as one of his foreign policy priorities while campaigning for the post of President.

Quad symbolizes expansion of Asian regionalism to the entirety of the Indian and Pacific Ocean[36]. The idea of the quad was first mentioned by Japanese PM Shinzo Abe in his book '*Utsukushi-Kuni-e*' (A beautiful country)[37]. Japan has been leading the case for a quadrilateral security grouping from the front. Strategic considerations play a dominant role in Japan's vision of quad as it symbolizes an alternative regional architecture shaped by players sharing the same democratic values[38]. The call for quad was reiterated by Japanese foreign minister Taro Aso in form of the arc of freedom and prosperity based on the premise of value-oriented diplomacy[39]. He notes "Japan must make its ties even firmer with friendly nations that share the common views and interests, namely of course the United States as well as Australia, India, and the member states of the EU and NATO, and at the same time work with these friends towards the expansion

of this *arc of freedom and prosperity*"[40] (emphasis added). The same sentiment was echoed by the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in his address to the Indian parliament in 2007 where he observed "how with Japan and India coming together, the broader Asia will evolve into an immense network spanning the entirety of Pacific Ocean, incorporating the United States of America and Australia"[41].

On the other hand, the idea of Quad received sharp criticisms from China whose strategists labelled the Quad rather provocatively as 'Asian NATO'[42] that is ganging up against the country. Thus, Quad 1.0 witnessed a quiet burial even before it could have taken the first steps. Australian Government then led by Kevin Rudd decided to step out of the Quad on the grounds of antagonizing China I[43]. India too remained reticent while the US developed cold feet as it was in need of China's support over United Nation Security Council (UNSC) sanctions against Iran[44].

2.1 Quad 2.0- a strategic necessity?

A decade after Quad 1.0 failed to garner any traction among the participating countries, the then US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's speech set the ball rolling for a Quad once again. The speech highlighted the significance of Indo-US relationship in the context of Indo-Pacific and subsequent Asian regionalism and highlighted the growing strategic convergence between India and the United States to safeguard the broader interest of the region. Secretary Tillerson had noted that "the increasing convergence of U.S. and Indian interests and values offers the Indo-Pacific the best opportunity to defend the rules-based global system. The United States is committed to working with any nation in South Asia or the broader region that shares our vision of an Indo-Pacific where sovereignty is upheld and a rules-based system is respected. It is time we act on our vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, supported and protected by two strong pillars of democracy: The United States and India."[45]

The Japanese foreign minister, Taro Kono, too proposed a top-level strategic dialogue with US, Australia, and India to promote free trade and defense cooperation across a stretch of ocean from the South China Sea, across the Indian Ocean and all the way to Africa in 2017[46]. Since then, four joint secretary level meetings have taken place between these countries, the most recent one being held in May 2019 in Bangkok[47]. Despite the initial setbacks, the renewed eagerness of the so-called Quad countries to engage on a common platform with the discourse of 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' points toward a deeper strategic necessity. Therefore, it is pertinent to reflect on the geostrategic underpinnings of the revival of the Quad.

According to the Power Transition theory[48] "the international system is usually hierarchically ordered with a dominant power at the top that creates and sustains the international order; that, because of uneven growth rates, new powers are regularly rising; and that the risk of war is highest in a situation when a dissatisfied rising power has reached parity or even overtaken the declining dominant power". Tammen & Kugler (2006)[49] argue that China's impressive growth rate and command over resources increasingly puts it in the zone of parity and potential transition with the US, and in such scenario, parity and peace is achieved if both parties are satisfied with existing rules and order whereas in case of dissatisfaction the probability of conflict increases significantly. The US and China are already engaged in an intense trade spat[50]. According to the recently declassified US strategic framework for Indo-Pacific, "the US increasingly visualizes China as a strategic competitor and points to Beijing's attempt to carve new illiberal spheres of influence as a major threat to the US"[51]. The first meeting in the aftermath of COVID19 pandemic under the new Biden administration at Anchorage in Alaska too was met with limited success[52]. The American side expressed concerns about China's concern in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Cyber-attack on the US, economic coercion etc. and labelled these actions as threatening to the rules-based order[53]. Similarly, Chinese officials accused the US of impeding trade exchanges and inciting other countries to attack China. Further they even took a dig at the state of democracy in the USA[54]. Here, it is important to note that the US-China meeting took place in the backdrop of secretary Blinken's visit to Japan and South Korea-allies Washington deems crucial in challenging China's unilateral aggression in the South China Sea. This brings to the fore seeming discontent within the Sino-US relations with global implications.

Scott (2018) explains the US Indo-Pacific strategy in three processes[55]; first, the rise of China presents a power transition challenge to the US. Second, the US responds to it through internal (building own capabilities) and external balancing (forging strategic partnerships and allies). Third, the balance of threat figures not only for the US but looms larger into the strategic considerations of other powers like India, Japan, and Australia. Previously, Trump administrations, 'America First' slogan and adherence to protectionism need to be seen in the light of enhancing its own capacity to retain primacy in the world[56]. Mearsheimer too in his analysis of the US foreign policy notes that "states which gain regional primacy or hegemony don't want peers, instead they prefer other regions divided into many powers which compete with one another"[57]. Therefore, the renaming of US Pacific Command (USPACOM) into the US Indo Pacific Command (USIPACOM) seems to be an attempt by the US to propagate the imagination

of a US-led regional architecture once again[58]. The same is reflected in the National Defense Strategy where it notes that [59]

"to advance our vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, we (the US) are building new and stronger bonds with nations that share our values across the region, from India to Samoa; Our (US) relationships will flow from a spirit of respect built on partnership, not domination."

It is no coincidence that the US National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy (NDS) document takes note of India's rising clout in a positive manner. Same sentiments were echoed by the former Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, in his speech on Indo-Pacific where he distinguishes two rising powers namely China and India. He elucidates:

"China, while rising alongside India, has done so less responsibly, at times undermining the international, rules-based order […] It makes perfect sense that the United States – at this time – should seek to build on the strong foundation of our years of cooperation with India. It is indeed time to double down on a democratic partner that is still rising – and rising responsibly – for the next 100 years […] The Indo-Pacific in particular – needs the United States and India to have a strong partnership."[60]

Traditionally, the act(s) of balancing happen against the dominant power with superior resources. With that in mind, it becomes interesting to note that regional Asian powers like Japan and India instead of resisting the US are willingly forging special strategic partnerships and alliances with the US and each other in the form of Quad. The reason for the same is explained by Walt (1985)[61] where he lists factors like geographical proximity and aggressive intention which shape the states' perception of threat and the subsequent decision to balance or bandwagon. Both of these factors make India and Japan more worried about China rather than the US. Increasing unilateral assertions by China are a cause for discomfort for countries like India, Japan, Vietnam, and the Indonesia. Enhanced economic and military capability is used by Beijing to dictate the 'acceptable' behavior towards contentious territorial and maritime disputes. The recent fatal clash between India and China along their northern borders in Ladakh highlighted the risk of territorial dispute blowing into armed conflict[62]. In the past Chinese pressure forced Vietnam to back out from drilling being carried out by Spanish subsidiary Repsol on its behest in the East Sea (referred to as the South China Sea by China)[63]. In the same vein, China has unilaterally built seven military bases in the South China Sea with great speed and scale aimed at strengthening and expanding its footprints[64]. The construction includes port facilities, airstrips, and military installations, aircraft hangers,

barrack facilities, radar facilities, weapon emplacements, and 1000 feet runways[65]. These activities aimed at altering the status-quo along its territorial and maritime boundaries have been major sources of regional and international contention. The US-China standoff that took place near Scarborough shoal where the missile destroyer USS Hooper was warned and intercepted by People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), serves as an interesting example of how regional problems metamorphose into global troubles[66].

The South China Sea is a strategic waterway with almost one-third of global trade passing through it and is a disputed geography with China, Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and Vietnam making overlapping claims over it[67]. Similarly, the transgressions in Dokalam tri-junction to alter the status-quo led to a stand-off between India and China[68]. China's repeated claims over parts of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh on the one hand and on the other the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) violating India's territorial sovereignty, clearly indicate China's pushover attitude vis-à-vis India[69]. Pressurizing Japan over Senkaku Islands (referred by China as Diaoyu Islands), ignoring international tribunals verdict in 2016 favoring the Philippines are among other examples that demonstrate Chinese assertive behavior and its desire to challenge the status-quo with threats and force[70]. Where China has not shied away from employing coercion to stir and settle disputes in ways it likes, it is also using other subtler ways to exercise domination. One such method has taken the shape of an ambitious trade and infrastructure project called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Under the BRI, China offers infrastructure loans at high-interest rates of approximate 6 percent per annum compared to World Bank and ADB loans at 0.25-3 percent annum to smaller countries in the Indo-Pacific, making them vulnerable to what is essentially predatory economics[71]. A point in case, amongst many that are emerging across the world, is that of Sri Lanka's Hambantota port which was leased to China for 99-years due to inability to repay[72].

The fact that China is making inroads into the political economies of many countries in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific in such a sly manner lends credibility to India's theory about "String of Pearls"[73], which talks about India's encirclement by China. Similarly, there has been a realization in the Australian strategic circles that China could use economic interdependence as a tool for geopolitical goals as was evident in Beijing's targeting of Australian wine after the passage of foreign donation and interference law[74]. Further in the wake of Australia's support for global inquiry into the origins of COVID19 pandemic, Beijing retaliated by suspending beef imports and blocked Barley trade worth 439 million[75]. This toolkit of military-economic coercion has made regional power(s) especially

India, Japan, and Australia seriously contemplate an alternate regional architecture based on democratic and transparent values – those that are represented by the Quad. The recently held Quad summit in the month of March took cognizance[76] of the eco-military coercion by China as member countries share intense trade relations. They went beyond the usual free and open Indo- Pacific, rules-based order to include collective responsibility in providing public goods such as vaccines in the wake of pandemic, quality infrastructure, critical technologies, climate change, and most importantly resilient supply chain infrastructure.

Although competing perspectives exist on the exact extent, nature and geography of the collaboration, there seems to be a growing convergence on the desire for a mechanism espousing democratic, free, open, and transparent values. This then makes the Quad appear to be a default option, and a *strategic necessity*.

3. ASEAN Centrality and the Indo-Pacific – Towards an inclusive regional order?

The ex-US president Trump's speech elucidating 'free and open Indo-Pacific' in Da Nang, Vietnam in 2017 led to a renewed interest in the geopolitical construct of ASEAN and prompted active deliberation within the ASEAN community[77]. ASEAN regionalism firmly holds South-East Asia together, which could provide an innovative solution to navigate the strategic quandary confronting them. In fact, as the discussions around 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' championed by major democratic nation-states namely India, Japan, US, and Australia gain momentum, suggestions are made in the diplomatic circles to involve ASEAN countries like Singapore as 'Quad plus' due to their central geographic location in this geopolitical construct[78]. Therefore, the inclusion/acceptance of 'Indo-Pacific' by ASEAN is pivotal to the legitimization of the Indo-Pacific regional construct.

Although the Quads' stated objectives make it be about rules-based order, maritime security, and connectivity, many analysts interpret it solely as a geopolitical tool to contain China and is often perceived as 'Asian NATO'[79]. As Cary Huang, senior columnist on China affairs notes "the aegis these democracies create has the potential to develop into an Asian NATO– and dramatically change the region's security landscape in the decades ahead"[80]. The confrontation between major powers does not augur well for ASEAN member-states[81]. This frustration was evident in Singapore PM Lee Hsien's speech at the Shangri-La dialogue where he emphasized close cooperation with both the US and China and said: "development programs like BRI and other regional cooperation initiatives shouldn't create rival blocs and force smaller countries to take sides"[82].

The apparent tension between the alternate visions of regional order championed by the Quad countries on the one hand and the China on the other has brought to fore the dilemma and limitations of ASEAN centered mechanism i.e. 'ASEAN centrality' in withstanding/containing the great power dynamics/competition manifested in the upcoming regional architecture(s)[83].

Section 3 in article 41 of ASEAN charter states that "ASEAN states shall be the primary driving force in regional arrangements that it initiates and maintain its centrality in regional cooperation and community building"[84]. The mention of ASEAN centrality in the charter shows how the notion of centrality has become a part of ASEAN identity and consciousness. Noted East Asian scholar Alice D Ba, speaks of ASEAN led regionalism/ regional architecture[85]

> "In East and South East Asia as a 20-year experiment in whether and how lesser powers can guide and moderate major powers. There, the challenge is not only how to avoid major power conflict and disruption but also how to guide major power activity in ways that do not undermine the interests and perspectives of Asia's lesser powers for whom the stakes can be especially high. Lesser powers are, after all, those most vulnerable to coercion by individual major powers, division by major power conflict, and also marginalization by great power concert. These challenges have provided the precipitating causes and driving rationales behind various ASEAN-led efforts aimed at institutionalizing –regularizing, guiding, bounding – major powers and their activities in the region".

The substantial traction received by the ASEAN centrality has also made it a subject of academic scrutiny. Filipino scholar Herman Kraft argues that the "ASEAN's' acceptance of its centrality in the broader East Asian and Asia-Pacific regionalism imposed an imperative to accept the involvement of and engagement with the major powers in the region and therefore deviating from the objective of insulating the South East Asian region from balance of power politics and great power rivalries"[86]. Clearly implying that ASEAN centrality is an 'accepted' notion and is a product of engagement of both the external powers and ASEAN member-states. As Evelyn Goh notes[87]:

> "ASEAN helped to create a minimalist normative bargain among the great powers in the region. Its model of comfortable regionalism allows great powers to treat regional institutions as instrument of so-called 'soft balancing' and is short of the kind of sustained cooperation on the part of great powers that is necessary to the creation of a new stable regional architecture and therefore negotiation of a new regional order is a task that regional great powers must take upon themselves".

Amitav Acharya argues that the idea of ASEAN centrality interpreted in the direct sense as ASEAN being the 'institutional anchor' of the Asia-Pacific regional architecture makes it vulnerable to the dynamics of great power relations as the regional/institutional architecture involves far stronger powers than the respective and, in some instances, the collective strength of ASEAN members[88]. One of the formidable challenges confronting ASEAN centrality is the internal rivalry and differences within ASEAN grouping itself. Expansion of membership in the past to include countries with diverse values and norms ranging from democracy to military dictatorship have rendered consensus building a herculean task[89]. Effectively undermining *ASEAN-Way[90]*. Mr. Natalegawa, ex-Indonesian foreign minister during the launch of his book 'Does ASEAN centrality matter-A view from within?' pointed to a "sense of drift among ASEAN countries, where on the surface there is a sense of unity and yet at the same time there is a sense of drift in ASEAN cooperation"[91]. Although the intra-ASEAN rivalry is much milder compared to that in South Asia or North-East Asia, the South China Sea conflict involving some ASEAN nation states and China has subjected ASEAN cohesion to substantial duress[92]. ASEAN countries like Cambodia and Laos, which have deep ties with China, have blocked/withdrawn proposals/joint communique on the South China Sea reportedly at the behest of Beijing[93]. It is observed that ASEAN countries with no competing or overlapping claims in the South China Sea place a greater premium on closer ties with China. Similarly, the divide was evident with respect to UNGA resolution asking Myanmar to end military operations in Rakhine where countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei voted in the favor while Thailand, Singapore abstained and the remaining voted against it[94].

ASEAN states are characterized by varied state capacity and any slippage in the political stability of a member state has the potential to disturb regional stability. Unfortunately, South-East Asia has been a fertile ground for the religious extremism and armed insurgency[95]. Islamic separatist movement in south Thailand and the southern Philippines[96], the spreading arc of ISIS in South-East Asia as evident in the suicide bombings in Indonesia[97] and the seize of Marawi by ISIS militants[98], Bangkok bombings[99], and Violent clash in Myanmar's Rakhine province[100]. These radical beliefs and ideologies easily garner traction in South East Asia as well as adjoining South Asia where political tensions often have religious undertones. Given, ASEAN's' principle of non-interference these transnational challenges emerging from domestic instability can undermine regional stability.

Conventional politics aside, the lack of cohesion has hampered ASEAN's ability to address non-traditional security issues like the South-East Asian haze[101].

It results from Indonesian farmers burning forest in the islands of Sumatra for Palm oil. The haze has long been a source of discontent for countries like Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia[102]. Although the recent past has witnessed some improvements, long-term institutional and regional approach is wanting and therefore serves another reminder of ASEAN's' institutional limitations. The frustration with lack of cohesion was reflected in Bilahari Kaushikan's speech at the ISEAS-Yousuf Ishak Institute where he was quoted saying "internal dynamics has been a restricting factor in intra-ASEAN relations as not every new member has internalized the need to balance between national and regional interest"[103].

Notwithstanding the challenges confronting ASEAN centrality, Quad countries have affirmed their faith in the ASEA-led regional architecture and extended their support for other regional institutions including the Indian Ocean Rim Association and Pacific Islands Forum[104]. Quad (in the making) as a strategic grouping is aimed at providing the much-needed anchor to ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific regional architecture. As noted by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Shangri-La dialogue, "The ten countries of South East Asia connect the two great oceans in both the geographical and civilizational sense. Inclusiveness, openness and ASEAN centrality and unity, therefore, lie at the heart of the new Indo-Pacific. India does not see the Indo-Pacific Region as a strategy or as a club of limited members. Nor as a grouping that seeks to dominate. And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country"[105].

The US in its Indo-Pacific report too pitches for ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific regional architecture. Indo-Pacific report notes "ASEAN and the US share common values and it is the key partner in the Indo-Pacific strategy aimed at promoting rules-based and transparent regional order"[106]. Australian too in its foreign policy white paper places a premium on ASEAN centrality[107] and similarly, Japan in the recently held 45th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan summit reiterated its commitment to the "ASEAN unity, cohesion, and centrality in shaping the evolving regional architecture"[108]. As evident, the Quad grouping does not aim at creating blocks or exclusive membership but a rules-based and transparent regional order and therefore can't be equated with Asian NATO. The acceptance of ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific regional architecture by the major regional powers at a time when the ASEAN way is being challenged by both endogenous and exogenous factors demonstrates their commitment to an inclusive regional order. Thus, it is imperative for ASEAN member-states to align their national interest with broader regional interests. ASEAN nation have been deliberating about the salience of ASEAN centrality. The recent release of ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific emphasizing "ASEAN Centrality, openness,

transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, good governance, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention, complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks, equality, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit and respect for international law, such as UN Charter, the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and other relevant UN treaties and conventions, the ASEAN Charter and various ASEAN treaties and agreements and the EAS Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (2011)" [109]is a welcome step towards arresting ASEAN's' waning centrality in dealing with unilateral assertions and the (re) emergence of great power rivalry.

4. Managing needs and expectations

Like any other emerging regional architecture, the Indo-Pacific too has its fair share of challenges. While the Indo-Pacific is largely viewed as a US-led regional order to contain China, there exists a substantial difference in the world view and interests of other major countries like India, Australia, and Japan. The engagement of these major powers is driven by their own security and economic logic.

The US allies and partners differ on the prospective partners in the Indo-Pacific. Japan and New Delhi view Russia as a balancing alternative to China contrary to the US perception of it being a pariah state. The US, Japan, and Australia view North Korea as a troubled littoral very much the same manner in which India views Pakistan[110]. Trade and commerce represent another blunt manifestation of differences among India, Japan, and the US. Trade deficit constituted an important parameter for the previous Trump administration to measure the merit of any bilateral partnership. Therefore, it did not hesitate in initiating coercive measures against its closest partner and allies. It terminated India's Generalized System of Preference (GSP) status on the grounds that "India had not assured the US it will provide equitable and reasonable access to its market"[111]. Japan too is apprehensive regarding tariff being imposed on its automobile industry. Washington's imposition of tariff on goods from Mexico hit the Japanese automobile industry[112]. Data localization is another avenue where serious disagreements lie between the US and India[113]. These differences suggest that major powers are driven by their own economic and strategic rationale. A fine balance between regional and national interests needs to be established.

Any way forward for the Indo-Pacific strategy should aim at the alignment of regional and national interest of major powers. As Pant and Rej notes "there is a need to delineate and calibrate expectation for one another in order to develop a congruent strategy for the region"[114]. The US as the most powerful state along

the Indo-Pacific littoral needs to rethink its strategy towards alliance and partners and accordingly improvise its strategy. Due to dense and fluid economic interaction the states along Indo-Pacific sees it as a risk that needs to be managed rather than threat. Therefore, It is argued that the US alliance and partnerships should move away from cold war model where demarcation was clear and should model it along the lines of insurance contracts aimed at maintaining uncertainty[115]. Country wise Risk – Insurance matrix for the US alliance and partnership strategy is given down below.

Probability of harm

	High	Low
High	**Health insurance** *Japan, South Korea*	**Disaster insurance** *Australia, India*
Low	**Accident insurance** *Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia*	**Travel insurance** *Thailand, Singapore*

Magnitude of harm

Source: Mukherjee, Rohan (2020).

According to Mukherjee (2020)[116], this table categorizes each country in accordance with the risk i.e., magnitude and probability of harm they face and the subsequent package or assurances they would need from the USA. The ones like Japan and South Korea that faces high probability and magnitude of harm due to historical reasons such as sovereignty etc. requires highest assurance from the US in terms of health insurance with preexisting disease. Similarly, South China Sea claimant states in the third quadrant faces low magnitude and high probability of harm due to China's claim of nine dash line and therefore they require something like Accident insurance. Australia and India in the second quadrant have high magnitude but low probability of harm as China has economic interest in Australia and even India also border issue with the exception of Galwan clash has remained dormant. Therefore, although the probability is low the magnitude of harm in terms of economic cost for Australia and rising power status for India remains high. Thus, they require something on the lines of Disaster insurance. The fourth quadrant country i.e., likes of Singapore and

Thailand faces low probability and magnitude of harm as they aren't involved in high stakes conflict and therefore require something like Travel insurance.

The Quad countries on the other hand need to understand the significance of Quad or Indo-Pacific from the US perspective to keep their expectations in check. For the US, Quad is an instrument to contain China where the cost of containment is dispersed across the member states while allowing it to maintain comparative advantage in East Asia where its interest lies[117]. Thus, while the US acts swiftly against any Chinese transgression in the Pacific, it remains cautious when the theater shifts to the Indian Ocean Region[118].

Recent developments & way forward

Differences apart, there has been rapid positive developments and a greater willingness among major powers to engage. India recently established a division for 'Indo-Pacific' at its Ministry for External Affairs[119]. This demonstrates the intent and seriousness of the indo-pacific regional architecture that is often discounted. Besides, US-India defense cooperation is an all-time high. From elevating India to the status of Strategic Trade Authorization List-1[120] to the acknowledgment of India as 'major defense partner'[121] the US-India defense cooperation seems to have come to full circle. Similarly, India and Japan too have agreed for 2+2 dialogue on the lines of the US[122]. Japan and India are already collaborating on transparent and sustainable infrastructure and development project in the Indo-Pacific region in the form of the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor[123]. On the defense front, they have already signed logistics sharing agreement in September last year[124]. Similarly, both New Delhi and Canberra have demonstrated greater strategic engagement[125]. Last year, both these countries had signed Australia-India mutual logistics support agreement as well as Defense Science and Technology Implementing Agreement aimed at deepening defense cooperation between the two country. In the wake of armed confrontation with China, India invited Royal Australian Navy to participate in the 24th edition of Malabar naval exercise in November 2020[126]. This was the first joint exercise by the Quad countries in the backdrop of tensed/strained relations with China. Further, Quad country navies are all set to join French navy for joint exercise in the Bay of Bengal region in the first week of April[127]. This is largely viewed as a 'Quad Plus' regional security arrangement. All these points to willingness towards forging a regional security partnership.

Quad countries could collaborate on issues like resilient and transparent supply chain especially. in the wake of covid, piracy, cybersecurity, and terrorism to name few. Unlike, Traditional issues that of non-traditional security issues invoke concerns of balancing and band wagoning. Alternatively, it can offer a

diplomatic forum to complement the existing ASEAN mechanism to deal with any unilateral assertion of interests. Indo-Pacific strategy needs to be institutionalized. To begin with, Asia –Pacific Economic Cooperation should be renamed as Indo-Pacific Economic Cooperation to factor in the dynamic geopolitical realities. Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy needs to synergize geopolitics and geo-economics Success of any new regional project is dependent on its institutional foot print. Competing interest aside, major powers in the region have demonstrated greater strategic agility and an eagerness to engage on differences. Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy (FOIP) is a timely instrument to navigate the strategic flux in the international order. There exists greater room for constructive engagement among Quad countries as they have the potential to provide much needed economic, political, security and diplomatic pillar to the Indo-Pacific regional architecture.

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Dawn of the 'Post-Hodor' Era in The Ever-Existing 'Post Truth' Society

Abstract

"We're in a post-truth world now, with eroding trust and accountability and it can't end well."¹ But are we really? Ever since the 2016 US elections, which led to Donald Trump getting elected as the President of the United States, we hear this sentiment across liberals, saying that the world has become a difficult place to live. Taking examples from different genres of the West and the East such as politics, religion, pop culture and history to further showcase that post truth is not a new phenomenon. Infact, it is just another rosy term used by the liberals to depict; as if some radical change has taken place in the society. This paper aims to examine the changes happening in the new era from various perspectives.

Key Words: *Post Truth, Hodor, Religion.*

People See Things as They Are & Not as actually things are

First, we need to understand what post truth means. Lee McIntyre in his book *'Post Truth'* explains the phenomenon as a time in history when objectivity of facts has lost its value and people believe in everything that appeals their emotions and personal beliefs. Recent examples which are given to prove this theory are flat earthers, who believe that the earth is flat. Alternatively it could be Donald Trump claiming to win majority votes or having the most attendance at his inauguration and people believing him, when there is clear evidence to show otherwise. The rise of fake news as is evident on various media platforms is also attributed to post truth. Fake news is defined as news articles which are intentionally false and are intended to misdirect the reader.

Such an interpretation disregards the origin of post-truth. There is no concrete evidence of origin of a post truth society since society has always been post truth but the origin of the idea of post truth lies in post-modernism which started to discredit truth more than 40 years ago, claiming that every truth is relative

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and is formed by the beliefs of the person saying it. The origin doesn't lie with 2016 elections or the current time. The left-leaning liberals aimed to sought freedom from the so called 'state-sponsored truth' and thus spawned post-truth. This can be seen in *Lyotard's The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* published in 1979 which clearly shows that since humans have been postmodern they have been setting the scene for a post-truth era.

I. A Lie Is Not A Lie If You Believe It's True

Religion is the first belief which united human beings on a large scale as is evident worldwide. Religion, essentially, are beliefs shared by group of people. Post truth too is based on shared beliefs. If we say that we have moved into a post truth era, this naturally begs the question that when was truth objective, when was there a consensus on everything? Ever since the dawn of humans, we have always lived in post truth society. The ability to have shared beliefs and create stories is what made humans to come out on top of every other species. We created a fiction which made us obey the same laws and cooperate. Yuval Noah Harari, Israeli historian, professor and the author of the famous book *Sapiens*, says that *"Humans are a post truth species."* He goes on and argues that millions of years ago, "*human locked themselves into a mythological bubble"*. The bible was never questioned on its facts. Similarly, no religion has ever been questioned by its believers, be it Islam, Hinduism or any other. No one ever questioned that whether Jesus walked on water or Allah punishes those who commit haram. This is very evident from the way the religious practices are blindly followed the world over. Emergence of fake news is another example that is given by the liberals to prove their claim of world turning into a post truth society. Fake news is just a story which might be false but is believed by many to be true and has an appeal to the mass

When Harari says that we are a post truth species, I cannot agree more. The existence of a person is based on his beliefs and it is hard to break those beliefs because a person will go miles in protecting those beliefs. A simple example of this could be a criminal. A criminal when charged with the case wants to undermine the trust that people have in the justice system. He will say that he is innocent and will try to undermine the trust that people have in police or the judiciary. Whenever someone challenges your beliefs, you feel threatened. This can also be linked to the communal violence between different religions.

The Truth Can Be a Bad Choice for A Wise Man

In the political and the historical context, post truth has always existed. Politics is about power, and you get power when people not only tend to believe

in what you say or do, but also start doing things which you have mentioned. The more the number of believers the more power a leader has. Hitler in Mein Kamp wrote,

> *"The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly — it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over."*

Joseph Goebbles the Reich Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany always believed that a lie repeated thousand times over will make it a truth. This was the philosophy of an official who had the duty of spreading the Nazi Propaganda of Hitler in the mid-20th century. The story sold in this case led to a killing of thousands of Jews. Then how can someone say that Trump Election or Brexit is the trigger which shifted us to a post truth society. The doctrine of *Terra Nullis* was used to wipe off thousands of years old Australian history by the Colonials. This doctrine is used to legally deem a land unoccupied. The colonials claimed the land of Australia to be unoccupied even though the native population existed. This was in the late 18th century. Even China, who itself were a victim of a staged attack by Japan once, has never recognized Tibet as an independent country. Nations and politicians have been bending the narrative to suit themselves. They have been trying to push their ideology as very old or maybe something which has always existed in the world since humans have always perceived truth with their own beliefs.

Politics the world over has been full of exaggerations, lies and vague information. The only thing Trump is doing different is that he is honest about it. He is blunt in his approach and does not mince words about issues he feels strongly. You can clearly observe from such instances that truth has never been objective and has been plural. This again shows that the concept of post truth is not new. In India religion has been the basis of politics, law, administration and almost every other thing. Communal violence in India is based on two groups of people with two shared beliefs as is evident in the number of incidences of violence that keep happening from time to time. One community trying to prove that their belief is the one that is true, again the demolition of Babri Masjid could be an example of this. Be it the segregation law or the Jim Crow Laws in the southern America or be it the *Disturbed Areas Act, 1976* or the Godhra riots in Gujarat which incited large scale communal mob violence, East and West, have won and still win elections based on such violence.

The Best Books (*Pop Culture*) ...Are Those That Tell You What You Already Know

Pop culture reflects the changing society all over. In pop culture too, the idea of

post truth isn't new. In 2005 Stephen Colbert, coined the term 'truthiness'. Solomon Asch in 1950s conducted experiments to test how people react to other's thoughts or behaviour. He concluded that most of the people conformed to group pressure and agreed to the most common answer even though it was clearly wrong. Sitcoms, also in the early 1950s, started using laugh track to make the people watching at home feel that they are in the theatre. Another effect which laugh tracks had on it's audience was proven by the conformity principle i.e. even if a joke doesn't land but enough people laugh at it be it fake or real, majority of people will under pressure laugh.. Not only that but also the next time they listen to that joke, they will be the part of the group who has been creating this pressure and the cycle goes on. This is similar to how fake news spreads or how facts are claimed to be treated as in a post truth society.

Pop culture has been exploiting this behaviour of humans since very long now. Television is where most of the humans have learned to be media sceptics. There are examples of television dramas/series which has shown people in power bend or change the narrative via media to fulfil their dreams and protect themselves, be it Francis Urquhart in the book or the show '*House of Cards'* or Olivia Pope in *'Scandal'*. Orwell in his book 1984 wrote about how a Totalitarian state changed historical records to suit the propaganda it needs to disseminate. It could be observed that this was inspired by the totalitarian regimes of Nazi Germany and Soviet Union. Moreover, it is argued that the visuality of pop culture is one of its strongest powers. This visual nature forms the structure in which we experience reality. The existence of such shows, books and movies depicts that even before 2016 humans had experienced post truth in what they believed to be fictional stories; but those stories are actually based out of reality like 1984.

"Hold the Door (Hodor)": Living in a 'Post-Hodor' Society

After establishing above that post truth is not a new phenomenon, it can be said that humans have always been in the vehicle of post truth, we have always been driving on the roads of ideological conflicts, altering things to suit our agendas. People throughout the history have believed untrue things and thus there is nothing post about post truth. Then what change has led to this sudden outcry of shifting to a post-truth era?

The answer to the question is Internet. With the dawn of internet, circulation of news became easier. It suddenly became convenient for people to spread news and also choose from the various sources they get their news from. Social Media and Internet opened the gate for masses and freed them from the exclusive power commanded on circulation of information by the elite. Thus, there was

no one to 'Hold the Door' and selectively spread the information. A space which was highly regulated before has now in a moment become a space of endless information without rules and regulations. Co-incidentally, the episode and the season of *Game of Thrones* in which Hodor dies was aired in 2016 the same year when 'post-truth' was declared word of the year.

After social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter became prominent, the abundance of information to be consumed is all-time high. Since there is an abundance of information waiting to be consumed and at the same time the ability of selecting what information one wants to consume, has led to consumption of information which one seeks to be relevant to them as well as which aligns with their beliefs. This leads towards a lack of shared beliefs. In the time, before the internet when the elites held the door of information, the scarcity of information played a very crucial role in uniting us together as a society.. They were restricted to local news of our community and experienced things as a community rather than individual souls. However still there were some people who would strongly feel about something and start a whole new movement. The abrupt removing of Hodors (People who held the door, Elites) has allowed people to get more information than before. The only difference between then and now is that before the internet fake news used to filter itself or the media elites used to filter it out. The media still tries to filter fake news but given the abundance of information and channels, and the quick spread, it gets very difficult to contain fake news to some extent. Truth is always derived from some information, our accepted truths before internet were just a product formed by Hodors, who restricted the circulation of information to impose a societal or economic order which they wanted.

Venturing back to where this paper began, humans always lived in a post-truth world since our notions of truth have always been grounded in opinions, beliefs and biases irrespective of facts and have always been subjective. The change being that, now we live in a world where having an access to information is much easier which has allowed us to eliminate the Hodors from the picture. So, more information has led us to see and understand the world in its less regulated form. This is a benefit only when free access is complimented with diverse opinions., I argue that we have moved in to a Post-Hodor era in an ever-existing post-truth society where internet has given us the ability to question the old and existing norms challenge the major sources of media.

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Differences in Aggression and Resilience due to Exposure to Conflict Amongst Kashmiri and Delhi Youth

Abstract

The present study isaimed at understanding how exposure to conflict affects the intensityof aggression and resilience in youth. The sample consisted of 160 young adults, with an equal number of Kashmiri and Delhi youth studying in Delhi-NCR. The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire(Buss & Perry, 1992) was used to measure aggression. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25, Connor & Davidson, 2003) was used to measure resilience. A 2x2 ANOVA (SPSS version 21) was used to assess the differences in aggression and resilience with respect to differences inethnicity/exposure to violence and gender. Pearson correlation was calculated to explore the relationship between aggression and resilience.Significant differences were observed in the level of aggression and resilience among Kashmiri and Delhi youth. Genderdifferences were observed with respect to aggression but not resilience. A low but significant negative correlation was found between aggression and resilience.

Key words: *Aggression, Resilience, Exposure to Violence, Youth, Kashmir, Kashmiri, Delhi NCR.*

Introduction

Young adults are in a constant state of exploration, change and search for meaning in life with culture and their surroundings playing a quintessential role in their development. They are the torch-bearers of development. Changes in both, the environment and physiology of the adolescent shape the transition foryouth. The psychological repercussions of conflict interfere substantially with the psychological development in individuals (Pedersen, 2006)[1]. Kashmir has been

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witnessing violence in the form of strikes, protests, killings, demonstrations among other things since decades as is evident from the news channels and newspapers. The conflict in Kashmir began right after partition and has been going on ever since, putting a huge strain on the coping mechanisms employed by the Kashmiri youth. Fisher (1990)[2] defined conflict as an incompatibility of values or goals between two groups, accompanied by antagonistic feelings towards one another. Conflicts destroy the safety provided through the environment in the form of adequate housing, family, education, nutrition and employment, which makes individuals vulnerable to psychological and physical disequilibrium. Although conflict and violence is not a new concept for the Kashmiri youth, they still remain highly impacted by the situation

The threat of violence along with actual violence impacts mental health of the population, leading to disorganization, disorientation, helplessness and even aggression. Prolonged exposure of conflict may contribute to a culture of terror, increasing the propensity of violence in youth (Shbli, 2009)[3] Grove et al (2005) reported an increase in psychological problems in 87.64% of the youth interviewed due to conflict.The impact of exposure to violence is mediated by how accepted, normative or endorsed the violence is at different levels, and itsattributions. Resilience on the other hand is the process of overcoming trauma successfully, when the individual uses his or her resources to turn the negative effects of the situation into positive outcomes. Factors that shape the developmental pathways duringyouth like influence of family, community and peers affect the development of resilience as is evident when we look at the society around us. The risks associated with exposure to violence can be mitigated when promotivefactors for resilience like social support and positive personality traits are in place (Chen, Voisin, & Jacobson, 2016).[4]

Aggression

Aggression is intended to cause injury to another individual, wherein the aggressor should believe that this behaviour will cause injury and the victim tries to avoid such behaviour. It is any behaviour to cause harm to an individual who does not wish to be harmed. The Kashmir valley lies in the lap of violence and armed conflict, which impacts the psychological well-being and behaviour of individuals. The prolonged conflict has destabilized many areas of life like education, job, mental and social well-being and the impact of this is felt irrespective of age or gender. Increased psychological distress has been prevalent among the Kashmiri population with the number of cases of stress, depression and anxiety on the rise (Margoob et al., 2006)[5]. Conflict leads to an increase in hostility and violent behaviour. A study conducted by Majied and Khan (2003)[6]

reported a significantly higher level of aggression in girls from Kashmir as compared to Jammu. Youth exposed to violence have been reported to be at a greater risk for negative behaviour like aggression, delinquency, and vandalism (Kerestes, 2006)[7]. Thus it can be concluded that violence leads to aggression and anxiety.

Individual differences in personality and family structure also impact the level of aggression. The development of aggression can be understood by studying; how individuals are affected by their social environment. Over the course of time, exposure to violence squanders this through desensitization (Huesmann&Kirwil, 2007)[8]. Reactions to exposure to conflict range from emotional responses to responses supporting aggressive cognitions (Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007).Stone pelting by youth during protests as a sign of frustration and anger has increased in Kashmir (Karanavar, 2017)[9]. The level of aggression experienced by Kashmiris is reported to be higher than average as mentioned in the studies above. Kumar et al. (2016)[10] reported that males had higher physical aggression whereas females reported higher verbal aggression in a Kashmiri sample. Khan and Majumdar (2017)[11] reported how the adolescents in Kashmir are provoked more easily, making them more short-tempered. They are likely to react even at the slightest provocation

Resilience

Resilience is the process of overcoming the negative effect of exposure to risks, through successfully coping with trauma (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005)[12]. It has been understood as a unique individual trait that helps to achieve desirable outcomes despite adversity (Rutter, 1985)[13]. Resilience is believed to be apositive adaptation of traumatic events in a mannerthat the individual's sense of psychological equilibrium remains undisturbed and he is able to overcome the challenges that come up time and again. It is hence, a defining characteristic of life and demonstrates intrinsic recovery, exemplifying coping rather that exceptional strength (Bonanno and Mancini, 2008)[14]. Psychological resilience involves many factors that work together to provide a protective mechanism or buffer against trauma, life family support, coping skills, meaningful relationships and influence of culture. It unfolds with time and is expressed differently by different individuals. Among Kashmiris then, resilience is conceptualized as a construct of their social environment. An alteration of social lives to permeate everyday violence increases the level of resilience. Resilience has been explained through models of individual differences (Tugade& Fredrickson, 2004)[15] as well as external protective factors that promote it (Richardson, 2002)[16]. It is a multidimensional construct that impacts the proclivity to psychological disorders

and emotional vulnerability on one hand versus optimum growth and adaption on the other (Bonanno, 2004; Campbell-Sills et al., 2006)[17].

Many studies talk about how the prolonged exposure to violence from early childhood deteriorates well-being and increases anxiety, carrying a cumulative impact that worsens the intensity of post traumatic symptoms as well (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2013)[18]. Literature on exposure to conflict and resilience points towards how increased exposure to conflict puts children at risk for maladjustment and un-sustained resilience (Vanderbilt-Adriance& Shaw, 2008)[19]. However, many researchers have contended that despite political violence the evidence of maladaptive functioning is not well established (Panter-Brick, 2010; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010)[20]. Bonanno (2004)[21] suggests that functioning of the individuals despite exposure to violence and adversity remains fairly normal. The same has been reported by other studies as well (Hoge et al., 2007).[22]

The framework of resilience is often used to assist youth exposed to violence, helping them transition from trauma to adaptation through strength building (Panter-Brick &Leckman, 2013)[23]. Sood et al. (2013) [24] reported significantly better resilience and mental health among individuals living in border areas. Sanders and Munford (2014)[25] reported how resilience was related to well-being and mediates the impact of risks. Resilience is positively associated with the trait of conscientiousness and task oriented coping (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006)[26]. Social support including family, friends, peer and the environment reduce the risk of experiencing negative outcomes and enhance the likelihood of experiencing a positive outcome. Meaningful relationships present an opportunity for enhanced support during exposure to violence, providing resilient outcomes (Tusaie& Dyer, 2004)[27].

Men and women differ in ways of utilisation of resources in order to cope. Whereas, men use more individualistic ways as they are made independent since childhood in our patriarchal society, women rely on communal means and social support. Women report experiencing higher social support along with lesser anger, which acts as a protective factor and contributes to the development of resilience (Galambos et al., 2006)[28]. Erdogan et al. (2015)[29] found that men experienced a higher level of resilience than women.

Relationship between Aggression and Resilience

Resilience is the ability to withstand stress, anxiety and any untoward incidences, making it an important component of well-being whereas aggression is termed as a negative behaviour which threatens well-being. Studies on relationship between aggression and resilience are very few in number, suggesting a need to

delve deeper into these constructs especially among youth. Mojrian et al. (2017)[30] studied the relationship between aggression and resilience among college students and found a significant correlation (r=.78) of resilience with hostility and aggression. Resilience plays a role in strengthening anger management skills (Reilly and Semkovska, 2018)[31]. This results in the ability to be in control of one's emotions, especially that of anger and resorting less to violence. It has been reported that children born in war-like conditions, even though more aggressive; tend tocope better with adversity than those who have not been exposed to conflict (Vizek-Vidovi et al.,2000)[32]. Haddadia and Besharata (2010)[33] reported that resilience isnegatively associated with anxiety, distress and depression. Different levels of resilience influence the tolerance of negative affect, which perhaps influences the level of aggression. Anderson (2006)[34] in her study with adolescents reported that resilience was significantly correlated with anger.

Present Study

Youth are an extremely essential components of a society, it is therefore important to inculcate/recognise/develop positive values like truth, honesty, compassion and happiness in them. An attempt was made to compare the level of aggression and resilience in youth exposed to conflict versus those who do not witness political violence as often. The relationship between aggression and resilience is imperative to study in order to understand how they impact well-being. The participants were divided into two groups depending on the ethnicity/place of residence (Kashmir vs Delhi) and exposure to violence. Kashmiri youth were categorised as falling into high exposure to violence due to the presence of political violence in Kashmir, whereas Delhi youth were categorised into the group with low exposure to violence.

Hypotheses

   H1: There is a significant difference in the level of aggression among Kashmiri and Delhi youth

   H2: There is significant gender difference in the level of aggression among men and women

   H3: There is a significant difference in the level of resilience among Kashmiri and Delhi youth

   H4: There is significant gender difference in the level of resilience betweenmen and women

   H5: There is a significant relationship between aggression and resilience

Sample

The sample consisted of 160 young adults from two distinct ethnic groups, aged 20-23 years (mean = 21.5yrs) studying in Delhi-NCR. Out of these, 80 participants were residents of Kashmir who were currently staying in Delhi to pursue their higher education. The other 80 were residents of Delhi, pursuing higher education from Delhi itself. The sample had an equal number of men and women from each ethnic group. All the participants could comprehend English.

Measures

Aggression was understood using the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992)[35]. The scale consists of 29 items assessing aggression in participants, with 4 sub-scales, measuring physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. The items have to be rated on a 5 point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "extremely unlike me" and 5 denoting "extremely like me". Total aggression score is obtained by summing all the items. The subscales possess good internal consistency, ranging from .72-.89 and criterion validity.

Resilience was measured using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 25, Connor and Davidson, 2003)[36]. It consists of 25 items that are evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, from "rarely true" (0) to "true nearly all the time" (5). The range of scores for CS-RISC 25 ranges from 0-100, with higher scores denoting higher resilience. The scale has good test-retest reliability, internal consistency and convergent as well as divergent reliability as stated in the manual.

Procedure

Informed consent was taken prior to the study. Confidentiality of data was assured, and demographic data was collected followed by the responses on the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire and the CD-RISC 25. Data was analysed using two-way Anova and Pearson correlation.

Results

Results for differences in aggression and resilience, whereaggression as a function of ethnicity/exposure to violence and gender are presented below:

**Table I. Mean and Standard Deviation of scores of
Kashmiri and Delhi youth on Aggression**

Gender	Kashmiri youth (n=80)	Delhi youth (n=80)	Total (n=160)
Men (n=80)	78.58 (9.06)	74.00(9.58)	76.29(9.54)
Women (n=80)	75.98 (8.48)	68.65(9.42)	72.31(9.64)
Total (n=160)	**77.28 (8.82)**	**71.32(9.81)**	**74.30(9.78)**

Data from table I reveals that Kashmiri youth have a higher mean for aggression (77.28) as compared to Delhi youth (71.32). In terms of gender differences, men report a higher mean (76.29) compared to women (72.31).

**Table II. Mean and Standard Deviation of scores of
Kashmiri and Delhi youth on Resilience**

Gender	Kashmiri youth (n=80)	Delhi youth (n=80)	Total (n=160)
Men (n=80)	75.05(10.77)	70.05(9.70)	72.55(10.49)
Women (n=80)	76.98(8.61)	74.70(12.56)	75.84(10.78)
Total (n=160)	**76.01(9.73)**	**72.38(11.41)**	**74.19(10.73)**

Data from table II reveals that Kashmiri youth have a higher mean for resilience (76.01) as compared to Delhi youth (72.38). Women obtained a slightly higher mean (75.84) than men (72.55) with respect to gender differences in resilience.

**Table III: F values for Factor A (Ethnicity), Factor B (Gender) and
AB Interaction effects for Aggression and Resilience**

Variables	Ethnicity (Factor A)	Gender (Factor B)	AB interaction
Aggression	16.933***	7.558**	.904
Resilience	4.782*	3.88	.671

*$F_{.95}(1,156)= 3.90$;**$F_{.99}(1,156).=6.80$; ***$F(1,156)=11.24$

Data from Table III shows that there is a significant difference for Factor A, i.e. the level of aggression among Kashmiri and Delhi youth [$F(1,156) = 16.93$, p <0.001]. A significant difference is also seen with respect to Factor B, i.e. gender differences in the level of aggression [$F(1,156) = 16.93$, p <0.001]. There is a significant difference for Factor B, i.e. in the level of resilience among Kashmiri and Delhi youth [$F(1,156) = 4.78$, p <0.05]. No significant difference was obtained with respect to Factor B, i.e. gender differences in resilience [$F(1,156) = 3.91$, p > 0.05, ns]. Interaction effects were not significant for both factors.

**Table IV. Correlation between Aggression and
Resilience among Kashmiri and Delhi Youth**

	Aggression (n=160)	Aggression (Kashmiri youth)	Aggression (Delhi youth)
Resilience(n=160)	-0.19*		
Resilience (Kashmiri youth)		-0.16	
Resilience (Delhi youth)			-0.22

*p< 0.05

Analysis of table IV revealed that there is negative correlation between aggression and resilience. Although the strength of the correlation is low (r= -0.19, p < 0.05), it is significant. The correlations obtained between the variables in terms of ethnicity yielded negative correlations between aggression and resilience with a low strength in both Kashmiri(r= -0.16, p> 0.05, ns) and Delhi (r= -0.22, p>0.05, ns) youth, which were not significant.

Discussion

Adolescence and youth is a major age period to understand the relationship between aggression and political violence. Aggression is the desire to inflict harm to another individual. Resilience is the ability to bounce back effectively after a negativeincident. It is a multidimensional construct based on the confluence of social support, personal skills, and their interaction with the environment (Connor and Davidson, 2003). Literature on aggression and resilience among youth in India is scarce. Considering this backdrop, the present study was conducted to inquire more into how exposure to violence impacts these factors among youth.

Hypothesis 1 which states that there is a significant difference in the level of aggression in Kashmiri and Delhi youth was accepted. Kashmiris reported a significantly higher score inaggression. The result is in sync with literature. Ethno-political violence is related to greater aggression among youth (Dubow et al., 2009)[37]. Exposure to violence has been associated with aggression, stress and anxiety. Children who are exposed to violence are more likely to develop negative schemas about the world, increasing the hostile-attributional bias (Crick & Dodge, 1994)[38] .Perhaps, frustration related to unfulfilled needs and aspirations in Kashmiri youth contribute to higher levels of aggression. This could be attributed to social learning (Bandura, 1973)[39] or due to thwarting of goals that leads to frustration and hence, aggression (Dollard et al., 1939)[40]. Observational learning could be attributed to the higher level of aggression reported by Kashmiri youth, which provides a script for social behaviour. DeWall, Anderson and

Bushman (2011)[41] also reported that exposure to community violence increases aggressive behaviour.

Hypothesis 2 pertaining to gender differences in the level of aggression was accepted. Men reported significantly higher scores than women. The gender role socialization has made women more sensitive to stress and violence (Elklit and Petersen, 2008)[42]. Cultural connotations of gender and masculinity predispose men to engage in more persistent and severe physical aggression than women (Fry, 1998)[43]. Whereas men display more of overt aggression in physical or verbal forms, women are more prone to experiencing indirect aggression.

Hypothesis 3 which states that there is a significant difference in the level of resilience between Kashmiri and Delhi youth was accepted. Kashmiri youth reported a higher level of resilience. Seery, Holman and Silver (2010)[43] also reported that individuals with a history of life adversity show better life satisfaction as compared to individuals with extremely low or high lifetime adversity. Such individuals display less distress due to difficulties, pointing towards higher resilience. Ungar (2012)[44] pointed that resilience is built through the opportunities' provided by one's environment, focusing on how the situations can facilitate growth. Although the propensity for resilience begins with genetics, it is largely influenced by environmental factors, such as peer influence, upbringing etc., as well as individual and societal variables like self-efficacy, coping, family support and relationships (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005)[45]. Resilience reduces the impact of stressful events, as propagated by the harm reduction theory (Davydov et al., 2010)[46]. Promotive factors increase resilience hence, reducing risk of psychological disorders in high risk populations (Bhugra, 2004)[47]. An individual's history of exposure to adversity may hold the capacity to build resilience as seen in the present study. Building resilience helps avoid negative encounters and enhance positive experiences, resulting in development and maintenance of positive affect and well-being despite adversity.

Hypothesis 4 was not accepted, no gender differences were found in the percentage of resilience amongst men and women. Although women are reported to have a higher degree of social support which contributes to the development of resilience differently from men, research on gender differences in resilience have not been conclusive. However, more research is required to understand the exact manifestations of resilience as a function of gender.

Hypothesis 5 stated that aggression and resilience would be significantly correlated was accepted. Similar results have been obtained by others too. Although the strength of the correlation was small, the negative correlation obtained was significant. It has been reported that children born underwar-like

circumstances are more aggressive but cope better with adversity than those who have not been exposed to conflict exposed areas. Resilience is positively correlated with psychological well-being and positive affect which could explain why those with a high resilience experience lesser anger. Sadeghifard et al. (2020)[48] found a small negative correlation between aggression and resilience, but it was not significant. They reported a significant negative correlation between aggression and resilience among youth. However, not much research has been conducted to examine this relationship.

Given the degree of conflict in Kashmir, it is important to understand and propagate resilience in youth and reduce the negative effects including aggression. The Delhi youth have been facing a different kind of violence. Women face issues of safety, eve teasing, and physical violence in the form of rapes which has induced fear and caution. Men, on the other hand are often victims of physical violence due to brawls, road rage and stone pelting. Therefore, both communities face violence, only the form differs and it is imperative to understand and develop interventions to reduce the negative impact of violence while increasing well-being.

Conclusion

Kashmiri youth reported a significantly higher level of aggression and resilience. Men reported a higher level of aggression, whereas no gender differences were found in the level of resilience. A small but negative correlation was found between aggression and resilience in the total sample. The findings suggest that exposure to violence can affect the level of aggression and resilience, which can be used to prepare interventions for enhancing the positives and reducing the negatives in youth. There is thus, a need to develop substantial mental health systems that are community based, and provide psychological assistance to help reduce the negative impact of exposure to violence. It is important to assess the manifestation and relationship of aggression in youth to develop proper interventions to enhance positive affect and reduce the impact of aggressors.

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<p style="text-align:center">$\boxed{\textit{Book Reviews}}$</p>

S. Jaishankar, *The India Way: Strategies for the Uncertain World, India:* (Harper Collins, India, 2020), Price: Rs. 699.00, Pages 240.

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The book titled *"The India Way: Strategies for the Uncertain World"* by India's Minister of External Affairs and ace career diplomat Dr. S. Jaishankar comes at a time when the entire world is going through one of the most unfortunate and uncertain periods in human history caused by the pandemic which first surfaced in Wuhan, China and soon gripped the entire world. The uncertainty it has created for human life and livelihood is a huge global concern and there doesn't seem to be any effective remedy in sight so far. China's secrecy in revealing the details of the Wuhan virus and plausible deniability about the pandemic has made the situation all the more bewildering. Perhaps, there can't be a better context to understand global uncertainty and get a sense of Jaishankar's book when the world watches China's actions, ambitions and assertions with great deal of circumspection

Uncertainty also looms large as the global hierarchy of power becomes hazy and multiple players become capable of playing games on their local turf. The broadening distribution of power is reinforcing multipolarity and perceptibly diminishing the purpose and efficacy of erstwhile alliances. Nevertheless, the concurrent rise of nationalistic fervor is emerging as a potential threat to multilateralism and global cooperation. The pandemic has also reinforced the sentiment of nationalism which is creating the apprehension of autarky and decoupling of economies, impacting global supply chain and even destabilizing globalization. The list of uncertainties is long. In such a backdrop India needs its own strategies to steer through and achieve the position of pre-eminence it deserves. Jaishankar through this book not only shares his strategic insights about the contemporary complexities of international relations from the Indian

and global perspective; he also invites us to revisit India's antiquity to appreciate its own thoughts on statecraft, its dilemmas and the strategic and tactical maneuvers to comprehend the contemporary global geopolitics.

Divided into eight chapters, "The India Way" is a coherently collated compilation of Dr. S. Jaishankar's insightful lectures delivered at different points of time at conferences, think tanks, business forums, etc. It presents a panoramic view of the contemporary global challenges, shifting balance of power and the three lingering impacts on India's foreign policy which Jaishankar enumerates as the partition of 1947, delayed economic reform and protracted exercise of nuclear option. The underlying message that there is a need to move on learning lessons from the past is pretty obvious. He observes India's transitioning from a 'civilizational society' to a 'nation state' and argues that the world needs to take cognizance of it. His idea that the moment in India's history has arrived when it needs to be redefined reflects both a conviction and a dilemma. He thus asks: 'Will the world continue to define India, or will India define itself?' However, a nation which the author finds to be on a 'voyage of self-discovery' must attempt itself.

The book underscores the fact that as in domestic politics, in global politics too there're neither permanent friends nor enemies. There are only permanent interests. In a multipolar world, nations have to work with frenemies; an oxymoron which refers to a relationship where nations having fundamental dislike for each-other try to befriend. The Sino-Indian and Indo-Pak relations are cases in point. The clash of values and interests add up to the uncertainty yet there is no alternative to walking on the tight rope. Much of the success of India's foreign policy and reinforcement of its global stature will depend on how India masters this art, author suggests. The reader gets the feel of Jaishankar's pragmatic insight as he writes: "This is a time to engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play." Being a formidable adversary and the next door neighbour, China puts India into double trouble. Therefore, the management of Sino-Indian relations should be examined from the perspective of bilateral, regional and overall balance of power in the region and the world, he suggests.

Complexities and challenges of international relations are subject to multiple interpretations. The other eminent predecessors of Jaishankar in the foreign office like Shri. Shyam Sharan and Shri. Shivshankar Menon have also given us equally brilliant account of India's geopolitical challenges in their respective books. A concurrent reading may help put things in a perspective. Shri Shyam Sharan's book "How India Sees the World" for example uses the prism of

Kautilya's *Arthasastra,* Kamandaki's *Nitisastra* 'besides other old treaties of administration and statecraft to explain interstate relations and diplomacy. His main thesis is that there has been a constant search for strategic autonomy which is reflected in India's diplomatic initiatives all through. However, as a strategic thinker he believes the objective of India's foreign policy should be to seek integration of the Indian sub-continent which shares common boundary, culture, history and economy.

Shri. Shivshankar Menon in "India and Asian Geopolitics" objectively defines how India managed to steer through its foreign policy and international relations ever since the era of Non-alignment movement and in the process how it failed and succeeded. Among the three, Menon's book is undoubtedly the most exhaustive one. It has the widest canvas on which he paints India's history, its unique geographical location and contrary to the common misnomer, its engagement with the rest of the world which goes as far back as 2600 BCE. He reminds us of the history of our Southern Kingdoms – the Cholas, The Pandyans, the Pallavas and the impact of their soft as well as hard power on South- East Asia to establish India's geopolitical importance in the region. And from the depth of history, Menon draws us to the contemporary era where alike Jaishankar he too acquiesces: "India's biggest strategic challenge today is managing its relationship with China and dealing with the consequences of China's rise." From the period of decolonization to the era of globalization, he describes the evolution of India's foreign policy and its geopolitical challenges from a perspective which is balanced, reflective and practical.

However, to explain India's contemporary geopolitical challenges, complexities, dilemmas, risks, strategies and tactical manoeuvres associated with global geopolitics, Jaishankar revisits the grand Indian mythological epic *Mahabharata*. Various references from the epic explain and illustrate the complexities of the contemporary international realpolitik and make it easier for a common reader to comprehend the intricacies of international relations. One of the most striking aspects of this book is Jaishankar's exhaustive use of *Mahabharata* as an allegory to explain the present day concept of multipolarity and its challenges. He writes: "The India of Mahabharata era was also multipolar, with its leading powers balancing eachother. But once the competition between its two major poles could not be contained, other perforce had to take sides." Whether as a nation we lack the doggedness and determination to take hard decisions is a lingering question that often haunts Indian minds. Are we still dissuaded by the dilemma of collateral consequences when it comes to taking a stand and implementing key policies as we saw during the *Mahabharata* era is a question awaiting answer. As a pragmatist which diplomats are supposed to

be, Jaishankar does not suggest a "disregard of cost-benefit analysis", nevertheless, in no uncertain terms he points out that "sometimes, even when there is a pathway, it may not be taken due to lack of resolve or fear of costs." There is much to learn from the diplomatic acumen and strategic dexterity of Krishna because: "He understands the big picture, fashions a strategy accordingly and comes up with tactical solutions at decisive moments" the author writes.

Chapters that further follow deal with various other key issues highlighting phases of India's foreign policy evolution, India's multilateral engagements in the Indo-Pacific region, with South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) among other. Jaishankar makes the evolution of India's foreign policy since independence a subject to incisive scrutiny. He believes that a power which is serious about improvement of its global stature should not shy away from honest introspection. He divides India's foreign policy evolution into six phases and calls the first phase from 1946-1962 the "era of optimistic non-alignment". For a nation which succeeded after a long struggle to throw the colonial yoke of subjugation, it was necessary to reject the allurement of joining one or the other camp of the bipolar world to safeguard its hard earned sovereignty. However, the idealism received a severe beating following India's conflict with China in 1962 and which "severely damaged India's standing", the author writes. It was followed by the second phase from 1962-1971 which he describes as the "decade of realism and recovery." India's foreign policy during this period was marked by pragmatism and realism as it looked beyond the framework of Non- Alignment to pursue national interest at a time when scarcity of national resources was surmounting. India learnt the art to survive in a bipolar world without any great damage.

The third phase; between 1971-1991 marked India's greater regional assertion. However, if the decisive defeat of Pakistan in the 1971 war and creation of Bangladesh was an affirmation of India's regional clout, it was somewhat eroded with the Indian Peace Keeping Force(IPKF)misadventure in Sri Lanka later on the author points out. The disintegration of USSR during the same period made India re-evaluate its domestic and foreign policy. With the unipolar world, India entered into the fourth phase of its foreign policy. It also coincided with economic liberalization and integration with the world economy, Look East policy and a new effort to engage with the US more closely. Come 1998 and India was recognized by the world as a nuclear weapon state. The book describes the fifth phase of India's foreign policy as an epoch when India begins to acquire the attributes of a balancing power. It acquired greater relevance in

the global geopolitics and had the ability to influence outcomes. The author substantiates it with the example of Indo-US civil nuclear deal.

Finally, the author describes the sixth phase which coincides with the coming of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government to power in 2014. In the second term of BJP returning to power Jaishankar became India's Foreign Minister. India's foreign policy challenge was to deal with a resurgent China and its hardening terms of engagement with the world on the one hand and the US resource limitation leading to risk aversion in the Asia-Pacific region on the other. However, a reader curiously looks forward to know what India's foreign policy has been able to achieve in this phase. Some interesting answers that one may find begin with India's venturing into "energetic diplomacy" backed by the awareness of its growing capabilities, improving economic status, technological prowess and the ability to shoulder bigger responsibility and participation in key global negotiations like climate change.

The book also makes analytical references of the growing impact of nationalism on the foreign policy of different nations precipitated by the domestic debate about cosmopolitanism and its responsibility for loss of livelihood and identity. Here Trump's nationalist slogan "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) that gravitated the Republicans and charged their emotions may be seen as a case in point. This may also give readers the perspective to analyse the sentiments behind Brexit, One China Dream and to an extent *Atmanirbhar Bharat''* too. Author writes: "When Donald Trump rejected globalism in favour of patriotism, he may have typically overstated his case. But the underlying reality is hard to wish away." When nationalist sentiments reflect in electoral outcomes, they can't be brushed aside, thus the author concludes: "Nationalism appears to be X-factor." It has the potential to influence the terms of engagement of international relations.

This book comes at a time when Covid-19 pandemic has created major global disruptions affecting both the geopolitics and geo-economics. The last chapter of the book 'After the Virus' discusses this contemporary global crisis and its short and long term impact on India and the world. China's reluctance to cooperate in the investigation, its opaque behaviour, World Health Organization (WHO's) perceived inability to persuade China to cooperate and the overall lack of global cooperation and understanding are the new challenges of international relations. In this backdrop while some contemporary discourse about the post-covid world order examine two main hypotheses - whether China will emerge as the global leader in a unipolar world or whether the world will come together and confront China's 'wolf warrior' diplomacy; Hhere in this

book the author evaluates the post-covid disruption in the concluding chapter from the geopolitical and geo-economic perspective. He thinks one of the immediate impacts will be on the societies which were expecting a better growth prospects in near future including India which will now take more time to conquer poverty. According to the author, "Global contradictions will accentuate as geo-politics and geo-economics get more heated." In his assessment of the situation, the post-covid world order may see more "deglobalization, regionalization, de-coupling, self-reliance and shorter supply chains." As the nations are now more concerned about their own respective strategic autonomy in the economic sphere, it will surely impact the process of economic globalization and the dependence on supply chain. Jaishankar also draws our attention to the latest form of nationalism – corona nationalism. It's starkly obvious that while the threat is global in nature the response of the nations has been confined to national interest. World has witnessed apparent disregard for even regional solidarity. He admits such a response may have been influenced by the panic created by the virus. Nevertheless, it also speaks volumes about the idealized international relations Health security will prominently figure in nations' agenda. However, for an Indian diplomat it's also important to tell the readers where will all these changes and disruptions lead India to? We find answer in author's conviction about India's civilizational strength which he feels will help contribute to re-balancing, shape multipolarity and reform multilateralism at the time of global volatility. There is a note of optimism in his vision about India's place in the post-covid world order as its achievements in social development will make it a source of dependable and skilled talent for the knowledge economy. And finally, its civilizational outlook and wisdom will be able to connect universal well-being with national formidability by connecting the two fulcrums of development – *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam* (world being one family) with *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (self-dependent India).

'The India Way' is a book written by a person who not only happens to be an ace diplomat, a serving Foreign Minister but also a keen observer of international relations and a scholar having deep understanding of India's civilizational anchorage. As such, he has leveraged the advantage of his vast experience, expertise and insight to succinctly summarize the complexities and nuances of international relations for a common reader and for an expert alike. The uncertainties of the world are the new reality emerging out of desperation to achieve individual goals and agenda with apparent disregard for collective development. The nonchalant transactional ethos prevailing in the present international relations and leading to unprincipled ad hoc grouping is a major challenge that calls for new strategies to deal with. However, while the author

underscores the need of strategies, he does not provide any readymade template or method that comes in handy. The cautious, but somewhat inclining approach towards the Indo-US relations and a careful circumspection towards India's overtures to China can be found as the undertone. On the whole, this book presents the author's deep knowledge and insight. It should not be seen as a handbook meant to give tips about dos and don'ts in pursuing international relations. Foreign policy is a constantly evolving subject matter. Therefore, nations including India cannot have any particular way to pursue it. Thus, 'The India Way' is more suggestive of the experiences and approaches of managing the foreign policy over the years rather than inventing any new formula. On the whole, it's a book which is worth reading for its pragmatic reflections, scholarly insights and vision which help appreciate the risks and challenges created by global uncertainties.

Jahnavi Mishra, *The Punished – Stories of Death-Row Prisoners in India*, (Harper Collins *Publishers*, India, 2021), Price: Rs. 499.00, Pages 150

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"Twenty-five years waiting in jail, they tell me. I had gone mad waiting for death, they say."

(*The Punished,* Pg. 100)

The Punished – Stories of Death-Row Prisoners in India is written by Jahnavi Mishra in 2021. The work is the by-product of the Project 39 A initiated by National Law University, Delhi. The Project 39 A's inception was inspired by Article 39 A of the Indian Constitution. The particular article is aimed at providing equal opportunity of representation and equal distribution of justice to all the citizens of the country without being denied to anyone on the account of economic or social disability. *The Punished* offers 19 stories written in vignette[1] form transformed from the interviews of the death-row prisoners and their family members. Since the stories are penned in vignette form, they may not have the beginning, middle and end but there are instances and experiences of the characters which enable readers to envision their lives. A sneak peek into the lives of prisoners and their family members captures snap shots of various socio-economic, socio-political and judicial aspects that they are encircled in. The author has pictorialized various consequences of custodial violence, faulty representation in the court of law, circumstantial evidence, etc. which prompt us to think about the systemic issues of the judiciary.

The stories in the book do not limit our cognisance to the crime the prisoners have committed. Each and every story resembles an iceberg wherein the crime is at the tip and the consequences leading to that crime, consequences surrounding the crime and consequences thereafter are beneath the tip. In the

book an attempt has been made to sketch the environment and circumstances wherein the particular crime has been committed, their location on the crime scene, vicious judicial circle and their lives there after. Stories spread extensive light upon the incidents of circumstantial evidences where in people are arrested just on the basis of mere assumptions. There have also been accounts of custodial violence and torture which compelled the prisoners to confess their crime even if they were not guilty. In the story titled *Contempt of Court*, Jameel uttered following words;

> **"The Police arrested many of us, sir. Farrukh was the only one who confessed. And that was not because he had anything to do with the attack, but we were badly beaten up by the police. He probably could not take it anymore." (Pg. 19)**

> **"Is it okay then for them to have pointed a gun at me and ordered me to confess? Is it okay for them to have denied me a lawyer during the interrogation? Then everyone harassed my family and warned my sister against visiting me." (*Pg. 19*)**

The above instance delineates the need to criminalise custodial torture and violence in India. According to the data provided by NCRB i.e. National Crime Records Bureau[2], the period between 2001 and 2018 totalled 1727 deaths resulting from custodial violence by police. But unfortunately only 26 policemen were held convicted for the same[3]. This particular scenario is alarming in nature as it somewhere echoes the vindication of human rights by the police which is considered as the guardians and protectors of human rights.

There has been a scathing remark on the communication barriers faced by the convicts. English being the language of communication in the courts, many times convicts were not even able to understand the proceedings of their own case. In the story, *How Chanda Became the Gurumata,* she came to know about her death penalty from her fellow inmates who were watching news on TV about her case. Inability to grasp the proceedings left the convicts jostling in the mire of confusion, boredom and fear. In the story titled *Fast Track to Justice*, the instance of one of his hearings has been portrayed which justifies the volcano of emotions experienced within the convict.

> **"The proceedings were conducted entirely in English. The fact that he could not understand a word was scary for a while, but then it just became plain boring. Then the dread returned every time someone looked at him, and then the boredom set in again as soon as they started talking among themselves." (*Pg. 24*)**

The usage of word boring in the text can stir a reader to question its placement in a crucial situation. But at the same time it can display the intensified effect of unknown and uncertain scenario which leaves one helpless and hopeless. There were eye opening instances wherein no communication had taken place between the convict and his lawyer as well. In the story *Rammohan's Nightmare*, when Rammohan was asked if his lawyer presented doctor's report about his mental health in any of his trials, he replied **"No, I don't think so. I did not understand anything. The lawyer never spoke to me"** (Pg. 40). In *The Castration*, Guru was accused of rape and murder of an eighteen year old girl. He was arrested as he was seen dragging that girl in the morning. In his case DNA testing and medical examination were not conducted. While conversing with DCP he lamented asking

> **"Why did they never speak to me, sahib? Why did the lawyers never ask me anything? Why was no DNA test done?"** *(Pg. 70)*

The above instances not only represent communication gap but also gap in the judicial proceedings. Communication gap during the judicial proceedings inhibits the adequate representation of the convicts which resultantly overturns the agenda of Article 39 A. Linguistic barrier in communication signals towards Article 348 of the Indian Constitution. According to Article 348 (1), English is the official language of all the high courts while Article 348 (2) provides a provision for the introduction of an official language of the state in the High court by the Governor with prior consent of the President of India. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are the only states who have authorised use of Hindi in their proceedings at high court[4]. It is a jarring fact that a dire need to unify judicial system across the country has linguistic issues as its by-product. English as a language unified judiciary but at the same time people at the unprivileged people at the receiving end face injustice.

The author has beautifully emphasised upon the mental health of the prisoners. When it comes to prisoners, mental health issues become extremely crucial as they have to deal with a lot of trauma, guilt and harassment. The stories penned in the book mirror the fact that the mental health of the prisoners is ignored and neglected. They are treated by the general physician and not by the psychologist or the psychiatrist. In the story titled *Prashant Bhave's Madness*, the deteriorated mental state of the prisoners is amplified. When Prashant Bhave's nephew inquired about his mental health to the in-charge doctor, he said

> **"What else am I supposed to tell you? I am a general physician. This is a prison, not a hotel. We don't have the luxury to bring in psychologist here."** (Pg. 33)

Prisoners are also given doses of anti-depressants as it is difficult to survive in prison while dealing with mundane yet uncertain routine of their lives. Such aspects even trigger towards the neglect of mental health of the prisoners which need to be taken care of.

There are a few prisoners who do not even remember what exactly happened at the time when the crime was committed and the others do not even know what instore is for them in their next hearing. Fear, as an emotion surfaces the mental state of many prisoners. Most importantly it is fear of unknown which scares them the most. Prisoners live in the state of confusion and fear which might lead to forgetfulness. In the story *The Punished,* an army officer is imprisoned for the alleged murder of two officers during an argument. The actual murderer ran away and he was arrested as he was found at the crime scene and had fired two bullets in the air to scare them. His family being victimised by abject poverty cannot spend money for his case. It was difficult for them to come and meet him in the prison. While describing the situation, he said

> **"My wife is also a mother. She came to see me with my daughters when I was still alive. They can't come often. It takes money to travel to hell. They are all striving to death." (*Pg. 100*)**

He has been waiting for 25 years as a death row convict. His wait has driven him into madness and oblivion wherein he cannot remember his own name. 'Army guy' has become his identity as everyone in the prison calls him so.

Since crimes are committed by the people living in the society, the social factors which influence such crimes are too highlighted. Few of the most alarming social issues which promoted murders are illegitimacy and same sex love. In *The Family Feud*, the convict murdered his uncle along with his family because his uncle was the illegitimate son of his grandfather. The convict was also framed by his uncle for raping his daughter. The leading cause of his anger was illegitimacy and false framing in the rape case. In this particular story, illegitimacy can be seen as a major force leading to upheaval in the family. Individuals are conditioned to see the world in terms of binaries. Notions of pure-impure and legitimate-illegitimate have been linked with the blood and lineage in the society. Society has always pressurised individuals to maintain sanctity of their blood in the family and the act of breaching it is wronged, criminalised and punished. There are many newspaper articles as well which talk about violent outbursts resulting from illegitimate relations and same sex love.[5] Another major social issue which is brought forth in *Redemption* is about the same sex love. Manpreet and Rana were arrested for murdering Manpreet's

family as they were not able to understand their love and affection for each other. Their love was always dealt with anger and hatred. Manpreet was also forced by his family to marry a girl in order to stop his affection for Rana. But Manpreet refused to do so. Manpreet and Rana were infuriated by the unacceptance and humiliation of the family members that they decided on killing them. Family as a social institution is obliged to maintain social order of the society. Any action which can hamper the established social order is dealt with cruelty by the family as they fear being outcaste from the society for breaking those set norms. The idea of same sex love is not accepted easily in the society because of notions attached with homosexuality.[6] These two stories are presented as mirrors of society which compels them to rethink about its notions of acceptance/non-acceptance, pure/impure, right/wrong, good/bad, true/false, and a lot more. The societal notion to view world in form of binaries has also affected the ideas of crime and punishment in the legal system.

The author has also commented upon the representation of prisoners in films in form of a story. In *The Real Parvathi*, a film was supposed to be made about a prisoner named Parvathi. But Parvathi in film resembled barely to the real life Parvathi in prison. Her character was portrayed mostly on the basis of the assumptions of how director wants Parvathi to be and not how actually she was. The irony is that she was not even proven guilty for the crime she was arrested for. This story also forces us to think about the false fictional aspect portrayed in the movies. It is a blatant attack on the directors and actors who falsely create and perform real life characters according to their own whims and fancies in order to get critical attention and accolades. Few lines from the story amplify the essence of the book. They are as follows,

> **"You wanted to show pure evil in film. But the truth is never pure – never just black or white. It is complicated. And there can be no justice without it." (*Pg. 109*)**

The work is not just a collection of stories about the death-row prisoners, but also a mirror to the society in which we inhabit. This work enables us to see the prisoners beyond their crime. Stories have the power to humanise the dehumanised prisoners. There were a few stories in which the prisoners were content as they were atoning for their sins in the prison. Apart from the state of fear, ignorance and madness, contentment and detachment were also introduced by the author in a few stories.

Jahnavi Mishra's finesse with language strike the hardest strings of our heart and compel us to rethink about the prisoners in death-row. One may feel that she is attempting to prove convicts innocent for the crimes that they have

committed. But instead it's a trial to bring forth the other side of the story which is often neglected. There is no denial of the crimes that they have committed but the emphasize is laid on the lack of fulfilment of judicial procedure.

Notes

1. Vignette form generally captures a defining detail and information about character or an idea of the story. It refers to a short scene.

2. National Crime Records Bureau is an agency of national importance which is responsible for accumulating and analysing the data of crimes committed in the country identified under IPC and Social and Local laws.

3. https://www.drishtiias.com/pdf/1593520847-custodial-violence.pdf

4. https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/haryana-governor-hindi-language-judicial-system-6480797

5. Hindustan Times had covered about how same sex couple Swapan Biswas and Bikash Das staying to gather was beaten up in Bengal by the owner of their house.

   https://www.hindustantimes.com/kolkata/same-sex-couple-living-together-beaten-up-in-bengal/story-2IKFOIs2axxisn73kq6uTL.HTML

   Other instance is of a lesbian woman who was tied to a tree and was beaten up for besmirching whole village.

   https://www.newsweek.com/immoral-woman-caught-bed-another-woman-tied-tree-and-beaten-after-she-1436565

6. The patriarchal ideology of the society is concentrated around phallus which is a symbol of male potency. It is majorly associated with the reproduction and generation of life. In such a scenario when male potency is "wasted" leads to the questioning of his maleness. Family is an integral part of society and thus as a unity it is vested with responsibility of maintaining the social order. Thus family being a microcosm of society, cannot tolerate deviance which can disturb the established social order.

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