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Ravi Kumar

Informal Sector of Municipal Solid Waste Management: Mapping Union's Initiative and State's Response

Sanjay Sharma*

Abstract

India is a union model of federalism. Federalism is regarded as the association of societies. It shares power between union and state governments on the one hand and governments and societies on the other. It is a grand design of living together. The competence of both levels of government is divided on the lines of legislative and geographical jurisdiction. Issues of common interests are legislated by the union government and executed by the federal units. On the other hand, issues of local importance are legislated and executed by the federal units. The present research papers deconstruct one such case where the Union government provided framework legislation for solid waste management in 2016, and state governments are executing it. Methodically speaking, it is applied evolutionary research. It primarily seeks to analyse the policy initiative of the union government to integrate the informal sector in municipal solid waste management and the different responses of the state governments.

Keywords: Informal Sector, Solid Waste Management, Federalism, State Government, Power Sharing, and Solid Waste Management Rules

Introduction

Municipal Solid Waste Management and Informal Sector

India is the fastest-growing economy and aspires to become a five trillion economy by 2025. It means a steep rise in production and consumption, ultimately leading to the generation of additional waste. Solid waste management has become a major challenge with the rise of urbanisation. In 1960 India had an 18 per cent urban population; however, presently, India has a 35 per cent urban population (World Bank, 2021). India has an estimated population of 139 crores, of which 49

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crores live in Urban India. Solid waste management is a post-industrialisation and post-urbanisation issue. Solid waste management requires systematic treatment of waste in the form of collection, segregation locating the disposal site and scientific treatment of waste. The Union government has introduced Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 to accomplish the same. These rules provide a framework for the collection, transportation, disposal and scientific treatment of solid waste management. SWM Rules-2016 doesn't limit to the traditional approach of waste management rather, it provides a blueprint for the role of producers, service providers, civil society and the informal sector in solid waste management. The present paper has narrowed down the research area and focused on integrating the informal sector into Solid Waste Management. Hence, it explores the component of the integration of the informal sector in solid waste management in Municipal areas from three broad research objectives:

- i) The standardisation of rules for integration of the informal sector in SWM;
- ii) Establishing coordination amongst stakeholders; and
- iii) Deciding jurisdictional reach, legislative competence and executive autonomy between federal governments and federal units.

The present paper to explore the integration of the informal sector in solid waste management is divided into three segments i) Informal Sector and Solid waste Management Rules-2016 A Union's Initiatives; ii) Responses of the state governments to integrate informal sector in SWM, and iii) conclusion.

Informal Sector and Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules 2016

Urban areas in India produce around 72.56 million tonnes of municipal solid waste per annum (Singh, 2020). Scientific disposal of this waste is minimal, and its inappropriate disposal is causing health and environmental hazards. However, till recent contribution of the informal sector was highly unrecognised. The informal sector comprises individuals, affiliations or waste traders involved in sorting, collecting, selling and purchasing collected recyclable materials. These people are out of the formal sector and highly neglected and exploited in the present waste management system. The union government is providing an opportunity to include this informal sector in solid waste management.

The union government enacted the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules in 2016 by exercising power conferred by sections 3, 6 and 25 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1985. The EPA empowers the central government to take protective measures to improve the environment and take preventive measures to control the pollution of the environment. In fact, the union government enacted Municipal Solid Waste Management and Handling Rules in 2010. After that, solid waste management's growing importance and challenges

have led the government to redraft the provision according to the contemporary challenge and make it as inclusive as possible. For this purpose, the central government invited suggestions from the people and objections and comments from the affected people. The central government enacted these rules in 2016 after considering the response received.

As a federal country, India provides for power sharing between the union and states. The union government, on the issues of common interests, provides framework legislation and states are required to execute it. The legislative competence of protection of the environment covers the issue of waste management as well. The SWM-2016 rules provide framework legislation. It prescribes broad guidelines for the state governments and local urban authorities. These rules are applicable to vertical and horizontal authorities. Horizontally it covers institutions of central governments like areas under the jurisdiction of railways, airports and airbases, defence establishments, special economic zones and central governmental organizations. Vertically, these rules are applicable to urban local bodies, census towns, state government organizations, and places of historical, religious and pilgrimage importance as declared by the states. All urban areas, except areas covered under hazardous waste management rules, are covered under the jurisdiction of these rules.

SWM Rules-2016 grants authorities in the form of duties and responsibilities in the same horizontal and vertical style. First, it mandates a central monitoring committee headed by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate change (MoEF & CC). It also enlists the advisor (not below the rank of joint secretary) from central ministries, state departments, local authorities, and institutions like FICCI and also accommodates two subject experts. SWM Rules-2016 also allocate duties to different central ministries like the ministry of urban development, ministry of agriculture, ministry of power, ministry of power and ministry of new and renewable energy resources. Besides, it also endows the duty to the Central Pollution Control Board to implement these rules. Vertically speaking, it empowers the secretary in charge of urban development in the state and union territories to implement these rules in letter and spirit. Thereafter, it also provides responsibilities to the district magistrate for implementing these rules. Similarly, the secretary in charge of the village panchayat and rural development department in the state and union territories is also responsible for implementing these rules. These rules also bring state pollution control boards into the ambit of implementing these rules. These rules make it a point that along with the government, civil society and other stakeholders should also become a party to these rules.

Accordingly, these rules prioritise the inclusion of informal waste collectors in managing municipal solid waste. It defines the informal waste collector sector as individuals, associations and traders involved in collecting, sorting and recycling waste materials. Section 11 of the SWM Rules-2016 provides that the Secretary having charge of urban development in the state and union territories through directing officers of municipal or local bodies shall prepare a state policy and strategy on waste management for state and union territories. This policy shall be prepared in consultation with stakeholders, including self-help groups and waste collectors. The SWM rules show that state policy should acknowledge the seminal role of the informal sector, i.e., waste pickers, collectors and recyclers, in solid waste management. Further, it directs the states to form policies to include the informal sector in solid waste management.

Section 15 of the SWM rules-2016 provides the duties and responsibilities of local authorities. Subsection 'c' of Section 15 maintains that local authorities shall establish a system where organisations of informal sector waste pickers and waste collectors can be included in waste management, and their services can also be availed for door-to-door collection of the waste. In addition, the SWM Rules-2016 also provides for the constitution of state-level advisory bodies in every state. The secretary of the respective local authority in every state shall constitute it. The Secretary of the department of Urban Development or Local Authorities shall be its ex-officio chairman. Apart from its other members, it proposes one representative from the organisation working informal sector of waste pickers, collectors and recyclers. The SWM rules 2016 were required to be implemented by the state and central authorities in a specified timeframe, e.g., central and state advisory committees within six months and state policy on solid waste management in one year. However, many states did not comply, and it called for legal intervention. The following sections analyse the policy and strategy framed by the state governments and union territories' for integrating the informal sector in municipal solid waste management.

State's Response to Integrate Informal Sector in Management of Municipal Solid Waste

States have responded vividly while framing the rules and bye-laws for implementing Solid Waste Management Rules-2016. There is a mixed response from the states to the framework rule. These responses can be divided into four categories i) States framing the Solid Waste Management Rules-2016 within the timeframe; ii) States framing the rules after the intervention of the National Green Tribunal; iii) states having innovative schemes by districts, and iv) states with poor or no response in framing laws and taking any other actions in this regard.

States with Early Response

Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Delhi are covered in the first category. These states prepared their plans and policies on Solid Waste Management Rules in 2017. Uttarakhand has prepared the final draft of its “Urban Municipal Solid Waste Management Action Plan for the State of Uttarakhand in 2017” its vision states that while accomplishing Swachh Bharat Mission, it aims that all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) put their effort toward Sustainable Solid Waste Management as per SWM Rules 2016 by adopting suitable measures for waste minimisation at the source with an emphasis on the principles of 5Rs, comprising Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover and Rethink. It also emphasises proper collection, segregation, and transportation, processing, treatment and disposal systems in complete harmony with the environment and in tune with prevalent regulations. Section 2 spells out its objective and provides for integrating the informal sector in managing municipal solid waste. Section 5.4, dealing with the strategy, maintains that “the activities of the informal sector (waste picking community and scrap dealers) have a significant role in the collection and recycling of material resulting in a significant impact on overall solid waste management in the city/town. As such, the urban local bodies shall establish a system to recognise organisations of waste pickers and scrap dealers and promote and establish a system for integration of these waste-collectors in organised systems of door-to-door collection” (Action Plan of Uttarakhand, 2017).

The state of Gujarat formulated Urban Sanitation and Cleanliness Policy in 2017. It mentions that the informal sector shall be essential in managing solid waste in the state's urban and other local bodies. Gujarat has a decentralised mechanism where districts develop their plans and vision for waste management. Jammu and Kashmir enacted Jammu and Kashmir State Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategy in 2017. Section 2.7.3 provides permission for rag pickers to separate the waste and to take away non-biodegradable items from such waste. This strategy does not offer a comprehensive action plan for integrating the informal sector into solid waste management. However, it mentions including Self Help Groups (SHG), the Informal Sector and NGOs just at the primary level of segregation of waste at the source.

Delhi has framed the “New Delhi Municipal Council Solid Waste Management Bye-Laws, 2017.” Section 10 of the responsibilities of New Delhi Municipal Corporation lays down that the “NDMC shall make efforts to streamline and formalise solid waste management systems and endeavour that the informal sector workers in waste management (waste pickers) are given priority to upgrade their work conditions and are enumerated and integrated into the formal system of solid waste management” (NDMC Bye-Laws, 2017) .

States Responding after the Intervention of the National Green Tribunal

Many states still need to follow the timeline for framing these rules. It invited the intervention of civil society by filing a case in the National Green Tribunal. The NGT has passed its verdict in OA 606/2018, where it maintained that most states failed to implement SWM Rules-2016. The NGT, based on its interaction with the stakeholders auditing, evaluated the progress of different states. Meanwhile, following the order of the NGT, the Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs has formulated 18 indicators for auditing, including door-to-door collections, source segregation, waste processing and penalty mechanisms. The NGT has developed one central committee and four regional committees to oversee the implementation of the rules.

Following the orders of the NGT, many states have come up with their policy document on SWM. Arunachal Pradesh has drafted bye-laws titled Arunachal Pradesh Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Bye-laws, 2019. Section 28.6 of Chapter XII provides a scheme for integrating the informal sector into waste management. It provides that “the Local Body shall ensure that informal sector workers in waste management are given priority to upgrade their work conditions and are integrated into the formal system of Solid Waste management. Such integration can be implemented through the formal system of Solid waste management. Such integration can be implemented through registration of waste pickers/collectors with the Local Body, licensing of waste/scrap dealers, issuing identity cards to waste pickers/ collectors and enabling delivery of Solid Waste from waste pickers/collectors at Secondary Segregation and Storage units”. In addition to it, section 28.6 also maintains that proper training should be imparted to informal waste pickers by the local authorities (Draft Notification, 2019).

Assam Government formulated a draft Assam Urban Solid Waste Management Policy in 2018. Section 11 (c) acknowledges that “state policies and strategies should acknowledge the primary role played by the informal sector of waste pickers, waste collectors and recycling industry in reducing waste and provide broad guidelines regarding integration of waste picker or informal waste collectors in the waste management system.” the primary role played by the informal sector of waste pickers, waste collectors and the recycling industry in reducing waste and provide broad guidelines regarding integration of waste picker or informal waste collectors in the waste management system. Section 15 of the policy deals with the authorities of the local bodies. Its subsection (c) directs the local authority to “establish a system to recognise organisations of waste pickers or informal waste collectors and promote and establish a system for integration of these authorised waste pickers and waste collectors to facilitate their participation in solid waste management including door to door collection of waste (Draft

Policy, 2018).” Subsection (h) of section 15 also provides that the informal sector should be integrated into material recovery facilities to recycle waste materials.

Chhattisgarh has initiated its activities in solid waste management after the direction given by the National Green Tribunal in the Matter of O.A. No. 360 of 2018. Chhattisgarh released its State Environment Plan in 2019. Section 8 of the plan relates to the waste management plan. It maintains that all 27 districts of Chhattisgarh have carried out the survey of the waste pickers at regular intervals. It provides that under Mission Clean City Model (MCC), barring two districts, namely Barod and Korea, all have initiated issuing identity cards to waste pickers (Waste Management Plan, 2019).

The Hon’ble High Court of Bombay has observed the non-compliance of the Solid Waste Management Rules-2016 by Goa in suo moto petition 2 of 2007. The Hon’ble high court has nominated two Goa State Pollution Control Board officers to provide a report regarding the compliance of SWM Rules-2016 in Goa. The submitted report does not provide any reference to the integration of the informal sector in solid waste management (Verification Report, 2019). Urban Local Body Department of the Government of Haryana, following the OA 606/2018 of the National Green Tribunal, has notified its seven districts as model cities/towns. These districts are Panipat, Rohtak, Thanesar, Karnal, Panchkula, Jind and Fatehabad. These districts are framing their own bye-laws and ensuring the inclusion of the informal sector in the solid waste management of the model cities (Notification of Haryana Government,2019).

Following the directions of the National Green Tribunal, Rajasthan has framed a new policy called Rajasthan State Solid Waste Management Policy and Strategy 2019. Section 5 covers Sustainable Waste Management. Its subsection 5.3.2 provides for the integration of Informal Waste Pickers and Employment Generation with the following points: -

1. Employment generation opportunity in solid waste management through creation of new infrastructure projects and waste management sector
2. Local bodies to develop mechanisms to integrate informal waste pickers, slum dwellers and unemployed into formal waste management sector
3. Annual action plans to be created by Local bodies with specifying the strategies to promote inclusion and formalization of SHGs and Waste pickers into the solid waste management through partnerships with NGOs, Private sector and any other suitable manner
4. All Local bodies shall provide a separate clinic at the project site where people can approach for primary health advice.

5. All Local bodies shall provide community and training center with in the project site wherein multiple employments related capacity-building and training activities shall be undertaken, and necessary skills shall be imparted.
6. All Local bodies are supposed to provide employment opportunities based on training and skill assessment. The secondary employment and business opportunity shall be created through the facility operator or support services.
7. All Local bodies shall provide training and awareness to labourers at the plant, which should be a continuous activity.
8. The concessionaire shall set up SWM and innovation centers for everyone which will be helpful to locals, students and others who wish to work in this field.
9. The concessionaire shall give prior importance to nearby population to get involved in the activities of horticulture, garden maintenance, energy management etc. at the project facilities (Rajasthan SWM Policy & Strategy,2019).

Tripura has initiated Tripura Municipal Solid Waste Cleanliness and Sanitation Rules 2019. These rules envisage involving the Women Self Help Groups (SHG) for source-based segregation of waste.

Uttar Pradesh formulated its own variant rule called Uttar Pradesh Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) and Sanitation Rules/2019. These rules directed the “ULB shall establish a system to recognise organisations of waste pickers/informal waste collectors and promote a system for integrating these authorised waste-pickers and waste collectors to facilitate their participation in solid waste management including door-to-door collection of waste. To establish the system, the ULBs may consider forming a Self Help Group of informal waste pickers or waste collectors and issuing identity cards for integrating them into the management of solid waste. The ULB shall also endeavour to promote people/ groups that are locally engaged in sanitation and cleanness drive, and such person/groups should be integrated while enabling a clean environment”.

West Bengal has framed the state Environment Policy of West Bengal 2021. It is a comprehensive environmental policy that includes states’ vision and policy on solid waste management. Section 1.7 of its action plan directs the inclusion of the informal sector. It aims to “include the informal sector in waste management and disposal: several households have employed private informal individuals to collect and transport the waste. Internalise these individuals by employing or contracting them under the ULB to conduct formal waste

management services. Provide them with formal training, safety gear and appropriate equipment for conducting the services (State Env Plan, 2019).”

Initiatives by Districts

Chennai Corporation, by pursuing SWM 2016, formulated Solid Waste Management Bye-Laws in 2019. Section 5 lays down the responsibilities of Chennai Corporation. Subsection 2 of section 5 provides to “establish a system to recognise organisations of waste pickers or informal waste collectors and promote and establish a system for integration of these authorised waste-pickers and waste collectors to facilitate their participation in solid waste management including door-to-door collection of waste” (Chennai SWM Rules, 2019).

Maharashtra has adopted Solid Waste Management Rules by 606/2018 order of the NGT. However, Pune Municipal Corporation framed bylaws in 2017 and provides the following strategy for utilising the informal sector in waste management:-

1. Establish a system to recognise the organisation of waste pickers or informal waste collectors and promote and establish a system for integration of these authorised waste-pickers and waste collectors to facilitate their participation in solid waste management, including door-to-door collection of waste;
2. Facilitate the formation of Self-Help Groups, provide identity cards and thereafter encourage integration in solid waste management, including door to door collection of waste;
3. Establish appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanism;
4. Create awareness among all stakeholders about their responsibilities and other provisions of these Bye-laws;
5. Educate workers, including contract workers and integrated waste-pickers, for door-to-door collection of segregated waste and transporting the unmixed waste during primary and secondary transportation to material recovery, processing or disposal facilities;
6. Involve communities in waste management and promotion of home composting, bio-gas generation, decentralised processing of waste at the community level subject to the control of odour and maintenance of hygienic conditions around the facility; For this purpose, meetings at regular intervals shall be arranged by the Corporation with representatives of resident welfare associations and non-governmental organisations;

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, jointly with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development, has designed a document titled “The Road Map for Zero Waste Ahmedabad – 2031”. This envisages “develop appropriate policies

and regulatory measures to formalise and systemize the informal waste management sector (rag pickers, scavengers, etc.) to reduce the current high level of exposure to health, safety and environmental hazards”.

States having poor response following the SMW Rules-2016

Some states have demonstrated poor response by not framing any bye-laws, policies, plans or strategies to follow the framework rules provided by the Solid Waste Management Rules-2016. One can hardly find any data in the public domain to ascertain the state’s approach to following SWM Rules 2016 and thereby integrating the Informal Sector in Solid Waste Management. However, in 2018 at a review meeting held for SWM 2016, Telangana Government conveyed its intention to frame a district-wise plan for adhering to SWM 2016. Nevertheless, to date, no progress has been made in this regard.

Andaman and Nicobar framed solid waste management rules under the title “Port Blair Municipal Corporation Solid Waste (Handling and Management) Bye-Laws 2017. Surprisingly these laws follow many of the broad guidelines of SWM Rules-2016; however, there is no mention of waste pickers and integration of the informal sector in any form (Port Blairs SWM Rule-2017).

Bihar also fails to provide any strategy for integrating the informal sector into solid waste management. No explicit rules have been framed for the State. Still, the Secretary (Environment) to the Government of Bihar has conveyed to The Green Tribunal that the State complies with the Solid Waste Management Rule 2016. In that said communication, there is no reference to engaging the informal waste collectors. Also, The Green Tribunal has directed the Government of Bihar to frame Byelaw in compliance with the SWM 2016; until now, there have been no such drafts for the law, and only the committee was formed to frame such bylaw. In the case of some union territories like Puducherry, Ladakh, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep, hardly any data is available to ascertain their compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules 2016.

Conclusion

The Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 are the successor of the Solid Waste Management and Handling Rules 2000. These rules are the framework of legislation and must be followed by the states and union territories. India is a Union model of federalism, which provides a sharing of power, whereas the union government legislates issues of national importance. Once a subject of state competence, environment has been shifted into the concurrent list by the 42nd constitutional amendment act. Presently, the union government has the right to decide on the matter of environment, and states have the obligation to execute. Solid Waste Management Rules-2016 is another field where the union government

has framed the framework legislation, and states were supposed to implement it in the required directions and given timeframe. The response from the states was not uniform in implementing these rules. Some states like Uttarakhand, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Gujarat are the early responders. Many states like Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Uttar Pradesh acted only after the intervention of the National Green Tribunal. Even there are many cases where the integration of the informal sector, i.e., waste pickers, collectors and recyclers, are not being considered in the plan, bye-laws, strategy and rules framed by the states and union territories like Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar, Puducherry, Daman and Diu and Bihar. This inclusion of the informal sector will not only improve waste management in India but also prevent their social negligence and exploitation. It will benefit them from financial, social and political inclusion. It will also help India to achieve Sustainable Development Goals like no poverty, good health and well-being, gender equality, decent work and sanitation condition and climate action. Therefore, SWM Rules by Union and its implementation by states and union territories shall have multiple benefits for society, nation, environment and subaltern working in waste management.

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Should India Fund its Elections? Lessons from the Global Experiences

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Abstract

Democracy costs a lot of money. From running routine political activities to fighting periodic elections, political parties and candidates seek donations from all possible sources including illegal and criminal money. As per available data in India, most open-source donations of political parties are secured from private businesses. This ultimately has a net negative effect on governance as elected officials ought to return the favours. Besides, the expensive nature of elections acts as a huge barrier for a lot of aspiring and meritorious candidates to enter politics, thus working as a major “entry barrier”. In the absence of adequate funds, smaller and new parties particularly find it difficult to run decent election campaigns. To reduce the dependency on big money and encourage aspiring politicians to participate in the democratic process, several democracies have embraced the path of public subsidies and direct funding of political parties and political activities. India is not alone in this. Money problem afflicts all democracies including the most advanced western democracies.

Keywords: Elections, Political finance, democracy, India.

Introduction

To bring down the pernicious effects of big money into the democratic process, most democracies have followed a combination of public subsidies and direct funding of political parties and political activities. According to democracy watchdog International IDEA, roughly 116 democracies (68%) have embraced some form of state subsidies for political activities. Many western democracies like the United States, United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Finland and Italy have been experimenting with state funding for many years. In fact, countries like Germany and UK have made impressive strides in reducing the role of big money

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in politics and bringing about modest degree of transparency back to their democratic processes through intelligent use of state subsidies. However, India cannot simply imitate Germany or UK's experience. It is a gigantic and vastly complicated country with very diverse and evolving democracy where many institutions ensuring transparency and accountability are still a work in progress. Therefore, in the context of India, it is essential to understand the context of the reforms in different cases, and the differences in the systems introduced in the various countries. Hence, this chapter will make a scrutiny of these claims while identifying key variations in implementation. It will also try to identify the other factors including key lessons that can help India's policy makers.

Public Funding of Politics: the Philosophy and Rationale

One of the popular propositions regarding public financing is its contribution to anti-corruption efforts. The anti-corruption theorists (Milyo & Cordis, 2013) put their claim on intuitive and historically verifiable indicators, where election contributions (in certain instances) including legal one's function as a kind of legalised bribery that constrains or animates political actors from acting independently (Sample, 2013; Smith, 1997). This is the primary reason why political finance analysts push for public financing of elections: to mitigate "the importance of private money" by keeping "the big money out of politics." Public finance protects the political process from direct, quid-pro-quo kickbacks or corruption (Ortiz, 1998). State funding for them is an affirmative system—not just a restrictive one—that seeks to prevent corruption, promotes diversity among candidates, and acts as public service to the entire society rather than to those who contribute to the kitties of parties and candidates (Sample, 2013).

However, the original theoretical justification of political finance regulation, especially the public funding proposal, is based on the normative goal of "equalising influence," an effort that goes on to ensure that certain powerful groups or individuals do not exercise undue influence in the electoral processes (Sample, 2013). According to its key proponents, political equality propagates the concept of "equal political influence," meaning no citizen should have more power over the political process than other citizens. This implies that wealth or money should not translate into more control over the political process, or conversely, poverty should not severely diminish one's political power. The principle of "one person, one vote" is a natural expression of the belief in the intrinsic equality of citizens (Lipsitz, 2004).

Political philosophers and scholars, such as John Rawls, Robert Dahl, and Ronald Dworkin, call for public funding to preserve equal political influence and prevent well-heeled candidates from using the advantage of wealth to defeat poorly

financed opponents (Lipsitz, 2004). In his important treatise, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Dahl argues in favour of the preservation of equal political influence, as well as voter autonomy, which requires that voters possess identical information about the choices confronting them on election day. As per Dahl, voter choice should not be "...manipulated by controls over information possessed by any one individual or group" (Dahl, 1956).

Yet, the most vocal supporter of the equality rationale is political philosopher John Rawls. Rawls strongly argues for "public financing of political campaign and election expenditures, various limits on contributions and other regulations are essential to maintain the fair value of the political liberties." According to Rawls, "It is necessary to prevent those with greater property and wealth, and the greater skills of organisation which accompany them, from controlling the electoral process to their advantage" (Rawls, 1993). The locus of Rawlsian egalitarian democracy is the notion that because the public benefits from the existence of political parties, the state may claim them as public asset and regulate them as such.

Expanding on Rawlsian idea of egalitarian democracy, Ronald Dworkin argues that democracy requires that we each have not only an equal say in choosing among competing candidates and positions, i.e. an equal vote, but also "an equal opportunity to persuade others" of our own views about these candidates and issues (Dworkin, 1996). To him, unregulated spending violates this, as it would allow the rich to make more appeals on behalf of their views than can others (Ortiz, 1998). In short, the equality view of public funding rests on one central fear that, left to themselves, political actors will transform economic power into political power and thereby violate the principle of political equality (Rawls, 1993).

Its contemporary proponents claim political parties in democracies as critical links between citizens and the state, and in doing so, the parties serve vital public interest. According to Dawson (1963) one of the original proponents of public-interest theory, political parties facilitate activities and efficacy in arousing interest, educating for democracy, simplifying the task of the voter, constituting an alternative government in waiting, and minimising transitional delays following an election in which the incumbent party is ousted. Therefore, given that political parties and elected representatives hold "trustee" positions for the electorate, it would be fair for the state to fund their activities.

According to the proponents of public interest, if managed well, public funding can vitally improve legislative politics and the quality of democracy. Elected representatives must keep their eyes on their jobs instead of spending time on "relentless pursuits of contributions, sometimes from illegal ways" (Sample, 2013).

According to this view, it is a failure of representation when candidates spend great amounts of time to attend the task of fundraising. For them, fundraising is a form of shirking, which affects the quality of the voters' representation (Blasi, 1994). Thus, for democracy's good health, the state has an important interest in ensuring that the elected representatives avoid such behaviour.

To conclude, there are three broad issues that emerge from the discussion on the theoretical positioning of public financing of politics. First, the argument for anti-corruption and keeping "big money out of politics" demands the state to take appropriate steps to address the political finance challenges facing political parties and candidates. Second, public financing is necessary to "equalise influence" and promote competition (create a level playing field for parties and candidates with less resources vis-à-vis parties and candidates with ex ante equality). Third, a strong public-interest rationale demands public financing of elections as they benefit democracy and serve the common good.

Types of Public Funding

Public Funding can be divided into two types in which public resources are made available to parties or candidates. These are direct funding and indirect funding. Below is a brief description of their nature and key characteristics.

Indirect Public Funding

Under indirect funding, the government provides resources with a monetary value to political parties or candidates. The most common forms of indirect subsidies are in the form of access to publically-owned media, use of public infrastructure for meeting and rallies, free or subsidized public transportation for candidates and key party personnel for campaigning, free printing and distribution of ballot papers, free or subsidized office space for party functions, interest free loans to finance basic campaigning expenses, incentivizing private donations by tax exemptions. As per International IDEA statistics, more than 68% countries around the world offer some form of indirect subsidies to political parties or candidates (Ohman, 2014).

Direct Public Funding

Here the state provides money directly to political parties or candidates to meet their expenses fully or partially. Direct funding system can differ in many forms. Based on the goals, the systems differ on the following aspects:

1. Recipient

In most countries direct public subsidies are provided to political parties particularly to party central offices or headquarters, but there are many countries, like US, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Spain, Austria, and Sweden, which provide direct subsidies to state or regional level party offices

(Casas-Zamora, 2008, p. 12). It is only in handful of countries such as Ecuador, France, Uruguay, and the US where candidates receive direct subventions (ibid).

2. Threshold for Eligibility to Access Public Funds.

It should be noted that providing funds to all parties or candidates create the most competitive electoral system. However, problem with such a system is the proliferation of non-serious parties or candidates who only seek to get funding. Alternatively, a very high threshold, like 10% vote share as in Bhutan and Malawi, would largely favour incumbents and would be against the interests of competition as new parties and smaller parties would be ineligible for

Therefore, most countries have adopted an eligibility barrier based on performance in the previous election. This is usually based on parliamentary representation like Bolivia and Finland or vote share as in the cases of Germany and Nicaragua. Some like Sweden and Costa Rica have used a combination of representation and vote share with mixed successes (Casas-Zamora, 2008).

3. Criteria for allocation among eligible political actors

Equality in fund allocation is the hallmark of a sound public funding system. While it may seem that providing equal subventions to all eligible political players is the most democratic method, the idea of providing equal grants to a small party with minimal representation or minor vote share as that given to large parties is a disregard of the opinion of the voters and can cause wastage of public funds. It could also lead to party fragmentation. Most countries, though, use a system of proportional allocation according to vote share, as in Belgium and Greece or representation as in Finland and Sweden. Germany (along with funds based on votes received) and the US have implemented a system of matching funds that have been raised by the parties through small private donations(Casas-Zamora, 2008). A key feature of the German allocation criteria is that the amount of funds granted for the first 4 million votes received by parties, which is 0.85 euro per valid vote, is higher than the amount granted for votes received beyond that, which is 0.70 euro per valid vote (Ohman, 2014). This is crucial in maintaining a balance between large established parties and smaller, usually regional, parties. In short, the determination of the allocation criteria is a critical factor to ensure the fulfilment of core objectives.

4. Method of Disbursement of Funds

There are two key elements involved in the methods of disbursement. These are the purpose and the timing of such disbursement. Based on their purpose, parties can be funded permanently or for election campaigns. Most countries have provisions for regular funding or both regular and campaign funding. Only a handful of countries restrict funds to fund electoral campaigns.

Although the intended use may be different from the timing of the disbursement (Ohman, 2014).

Effects of Public Funding

As stated in the beginning, the core objectives in having public funding system are to cut the costs of elections, reduce the dependency on 'interested money', enhance political competition by providing a level playing field for smaller and newer political entrants and institutionalizing transparency and accountability in the democratic processes. In the following pages, we do a quick scrutiny of impacts that public financing of politics in different political contexts and conditions.

1. Effect of Public Funding in reducing Election Expenses

The proponents of state funding of elections popularly argue that it helps reduce and limits the enormous costs of campaigning. However, insights emerging from the global experiences provide mixed trends. Negative ones first. Despite direct subsidies given to political parties in Israel and the US, the electoral expenditure continues to grow with each election and parties in both countries continue their dependency on large private donors (Casas-Zamora, 2008). This is due to the lack of spending ceilings and the existence of catch-all parties (Matakovic & Mraovic, 2015). Of course, in the case of America, this is mostly due to the effect of the 2010 Citizens United judgement (Poteat et al., n.d.). The judgment allowed, what was called, 'independent expenditure', whereby, instead of contributing to a candidate, corporate entities could directly spend on advertisements calling for election of a candidate for the defeat of another (USSIF, 2014). The exponential increase in expenses in the 2012 Presidential election has been attributed to the formation of super-PACs which were allowed by the judgment (The Economist, 9 Feb 2014).

However, there are several successful examples like Japan and Germany that have reduced the costs of elections and dependency from the private business. Japan has able to reduce its campaign costs (Norris & Van Es, 2016) through a judicious mix of supporting reforms including imposing bans on corporate donations, imposing spending ceilings, improving transparency along with state funding.

2. Effect on the influence of Big Money

One of the strongest arguments in favour of public funding of politics is that it reduces the dependence of parties of big private donations. In terms of results, international experience holds a mixed bag. For instance, a close examination of a major case like South Africa saw the gross misuse of public funds specially the wealthy candidates. One the one hand they continue receiving state subsidies and on the other same parties keep receiving private money through government contracts and

other forms of preferment (Norris & Van Es, 2016). Even in America, such funding has not reduced the dependency of political parties on wealthy donors (Levin, 2006). In terms of checking the growing plutocratic influence, the results are not all that encouraging either (Walecki et al., 2009). For instance, in Israel and US, as noted above, public subsidies have not reduced the reliance on private donations. Similarly, in several Latin American countries particularly Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Costa Rica, public subsidies have proved rather ineffective in limiting the role of business in the political financing. The easy availability of money from interest groups and business circles to typically catch-all parties also contributed to the failure in Israel and US. In Latin America, business ordinarily played a central role in campaign funding because there were no other sources available for parties. Political parties in Latin America are typically characterized by weak party organizations, scarcity of fee-paying party members and weakness of interested trade union contributions (Casas-Zamora, 2008). Therefore, public subsidies in this case failed to replace the need to attract private donations but were merely an additional source of income for the parties.

However, there are some successful examples as well. Canada is a good example. Canada introduced public subsidies as a part of a whole set of reforms, including spending ceilings, tax incentives for smaller contributions have been able to successfully reduce the role of interested money in party financing (Casas-Zamora, 2008). In Sweden, generous public subsidies, which far exceeds private donations, and minimal state intervention in party affairs have been successful in reducing temptation for parties to seek anonymous interested money (Ohman, 2014). In both these cases, it is necessary to understand that other factors were also responsible for the resultant effect.

3. Positive Effect on Electoral Competition

Does public funding of elections encourage new entrants and promote electoral competition? International experiences suggest that public subsidies fostering competition is a function of how public subsidies are distributed. In countries like Russia, it has been used to stifle political competition and promote authoritarianism. The 2001 law, apart from establishing heavy state subsidization, introduced other regulations such as limiting private donations, imposing spending ceilings and strict disclosure requirement. This has led to a situation where it is almost impossible to challenge the ruling party (Norris & Van Es, 2016). Thus, it has led to creation of cartel party. However, there is reasonable evidence of the opposite too. Many new parties have emerged in countries like Canada and Finland, where public subsidies were introduced to reduce proliferation of parties (Casas-Zamora, 2008). In some instances, particularly in the cases of Israel, Italy and Mexico, introduction of public subsidies has brought greater competition by

enabling entry of newer parties and providing smaller parties with the funds to compete with incumbents (Casas-Zamora, 2008).

There are also peculiar experiences particularly about parties that have certain ideological preferences, like the left oriented or socialist parties. It is well known these parties find it increasingly difficult to compete with right-wing parties since huge private funds are readily available to the latter. In some ways, the introduction of public subsidies is helping those political entities as evident in the case of Uruguay. The public subsidies also can be employed to promote competition within the party. As the global evidence suggests, this can be done by introducing public funding for determination of candidate at the intra-party level. One of the best examples of this is the United States, where candidates can seek public funding to contest intra-party elections for candidature. Another method of tackling this problem is by routing public subsidies directly to lower units of parties and thereby strengthening intra-party democracy. In short, public funding has a mixed bag.

Making a Case for India

India's current political funding regime is under great stress for various reasons, but most significantly due to rising election expenses. For instance, India's last general elections in 2019 was by far the most expensive election in the world where a staggering Rs 55,000-60,000 crore (7-8 billion dollar) was believed to have been spent by various political parties and candidates in the fray (*The Bloomberg*, June 4, 2019). Importantly, the general election was marked by sharpest inequality in terms of spending between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition. Reportedly, the ruling BJP spent as much as 45 per cent of total poll expenditure, where as the main opposition the Congress Party's poll expenses was distant 15 per cent (*The Print*, May 5, 2019). Beyond massive gaps in poll expenses, the 2019 general election witnessed introduction of most controversial provision called Electoral Bond. This new scheme which the BJP government claimed to clean up the black money by pumping white money into democratic system has arguably emerged as the single biggest source of opacity in political finance (Sahoo and Tiwari, 2019).

This apart, the 2019 poll was conducted at a time when the political finance regime experienced systemic and procedural erosion due to series of legislative and administrative measures taken by the BJP government soon after it assumed the power in 2014. While the government introduced a slew of reforms (via 2017 Finance Bill) such as restricting cash donations and timely submission of books of accounts by political parties, yet introduction of electoral bond scheme with anonymity clause, removal of limit for cooperate donations among others

considerably weakened the foundation of political finance regime. Yet, the most worrisome development about the integrity of country's electoral democracy was the amendments made to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010 with retrospective effect. The amendment did away with the scope of scrutiny to foreign funding to political parties with effect from 1976 (Vaishnav, 2019).

Such development especially the lack of transparency in political donations ultimately has a net negative effect on governance as elected officials are likely to return the favours to those sources that have funded them. In a sense, this opens the door for all kinds of money including illicit or black money into democratic politics. It is a harsh reality that India's democratic processes are heavily exposed to illicit financing. This is evident from the fact that nearly two-thirds of political donations of registered political parties are from so-called "unknown" sources (ADR, 2017.). The associated problems relating to electoral activities fuelled by black money are well known.

India's Response So far

Successive governments in India have taken note of the challenges of related to political funding by adopting diverse means and methods to curb negative trends distorting democratic processes (Law Commission of India, 2015). Among the many reform proposals, the idea of public funding of politics, especially the funding of elections, has been in discussion for quite some time. India's civil society and policy circle, too, is filled with a wide variety of opinions and narratives on public funding of elections. (Quraishi & Yadav, n.d.) Numerous committees appointed by successive governments in the last two decades have discussed various proposals of direct state funding of parties and elections. The following is a summary of the recommendations of the various committees. The reports by the Goswami Committee (1990), Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998), the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007) and the Law Commission (2015), which dealt with public funding issues, have argued against full state funding. Their rationale has been that the prevailing economic conditions and development needs make it infeasible to fund a large democracy. Instead, they have argued for partial subsidies in kind. On the other hand, the Law Commission Report (1999), Venkatachaliah Committee Report (2002) and the Law Commission Report (2015) have insisted that regulatory frameworks dealing with transparency, disclosure, auditing and submission of accounts and internal democracy of parties must precede any attempt at complete state funding. The CII Taskforce Report (2012) suggested for the imposition of a democracy, a cess of 0.2 percent of the income be paid by individuals and corporates to finance election expenses. However, these committees and taskforce have largely failed to build consensus on its criteria, methods, and quantum of such funding. Although all the

committees have proposed state funding, as of now, political parties in India only receive limited indirect subsidies. Since 1996, parties can access free time on state-owned electronic media. But since Doordarshan and All India Radio only form a miniscule part of the electronic campaign advertising options for the parties, this is hardly of any consequence.

The other in-kind subsidies provided to the parties are in the form of free supply of copy of electoral rolls and identity slips of electors to candidates. In addition to this, any donation to political parties is eligible for income tax deductions. However, these measures, too, have not had a major impact on reducing the costs to be incurred by the parties or increasing the funds available to them (Chatterjee & Sahoo, n.d.). Other regulations have also largely been in vain. The lack of expenditure ceilings for parties and others in support of candidates (prior to The Election and Other Related Laws (Amendments), 2003) and extremely low limits for election spending by candidates thereafter have resulted in frequent evasion of the regulations (Gowda & Sridharan, 2012).

Arguably, the lack of state funding has contributed to the failure of compliance. The blanket ban on corporate donations in the absence of any other source of funds resulted in corrupt fundraising practices among parties (Gowda & Sridharan, 2012). The situation worsened due to the lack of any spending ceilings on the parties. The most recent changes to political funding regime via electoral bond with an intention to bring white money into the system has added to the opacity as donors' details are kept from public knowledge.

Should India Adopt Public Funding model?

Given the major issues as described above, many including major political parties such as the Congress party argue for public funding of elections. Yet, the big question is will this solve the structural and procedural problems afflicting India's democratic politics? Will this critical provision of state resources not be misused? A quick scrutiny of available evidence on public funding option provides mixed trends and greatly varies from country to country. While public funding failed to make a significance dent in many democracies, a handful countries show the promise. From an Indian policy perspective, it makes sense to pay close attention to success stories. The insights especially from the success stories of Canada, Sweden and to some extent Japan suggest that an effective public funding model must have a two-pronged strategy: viz, reduce the dependency on corporate or private money (by strict restrictions on limits, strong regulations, disclosures) and infuse white money through state funding or incentivizing various other funding options including tax free donations/loans. Yet, as seen from Canadian example, success to a great degree have yielded through strict transparency and

disclosure norms, elaborate regulatory mechanisms, and public scrutiny of expenditures by parties and candidates.

In this regard, India's present system of campaign finance laws and institutional processes hardly fulfill those preconditions for state funding. India's broken political finance regime accompanied by lack of rules on transparency, disclosure, and absence of a strong and effective regulatory agency would make it an unsuitable candidate for public funding. Yet, this is the precise reason why India needs to embrace state funding model to fund its politics. Given the fact that in nearly all countries that have introduced public financing option, this has preceded by a regulatory regime of transparency and disclosure and regulatory body (in many cases empowering existing electoral commissions) to go after the violators. India's underdeveloped and slack political finance regime and missing regulatory body would be the net gain from the new scheme.

Secondly, by providing "floor level fund" for everyone, state fund scheme can become critical for smaller and newer political entrants. For various factors, India has seen a huge proliferation of political parties, formed on ethnic, religious, and other parochial grounds. However, due to growing costs of elections, many of them find it difficult to put up a decent campaign. It is here the public funding of elections especially if that is channelized through candidates can come very handy to promote competition for candidature and can bring internal democracy within these parties. Public funding, if enforced strictly can strengthen lower levels of party units to a situation where they can demand democratization. It can therefore solve the problem of concentration of power in the hands of few and creating dynastic politics. Importantly, if public funding is used as a lever, it can help the state in securing compliance from parties on all these issues.

In short, public funding should not be seen as a silver bullet to solve all problems in electoral finances of any country, but if introduced as a part of a set of reforms, it can contribute greatly to incentivize good practices and disincentivise many wrong and illegal practices.

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Southeast Asia's Changing Perception on Security in the Indo-Pacific: Evaluating India's Role

Dr. Shubhamitra Das*

Abstract

ASEAN's security paradigm has taken a multi-pronged approach due to the changing contours and paradigms of war, terrorism, crime, piracy and natural calamities on the one hand and the emergence of the concept of Indo-Pacific on the other that led to myriad of opportunities and possibilities to engage in the multipolar world as equal partners. The paper will be dealing with ASEAN's changing security perspective from four angles like; a) ASEAN's changing regional perspective, b) Change in security paradigm with China's aggression in South China Sea and China's involvement in depleting faith within ASEAN, c) India's perceived role as a 'net security provider' and ASEAN's take on the Look-to-Act East Policy and d) Terrorism and transnational crimes like piracy, drug and human trafficking leading to a comprehensive security paradigm where India's role is much perceived.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific, Security, Look East Policy, net security provider, east Asian regionalism

Introduction

Security perspective of the countries changed drastically with the emergence of the Indo-Pacific concept, the rise of China, the involvement of the European countries and the simultaneous rise of regionalism and Minilateralism. Moreover, the presence of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) like the "threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repressions and environmental hazards" (Pham, 2015, pp. 82-101) and terrorism got deeply entangled within the traditional security paradigm, making the countries to define their threat perception, security and foreign policy making as a priority. Moreso due to ASEAN's crumbling faith within the member countries, the decreasing

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capacity for bargaining, the regionalism once so strong is facing quite a number of backlashes due to the great power intervention and the growing pressure to find stability in the Indo-Pacific region. And this broadened security perspective became its security culture eventually. Security culture helps in an analytical review of threat perception to the individual countries and to the region, war preparedness and military establishments, modes of cooperation and alliance building. Strategic culture is “a distinct set of beliefs and values appertaining to the use of force in a state’s global and regional engagements” (Haglund, 2014, pp. 310-328). One major security concern of the ASEAN countries is not only to understand their position in US-China rivalry but also in China-Japan rivalry. ASEAN’s understanding of regional order, just some decades back had not included India in any concrete terms; though Asianisation from the perspective of China, Japan and the United States was discussed thoroughly. ASEAN+3 is the major force behind regionalisation of the whole of East Asia, where India is missing. India’s inclusion within the East Asian paradigm could be understood from Southeast Asia’s changing security perspective and India’s extended neighborhood through the Look to Act East Policy.

The four areas were taken to understand how ASEAN’s changing security perspective can imply to the Indian policy-makers to cooperate closely and constructively with ASEAN in the near future like a) ASEAN’s changing regional perspective, b) Change in security paradigm with China’s aggression in South China Sea and China’s involvement in depleting faith within ASEAN, c) India’s perceived role as a ‘net security provider’ and their converging interests to maintain peace and order in the wider Indo-Pacific region and d) Terrorism and transnational crimes leading to a comprehensive security paradigm.

ASEAN’s Changing Perspective on Regionalism

The basic reason for regionalism is that both the strong/weak states come together to have better bargaining power and help to map the member countries in one geographical entity thus deciding the economic, diplomatic and defence ties. In Asia the very concept of regionalism has emerged from the security perspective and the paradigm created by the United States to frame its own military and security strategy (for example ‘middle-east, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Far East’). Regionalism became economic in nature only after Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization has engulfed the global trade and economy by expanding the market culture. The Asian economies were just evolving after decolonization and World Wars and became the fastest growing economies and ASEAN emerged as one of the most successful regional groupings to have taken advantage of the global economy. ASEAN; a multilateral forum was found to promote economic, cultural and social development, to maintain peace and strict

adherence to the 'rule of law and principles of UN Charter' (Cuyver, Chen and Lombaerde, 2019, pp 609-618). ASEAN is "a process whereby local actors create rules with a view to preserve their autonomy from dominance, neglect, violation or abuse by more powerful central actors" (Acharya, 2011, pp. 95-123).

Cold War set the backdrop of ASEAN's regional architecture and hence security is one of the major reasons for cooperation. ASEAN charter all along had insisted on 'ASEAN centrality in its relations with its external partners in the regional architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive' (Weatherbee, 2009:3). But the regional countries are not playing their role through the ASEAN prism as much as they are playing individually; going beyond regionalism and the ASEAN way which is dealt below.

ASEAN Way was fondly used by the friendly leaders/founders of ASEAN in 1967, the cultural bonding, the inter-state relation; that meant a) "strict non-interference in internal matters, b) principle of pacific settlements of disputes, c) respects of territorial integrity and each other's independence" as said by the Malaysian Foreign Minister Musa Hitam in 1985 (Acharya, 2007, pp. 55-84). ASEAN way is also understood as a 'security framework to prevent intra-mural tensions and domestic disputes to aggravate into armed conflict and to prevent great power intervention in the region (Acharya, 2007, pp. 55-84). The ASEAN way with its informality and non-confrontationist policy had kept ASEAN neutral on aspects of security during the Cold War days. The end of Cold War, the gradual increase in traditional and non-traditional threats, China's territorial claims were all causes of concern leading to the formation of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with a primary focus on comprehensive security cooperation.

The ARF was successful in setting norms that can challenge regional balance of power and interestingly China, Japan, South Korea, US, Australia and India have all accepted and wanted ASEAN to lead in East Asian Regionalism. ASEAN's emphasis on 'state centricism and normative determinism' along with the code of conduct of 'consultation and consensus' (Acharya and Stubbs, 2006, pp. 125-134) was quite pronounced for a long time. What ARF does is institutionalising the ASEAN way which eventually brings forth all the regional players to understand and acknowledge ASEAN's centrality. But ARF ended up being a dialogue forum since the ASEAN principle of non-interference has been a big hindrance even in identifying the threats emanating from different countries. Hence ASEAN way had to give way to new forms of security architecture in the region due to its inadequacy in addressing certain issues of crises and confrontations that were arising. There are crevices within the ASEAN member countries like Myanmar and Thailand in 1990 on border issues, and between Cambodia and Thailand since 2008, (Pham, 2015, pp. 82-101), Thailand and

Cambodia's border dispute of the land near preah Vihear temple (Than, 2012, pp. 309-37) is quite a serious issue leading to intramural tensions and mistrust. Likewise, Indonesia and Malaysia; Singapore and Malaysia over 'Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh' which was though resolved in 2008 in favour of Singapore it was brought back by Malaysia in 2017 further deteriorating their bilateral relationship.' (Parameswaram, April 10, 2018).

The point is that these disputes were taken to the International Court by the individual Southeast Asian countries disproving the ASEAN way of 'consensus, consultation and pacific settlement of disputes.' ASEAN with its present difficulties proved that it has ignored the inter-state disputes like an 'ostrich hiding its face' and presumed the disputes will wither away which actually is the very reason for its gradual insignificance in region-building. "Regional Order (in Southeast Asia) in full sense has always been 'beyond' the capacity of ASEAN" (Than, 2012, pp. 309-37) due to mutual lack of trust and differences over issues. China has been quite successful in dividing ASEAN on the territorial claims on South China Sea (Ebbighausen, 7th August, 2017). It was also felt consequently that neither ASEAN nor ARF have been real mechanisms to promote peace in the region but is merely "an exercise of informal confidence building" (Than, 2012, pp. 309-37).

Nevertheless, ASEAN had two primary perspectives towards region building a) ASEAN had contemplated a regional order where ASEAN will be the central factor while maintaining a bilateral relation with the United States (Haacke, 1998, pp. 7-47). The big powers found it "convenient to engage Southeast Asia without raising the suspicion or opposition from the nationalistic governments and people" (Acharya, 2017, pp. 273-279). In the recent decade ASEAN's centrality in defining the regional order became questionable with the rise of China and the formation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between Australia, India, Japan and the United States. The fact that though ASEAN institutionally could not retain its centrality in dictating balance of power in the region but ASEAN geopolitically (Collin, 2013, pp. 186-206) gained the centrality¹ while defining the regional security architecture. Amitav Acharya wrote that ASEAN's centrality has been due to Great Power involvement in the region rather than for ASEAN regionalism or its identity (Acharya, 2017, pp. 273-279).

Donald Trump withdrawing from TPP and his comments on security and economic cooperation had questioned ASEAN centrality thoroughly (Acharya, 2017, pp. 273-279) and ASEAN centralisation and also 'ASEAN architecture' (Thu, 2018, ASPI Special Report) and identity was pushed to the backseat by Quad. Interestingly, though China and the Quad undermines ASEAN centrality their work area or the central focus is Southeast Asian region. b) The formation of

'ASEAN Community' (Bali Concord II) that would achieve "the depth of regional cooperation and integration to satisfy the collective needs of the region." (Than and Korovin, 2015, pp. 3-24). ASEAN in Bali Concord III in 2014 has announced to have a common voice on global issues of mutual concern and enhance cooperation and coordination within ASEAN to showcase its unity and strength on addressing global issues (Asian Studies Programme, 2014). The essence of ASEAN needed a paradigm shift which was also articulated by "Surin Putsiwan, the Secretary General of ASEAN (2008-2012) that ASEAN need to move beyond the 'centrality of good will' to 'centrality of substance'." (Than and Korovin, 2015, pp. 3-24) Since China's entry in ASEAN though later than Japan (1977) was carried out relentlessly and has created a space of its own (China-Centric), exactly the kind of centrality ASEAN was aspiring.

The 'East Asian Regionalism' in ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea) is growing to be practically a regional network. China has a strong hold over ASEAN Plus three and 'ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) since 2010.' (Pham, 2015, pp. 82-101). China centric trade and development along with an increased 'China's stake, bargaining power and influence' in the region will happen when the "ASEAN-China FTA is expanded to ASEAN Plus 3" (Cheow, 2005, pp. 3960-3967 and Estrada, Park, January 2012) Chiangmai Initiative in 2000 could be seen as an attempt to both control the Asian financial crisis and also the first steps to Asian regionalisation by China; almost on the lines of IMF which was initially obstructed by the US. One important aspect of EAR is that China from 1993 "both reinforced and extended ASEAN procedural norms for constructing a regional order" (Jones and Smith, 2007, pp. 165-186). China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its aide Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank (AIIB) has made China an economic powerhouse. On the other hand, the coming up of a number of regional groupings with every country in East Asian being a member of either of the grouping has varied implications.

First it may be due to increasing distrust among the regional members, second it may be due to security reasons overlapping non-security issues that require a different grouping with concerned member countries, third because multiple minilateral arrangements could act one over the other in balancing the region on crucial issues of economics, trade and international relations. Lastly to expand, broaden and ease regionalisation for India.

India's aspirations on the Indian Ocean and maritime security requires strong bond with the Southeast Asian countries. India became a strategic partner of ASEAN from a dialogue partner in 2012. The Look-East to Act-East policy made India a significant part of multiple minilateral initiatives extending regionalism with these countries for example; Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral

Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM), Ganga Mekong Cooperation (GMC). The connectivity projects like Trilateral Highway, Kaladana multimodal projects have fastened the ties between the countries further. India's efforts to institutionalisation and region building will be tested, as to how well it could bring these countries within the fold of Indian Ocean Rim Association and make it stronger from within so that it can also work as a counter measure to China and US rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore the member countries of IORA can play a constructive role in strengthening the organisation.

China's Aggression on South China Sea and Weakening ASEAN

The degree of influence China could develop since 1990, both economically and diplomatically has made the ASEAN members cautious about the long-standing ASEAN principles, values and unity. Geographically China has land border with Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam from its provinces of Yunnan and having the sea border with Vietnam and the rest of the ASEAN countries from Guangxi province, thus having a physical proximity which implies directly to Southeast Asian Regionalism and to the regional security architecture. The least-developed countries like Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia (MLC) were weaning on China's aid and economic diplomacy; a situation known as debt trap induced by China covertly hampering the faith, unity and strength of ASEAN. China's way to deal with individual countries like Cambodia on a bilateral basis, with increased international aid and loan and the high-level visits to these small weak countries made them seem important and China gaining ground in the regions (Welsh, 2013, pp. 3-16). The direct impact was seen when ASEAN was chaired by Cambodia and ASEAN 'failed to sign a basic communiqué in the meeting in Phnom Penh and could not get the code of conduct agreement with China on the long disputed South China Sea at the East Asia Summit.' Indonesia's six-point principles on SCS rejuvenated ASEAN that mentioned about building a regional Code of Conduct (COC) and re-emphasise universally accepted International Law and the 1982 UNCLOS (Parameswaran, 26th March, 2015). The success of the organisation under strong membership of Indonesia and Vietnam led to stronger regional ties and international standing. China's declaration of 'Nine-Dash line' and raising offshore blocks and its aggression fired US' resolve of Pivot which later became 'rebalance' in the Shangri-La dialogue.

The second shocker was when Philippines became the chair and how SCS dispute is not discussed in the East Asia Summit. Neither was the ruling of the International Tribunal that denied China's claims in the waters discussed, nor a single participant at the East Asia Summit in 2017 has brought the matter up emphasising trade over territorial disputes. The challenge of ASEAN is to be

united and build mutual trust with China. The third issue that is mounting pressure on ASEAN is how it is dealing with the Rohingyas of Rakhine and their reaction to Myanmar's way of handling it. China supported the Myanmar's government on the grounds of terrorism, and its business to flourish (Clark and Pattison, April 18, 2017). Myanmar also rejected ASEAN's involvement into the matter which questioned ASEAN's credibility. Cambodia, Myanmar and Philippines could be studied from contrary angles one due to its late entry into ASEAN or a long-time military rule and closeness to China but Philippines being a founder member had not stood by the norms of neutrality (Acharya, 2017, pp. 273-279) one of the main ideas while ASEAN was formed. Moreover China's growing aggression on SCS is very well called as 'tailored coercion' quite visible, on the one hand Xi Jinping said 'China will never seek hegemony or expansion in the region' but on the other hand the Chinese ships keeps defaulting the UNCLOS and once rammed on the coast guard ships of Vietnam near the Oil rig in 2014 and that too just after an elaborate vistas of agreement with Vietnam on infrastructure, trade, energy and maritime trade' in October 2013 (Than and Korovin, 2015, pp. 3-24) though China immediately removed the oil rig.

Another deep seeded tension that is slowly emerging is the turn China's policy extravaganza Belt Road Initiative (BRI) worth nearly \$1 trillion will take in the near future. The show casing of Chinese economic leadership by the creation of Asia Pacific Free Trade Area and opening up of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (Tan and Korovin, 2015, pp. 3-24) will have wider impact in the region; with special reference to MLC. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting at Qingdao, a port city was held not just to showcase China's grand plan of BRI but also to show the extent of military capabilities and technological advancement Chinese military has reached.

The other grave concern is the rising friendship between Russia and China, where 'Russia is more dependent on China; (Tan and Korovin, 2015, pp. 3-24) especially on the economic sphere. China increased its strategic partnership with Russia, during the Ukraine war and did not condemn the attack as an invasion undermining the UN Charter, the joint drills of Chinese and Russian bombers (Kewalramani, June 3, 2022) examples of provocative actions against the US. 'Thucydides Trap' kind of situation is emerging between China and the United States where "not just extraordinary, unexpected reasons but even ordinary flashpoints of foreign affairs, can trigger large scale conflict" (Khan, 20th May, 2018, p. 12) and the Indo-Pacific region will be the warfront. This concern made the regional countries to expand their strategies and engagement among themselves for a peaceful region.

Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam consider India's cooperation would balance China to a considerable extent, their concern is that all ASEAN countries will have to be on the same page and that is a challenge. While Thailand doesn't consider China to be a threat and the need of cooperating with India is more to thwart insurgency in its southern most regions and its border problems with Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia (Blank, et.al., 2015, pp. 79-142 and Roy Chaudhury, 15th June, 2016) India and Thailand have extended their security relation further in the recent years. Laos and Cambodia have closer ties with China unlike any other Southeast Asian country.

China's influence over Myanmar is quite strong and for India to penetrate it will require meticulous strategy. India's engagement with Southeast Asia can be studied from firstly, the strait of Malacca that connects the Indo-Pacific region through the South China Sea which has to be secured and remain accessible to all and secondly from the economic angle of trade and connectivity. India and Indonesia have increased their ties and proposed to build a peaceful 'maritime Mandala' in the heart of Indo-Pacific by "building ports, shipping links, and promoting blue economy and advancing cooperative security framework for the Malacca straits and Bay of Bengal" (Mohan, 28th May, 2018, p. 10). India conducted Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) in June 2022 with the aim of understanding each other's navies and increase interoperability (Newsonair, December 16, 2022). Indonesia believes India to have the potential to balance China and is also wary of how much ASEAN can deliver and hence has extended its security relationship with the United States, Australia, Japan and India considerably. India and Vietnam share strong security relation for decades. June 2022 marks 30 years of India-ASEAN relation that emphasises on strategic partnership in the maritime region of Indo-Pacific.

ASEAN's Changing Perspective towards India as a Security Provider in the Indo-Pacific

When in 1980s Indian defence forces expanded with a new generation of weapon systems, Integrated Missile Development Programme was initiated, and "blue-Water" Navy, ASEAN countries were alarmed at India effecting the Balance of Power in the region. India's friendship with Soviet Russia and later India's *de facto* declaration of nuclear capability through the Pokhran II made Southeast Asian states suspicious of India's growth. The economic reforms in India in 1990s broadened India's economic and trade relations as well as defence and security cooperation with the regional countries. In 2005 Chief of Naval Staff Arun Prakash said that "It is imperative for India to maintain a strong maritime capability to maintain balance not only on the Indian Ocean but the wider Asia-Pacific" (Yong and Mun, 2009, pp. 20-42). The actual reason for change of

ASEAN perspective towards India was due to the US' Pivot to Asia-Pacific during Obama's regime and Trump emphasising on Indo-Pacific with India's centrality and also India's Look-East Policy was slowly making space in ASEAN's thinking.

India's involvement in the process of regionalism in the region had been limited to SAARC and in maintaining strategic autonomy had lost the opportunity to include itself in the 'expanded neighbourhood' and its regional structures. Nevertheless, India's strategic presence as well as steady economic growth makes it impossible to contemplate East Asian regionalism without India. India is building a regional architecture involving ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, US and Australia while having good and amicable relation bilaterally with China. Though India and China emerged as 'serious dialogue partners,' border disputes aggravated. India and China are actually the contending factors in the formation of an Asian Community in balancing of power, economic and trade cooperation and coordination of human resources and technology, though the fact remains that China is way ahead of India. Moreover, 'Indo-Pacific' itself gained traction due to China's economic extravaganza i.e., Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India has a crucial role to play and its role of a security provider is understood from its strong support to UNCLOS and the 'rules-based' order. But India is not a 'net security provider' and is more like one of the major 'security facilitators,' being the largest maritime power in the Indian Ocean and increased interaction on the sea will latently control NTS issues from occurring. India has become a serious partner with the Southeast Asian countries and unlike earlier times is not seeking a seat at the table (Blank, *et al* 2015, pp. 79-142). India's involvement with the region has increased substantially from the security perspective.

The biennial naval exercise Milan which started in 1995 includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, Philippines, Brunei, Thailand and in 2022 nearly 40 countries of the Indian Ocean region participated. These countries are also members of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. The regularity of bilateral and multilateral naval exercises on the Indian and the Pacific Oceans led to the reduction of piracy attacks in the Indo-Pacific region to 58 percent said Regional Cooperation on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) (The Statesman, 14th January, 2017, p. 12). ASEAN's growing perception of India to have the potential to gain regional leadership and facilitate security through cooperation and region-building led these countries to align closely with India on the defence and security lines. India signed security cooperation agreements with Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia. Maritime security cooperation, defence infrastructure production jointly, cooperation to counter terrorism and increasing trade and investment will be major focus.

Singapore has acted as the 'spring board' and helped in "socializing India into the ASEAN centric regional architecture ever since 1990s." (Collin 2013, pp.186-206) Indonesia is considered as the 'fulcrum' (Mohan, 28th May, 2018, p. 10) to enhance relationship with each other. To build a strong regional architecture ASEAN and India together requires similar purpose and vision Like Quang Minh Pham² said that "it requires not only leadership but the shared values of 'heart-to-heart' and 'equal' cooperative partnership and its vision" (Pham, 2015, pp. 82-101)

India-ASEAN population is almost a third of the global population and the total GDP is around \$US 3.8 trillion (Raslan, 26th January, 2018). India and ASEAN engagement found key concerns like trade, connectivity, cyber security, and socio-political issues under the Delhi Dialogue, Track 1.5 diplomacy (Pant and Deb, July 2017, ORF Issue 189) is a big boost to India's Look-to-Act East Policy making the possibility of an 'Asian economic Community' (Hong, 2006, pp 141-170). India's exit from RCEP (Nachiappan, July 2021, pp. 1-17) has many consequences but then India has extended trade with almost every country that is a member of RCEP and will not join RCEP in the near future keeping China is mind, that can be discussed some other time. India-ASEAN trade was \$64 billion in 2015 and \$86.92 billion in 2019-2020. India-ASEAN commodity trade reached to \$ 98. 39 billion with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand in 2021-22 (MEA, 2022). But the most visible aspect of India-ASEAN ties is in maritime security and defence (Brewster, 2013, pp.151-164) which has broad implications towards their closer and sustained ties, and trade will slowly increase as most of the countries are trying to diversify supply chains in the post-pandemic times.

Changing ASEAN - Internal Conflict, Piracy, Trafficking and Terrorism

The Non-Traditional Security has penetrated into the very ethos of traditional security paradigm. After the Second World War the character of conflicts and objectives of war have changed and the new trends that are seen are sub-conventional war, hybrid war and limited wars. Terrorism and cybercrime have brought the 'entire command and control mechanisms under threat.' The issues rising from internal conflict; concerning human rights, good governance, piracy, trafficking and terrorism transcends time and space and are all transnational (Jones and Smith, 2007, pp. 165-186) and also climate change, 'cross border environmental degradation and resource depletion, infectious disease, irregular migration, food shortage (Murray, 2020) requiring transnational measures. The traditional bilateral alliance structures that formed the regional security architecture were inadequate due to the complexity of conflicts and wars. Moreover, the pressure to combat NTS is due to the country's vision to achieve, attain and sustain economic growth and development. Conflict in the peripheries of Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines have rippling effect all over the

region. For example, the case of Myanmar, Rohingyas are one of the most prosecuted people in the world. And the Muslim states like Malaysia and Indonesia were at loggerheads with Myanmar's government for the delay in taking decision and southern Thailand having issues with the rising Rohingya refugees in their land.

The mechanisms that were available with ASEAN for inter-state issues could not hold ground while dealing with insurgency and 'terrorism.' The insurgency issues of West Papua in Indonesia, Moro in Philippines, Darul Islam (DI) to Jemmah Islamiyah (JI) in Indonesia leading to peripheral conflicts and terrorism.³ Terrorism and its severity is showcased in Bali Bombings in 2002-3 and Australian embassy bombing in Jakarta in 2005, explosion in MV Super Ferry 14 in 2004 and the Marawi siege in 2017 in Philippines Surabaya Church bombings in 2018 to name just a few. Islamic fundamentalists like Laskar-e Toiba, Jeemaah Islamia (JI) expanded and entered Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and other countries (Borelli, 2017, pp. 14-20). Transborder terrorism was an usual feature in Southeast Asia due to 'porous borders, weak governance structures, and lack of capabilities' (Acharya, 2006, pp. 297-321).

Southeast Asia depended on US under the ASEAN-US Joint Declaration to Combat Terrorism. India-China-ASEAN can really work out a lucrative mechanism with US to combat terrorism. Armed rebellion or ethno-nationalists have joined hands with new terrorist organisations, but to combat such a complex rebellion requires a holistic approach. The fact remains that the origin of rebellion lies in the most basic demands of life and livelihood that gets pronounced politically with the help of their own ethnic and religious identities. (Tan, 2008, pp. 311-325)

ASEAN's "counter-terrorism landscape is highly complex and asymmetrical in terms of member states" (Borelli, 2017, pp. 14-20) and hence the proposed ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) was not yet feasible, like the junta's crackdown on the Buddhist monks-led demonstration in Myanmar in 2007, border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand and the lack of consensus on South China Sea dispute among the member states. India plays a crucial role in humanitarian aid, disaster relief through Asia Regional Plan (ARP) in 2016 and finding ways to address disaster in the region. Enhanced cooperation on counter terrorism was promised in 2021 during the India-ASEAN friendship year to further Comprehensive Security Cooperation.

Conclusion

The security perspective has indeed taken the front seat for Southeast Asian countries with the changing equations and perspectives on threat; the

presumed US declining and China ascending on the one hand and the technological sophistication leading to the juxtaposition of traditional and non-traditional security threats on the other. Southeast Asia is a maritime region and a porous zone that is directly impacted with the politics and diplomacy of Indo-Pacific. ASEAN is a strong regional grouping which is showing signs of breaking within; especially the MLC that is overtly dependent on China, while Indonesia is disillusioned with the working of the organisation, Vietnam being anxious are searching for a more constructive role to play within Indo-Pacific. The emergence of different minilaterals like Quad and AUKUS where ASEAN countries were absent has made them wary of their prospective role in the region. At the same time Southeast Asian countries are playing an important role in institutionalising of the Indo-Pacific and framing rules of cooperation. India seems to be the most lucrative partner at this juncture not as a leader but as a partner at a level playing field for checking the US-China rivalry as well as to control the spread of Non-Traditional Security threats.

Notes

1. Southeast Asia's geographical location shows it being surrounded by China, Japan, the United States, Australia and India making it the centre stage of Asia-Pacific where the 'New Great Game' is being played. (Collin, 2013, p186-206) The author says that Southeast Asia seems to be like a "Pod of Porpoise surrounded by large whales from all sides...and this geostrategic environment will not change but regional and national interest might".
2. China in a short period i.e., after 1990s framed a regional architecture with southeast Asian nations, Japan had an early entry in 1970's started trying to compete with China to build the regional architecture. While India also in 1990 like China formed its 'look-east' policy to engaged with ASEAN but has a long way for region-building.
3. The distinction is also made by Andrew Tan about insurgency being a local version of rebellion i.e., guerrilla warfare and terrorism being a different kind of rebellion featuring urban based violence to fulfil the ethno-nationalist or religious objectives.

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International Aid to Afghanistan: An Exploration of Mechanisms and Effectiveness

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to scientifically assess the aid effectiveness and sustainability of foreign aid received by Afghanistan. An attempt has been made to analyse how the military–industrial complexes of the USA drained the aid money and were hardly enough to trickle down to local Afghans at the grass root levels. The research includes both primary and secondary sources of information highlighting certain facts and figures. The research essentially involves a data collection through in depth-interviews with the various spokespersons from the Afghan government and a few Afghan experts before the Taliban took over.

Keywords: Foreign Aid, International Assistance following 9/11 attack, on and off-budget aid in Afghanistan, War on Terror, Military–Industrial Complex, Taliban

Contextualizing the Case

Within one month of the international troops leaving the war torn country, the Taliban were quick to grab the opportunity in taking over the country to the extent that all hell were let loose! The International community barely had time enough to leave the country for their respective destinations. It was expected that given the huge training and capacity building measures as well as the huge collection of weapons of mass destruction, the Afghan forces will put up a strong resistance against the Taliban. Nevertheless it took less than weeks for the Taliban to takeover the entire country and unleashing their wrath and venom against people who had served the international community. The former president of the elected government Ashraf Ghani literally fled the country on the face of uncertainty. This proved the fragile capacity of the Afghan government, their security and safety. The Panjshir region was the only region led by Amrullah Saleh which resisted the Taliban. As a

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result of the Taliban brutality, people were fleeing with a sense of hopelessness and taking shelter wherever they could. The Taliban fighters hunted down the aides of the former Ghani government. The situation of women has been the worst with Sharia law being imposed once again irrespective of educated women, women who were professionals, women who reported in the news channel, etc. Although the United Nations declared it as a humanitarian crisis but nonetheless have failed to gather the required international attention to address the issue.

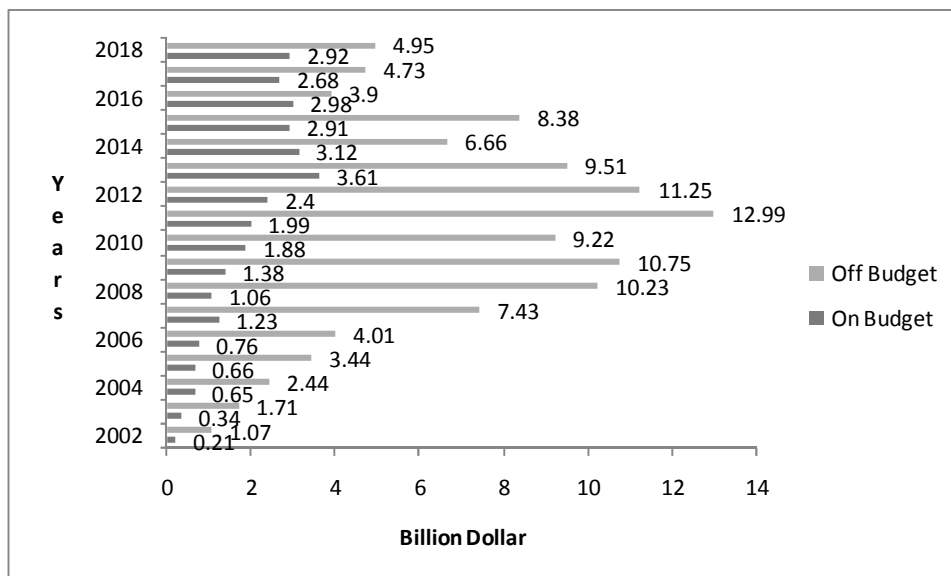
Meanwhile the international actors are trying to gain their own political brownies. The government of China already announced its million dollar investment in the unstable country. Pakistan is celebrating the Taliban takeover as they could leverage the situation against their common rivals. India located in close proximity to Afghanistan is still in the horns of dilemma and trying to find a way out, to make diplomatic connection with the newly formed Afghan government that consists of a large majority who have been declared as dreaded terrorist by the United Nations. American president Joe Biden has been found to be dodging the Afghan issue in a couple of interviews as he seems more interested in talking 'happy things'. The US government is blaming the Afghan political leaders and their security forces for the fall of the country. However it cannot be denied that two decades of capacity building and training has not evolved the desired results. The international assistance and Aid management has been rather flimsy as a result it fell like a pack of cards. It was the sole responsibility of the international community to build a strong political institution and heavily trained security forces in the war torn country.

Therefore, the failure of the Afghan political leaders and security forces is indirectly a failure of the US government and the international community's nation building programme. Recently the US government denied its responsibility of Afghanistan's nation building programme and categorised it as only as a counter terrorism mission against the 9/11 terror attack. The 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon marked the date as a black day in US history. The then President George W. Bush did not think twice before attacking the al-Qaida leader Osama Bin Laden who had been hiding under the shadow of Taliban government in Afghanistan. However in reality the predecessors of Biden government repeatedly talked about the importance of sharing responsibility in building political institutions in Afghanistan. Some media house research shows that most of the aid money of the US government were siphoned back to the private firms of the US, as a result of outsourcing the war on terror. They were neither Afghan owned, Afghan led nor Afghan Controlled. It is apparent that the aid never left the US and it was distributed as salaries to various Defence Companies and contractors. These private firms were responsible for providing

arms, ammunition and training to the Afghan security forces (WION, 2021). The military–industrial complex formed in the war on terror helps in building a nexus between the US politicians and defence contractors over the decades.

History repeats itself! This is what is clearly witnessed from the recent crisis in Afghanistan. The international community spent trillions of aid bilaterally and multilaterally in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. But the aid did not secure the devastated country in any way. A glimpse of the disbursement of foreign aid to Afghanistan can be understood through the procedure it adopted. The foreign aid in Afghanistan, was disbursed by the international community either directly or indirectly. The direct foreign aid was disbursed through the government budget and referred to as the ‘on-budget’. While the indirect budget was channelled through private sectors, and international organizations referred to as the ‘Off Budget’. The international community came to the rescue of the then newly formed Afghan government, opting for the off-budget indirect aid via the private sectors. What is surprising is that this off-budget indirect investment mostly cared for the donor priorities rather than the need based development objectives. On the other hand, the directly spent on-budget aid focused on the Afghan priorities. The initial first decade of ‘War on Terror’ witnessed a 51% aid allotted to the security sector (Rubin, 2020). A temporal distribution of the on and off-budget aid is depicted in the graph below (Figure I).

Figure I



Aid Disbursement in Afghanistan (US billion dollars) (2002-2018)

(Source: Karimi et al, 2020)

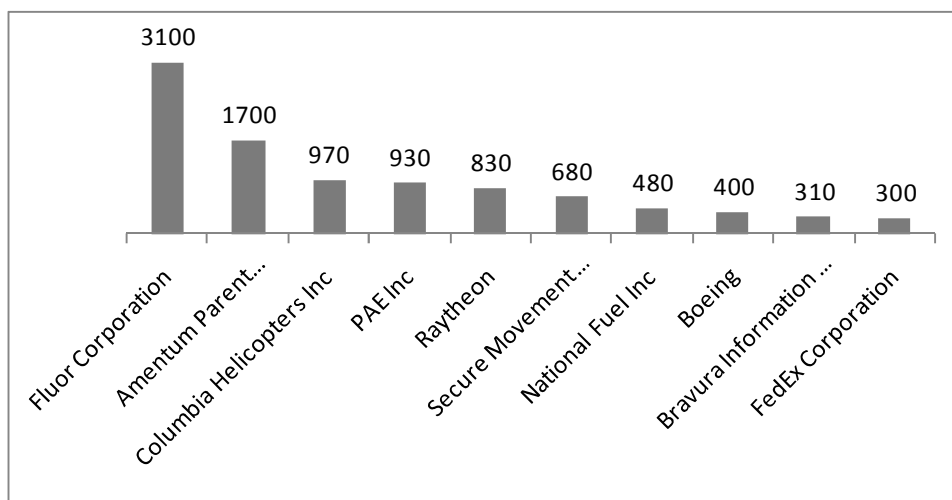
During this entire period, the off-budget aid clearly received much more than the on-budget aid (Figure I). The highest gap was observed in 2011 when only 1.99 billion was spent through the government budget and 12.99 billion dollar was spent through off-budget. The off-budget aid was provided not only through the private security firms but also via various NGOs and other organizations. Gradually the figure clearly shows how the off-budget disbursement started to far exceed the on-budget disbursement. They mostly accounted for the salaries, security arrangements and other services. Thus a small portion of the off-budget aid trickled down to the local Afghans. Moreover such off-budget aid was short term in nature and hence remained ineffective and failed to build the necessary capacity building measures among the local Afghan communities.

However, over the years the security sector continued to remain vulnerable in the country. Data shows a huge proportion of the US AID budget (89%) was for outside the Afghan government budget while only 11% was on-budget. Compared to other countries, the USA contributed the largest amount of AID through off-budget sectors (Ministry of Finance, Afghanistan, 2012). This off-budget aid did promote corruption and weak governance, creating an opportunity for the rise of private firms. This fact has been clearly depicted by the news media at present. Despite a recorded number of troops being inducted into the army, facts show the contrary. An estimated number to the tune of 30000 soldiers were supposed to be ghost soldiers that actually did not exist in reality but were on rolls. Their salaries kept on getting disbursed on a regular basis (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 2021). The term 'Ghost soldiers' or 'ghost battalions' are some names that appear on military rolls, but who are not actually in military service. This helps in diverting part of the soldiers' salaries to influential local entity (The Guardian, 2021). Although the Afghan Ministry of Defence denied such existence but Pentagon was well aware of the situation (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2016). Even after knowing the existence the Pentagon could not take adequate measures to curb the issue.

Since 2007, the number of US contractors increased manifold, even more than the presence of US armed forces in the war torn country (The New Yorker, 2016). During the war on terror the US spent 2.6 trillion USD in Afghanistan, that makes 300 USD million a day. Out of which, 80 billion USD was spent on fighting a war and 85 billion USD to train the Afghan security forces (TRT world, 2021) which now reveals that such enhanced number of forces were not existing in reality! Despite all, the amount spent in building the Afghan security forces is very low compared to the amount spent in the private sectors for providing services, infrastructure and other equipment. Most of this amount was spent through privatised firms such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Ray

Theon, General Dynamics, DynCorp, Academi, Black & Veatch, all belonging to the USA. These firms benefitted billions of dollars from the Pentagon contracts. These companies were hired for every possible service in the country and in some cases the US government shouldered all the costs. According to Linda Bilmes a Harvard based Professor, (Marketplace, 2021) “Such system enable the private firms to rip off the government”. A report says that out of 2.312 trillion USD to Afghanistan 2.02 trillion USD (87% of total amount) went to the top five defence contractors of the US (Global Times, 2021). The Figure II depicts the concentration of funds among the defence contractors in Afghanistan.

Figure II



Top Défense Contractors, 2016-2021, (in Million USD)

(Source: *Bloomberg Government (2021)*)

Figure II depicts the top companies that received contracts from the department of defence of the US government (2016-2021). These private firms assisted the US government in Afghanistan in every possible way such as lodging, transporting, monitoring, and other services. Reports (Bloomberg Government, 2021) suggest, the Pentagon has spent \$107.9 billion on these firms in Afghanistan. This dependence on the private firms undermined the need of capacity building measures in Afghanistan. That's why in spite of having a large army the Afghan forces could not secure their country against the Taliban. The private firms were well aware of the fact that they would not stay in the country for ever. Yet they showed very little enthusiasm in making a strong Afghan army. Besides producing the inadequate results in security sector, these private security contractors treated the local Afghans with disrespect and that created a lack of trust for the foreign troops among the Afghans (Reuters, 2007).

As the US troops have all left, the Taliban leaders have formed their government mostly consisting of hard core and UN sanctioned terrorists. It is true that during the presence of international community, indicators of security, economy and society did show signs of improvement. The infrastructure created, the education imparted to women and girls, the empowerment process that had accelerated among the minorities, the inclusiveness among the communities will all be a history now. They will undoubtedly have a cascading effect and ultimately vanish at a rapid speed under the new Taliban government which is determined to run the country by Sharia law banning women from all fields of development.

Commitment and Disbursement

The main donors who have come forward in rebuilding Afghanistan are the US, the European Union, the UK, Germany, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, India, Sweden Italy, Turkey, Australia, Spain, Denmark, France, Finland, Russia, and Switzerland. Every country has pledged the AID amount according to its priorities. The United States channelled their funding through the United State Agency for International Development (USAID). The USA is the largest donor to Afghanistan, and its top priority is to dismantle the Taliban and its allies. In its longest war overseas the US government has spent more than 2 trillion US dollar (The New York Times, 2019).

The International community have played a significant role through providing AID, and it is functioning because during that time Afghan government was not in a position to mobilise resources on its own. Security sector reforms was one of the key achievements of international communities. For this purpose, the United States build a hybrid civil-military field unit – the Provincial Reconstruction Team (Ayub et al., 2009). During the last years of the international community, there is a mixed picture of security scenario where the UN data NATO information provided a different picture about it (Nicole, 2013). According to Carter (2011), the coalition fatalities have been increasing since the outset of war against terrorism in Afghanistan by the years. After the initial ten years of war, the Afghan National Security Forces had little success in providing security in eastern Afghanistan where the foreign troops have a sturdy presence (Barry, 2011).

Not only the US government but also the Canadian efforts to make a difference in the long-term were compromised (Banerjee, 2015). Those who ran the government's AID programs in Kabul, stated that “we went into a complex country without a proper strategy, and this was a major problem.” Canada helped in counter-narcotics programme and refugee settlements. Canada also encouraged Iran to support the Afghan rebuilding (Bookmiller, 2011). The effects of the opium

trade in terrorist activities drove the US-coalition security policy strategy in Afghanistan (Piazza, 2012). However, during the initial stage, the US was only enthusiastic to eradicate the terrorist groups but eventually it felt the need of nation-building process in Afghanistan (Hassan et al., 2011).

Reconciliation and Reintegration were the best options in Afghanistan for maintaining long-term peace after the troops withdrawal (Hanasz, 2012). The international community also tried to solve the local rivalry among warlords to bring in peace in the region (Jarstad, 2013). While at the same time, economic reconstruction was necessary to win the hearts and minds of the people (Coyne et al., 2011). It is a fact that the international communities have played a crucial role in peace-building in Afghanistan, however this cannot ignore the crucial role played by the regional players in the process of Afghan rebuilding. Afghanistan's regional level communication, trade, connectivity were significant for its development (Gleason et al., 2009).

Sometimes the aid and peace building efforts were highly influenced by the political choice rather than on the basis of humanitarian considerations. Political participation is necessary to provide humanitarian aid, but sometimes fulfilling political purposes become the main issue of humanitarian aid (Stockton, 2004). Often the donors try to fulfil their strategic interests. The report published (Waldman, 2008) in the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR), an alliance of international AID agencies working in the country, including Oxfam, Christian AID, Islamic Relief and Save the Children, says the international community has pledged \$25 billion to Afghanistan since 2001, but only \$15 billion has been disbursed. The AID process was campaigned by the donor priorities and was administered through the donor channels thus making it difficult for Afghanistan to take the lead in pursuing its priorities (Totakhail, 2011). The international community made a rentier state in Afghanistan, which was unparalleled in their history and unique in the world (Suhrke, 2012). Many critics say that the international community failed to pay heed to the history of last twenty years of international engagement in Afghanistan (Johnson et al., 2002).

Even after pouring in billions of aid the Afghan situation is characterized 'by surging violence, limited developmental and economic progress, inept domestic political leadership, and widespread corruption' (Friis, 2012). The government was overwhelmed with the patronage system to question the viability of the state (Dodge, 2011). Some Afghan businessmen also took advantage of the weak. Contractual system of aid given by the international donors and fulfilled their interests (Murtazashvili, 2015). On the other hand a lack of development in agricultural sector resulted in an increase in opium cultivation and networked itself

with several crimes (Hussain, 2012). The troops withdrawal in 2014 could make the new actors re-evaluate their position in the abandoned country. Karzai wanted foreign governments and international aid organizations to work more closely with the Afghan government. After the withdrawal of international troops on 31 August 2021, the Taliban-Pakistan duo is expected to impose another threat to the regional security scenario (Motwani et al., 2015). According to Chaudet (2012), the troublesome nature in Afghan's neighbourhood had a critical impact on this country. As Karzai indicated, money is not the only issue. Diligence is also a big part of the formula for the success of Afghanistan's reconstruction. He wanted more contribution towards Afghanistan from donors because the administered AID was inadequate as it had fallen short of the amount initially promised which was 0.7% of the donor countries' Gross National Index.

Complications of Aid Effectiveness

The implications of AID effectiveness were diverse in different sectors. The security sector remains fragile, with neo-Taliban and al-Qaeda elements continuing their insurgency, mostly in the south and the east of Afghanistan (Ghufran, 2006). According to Long (2013), there is so much dissatisfaction among the Afghan Security Forces on the role of international community. Deteriorating security conditions in all likelihood will become increasingly precarious in the attempt to build a lasting and viable democratic state in Afghanistan (Mullen, 2009). The lack of security encouraged increased poppy cultivation in many provinces, making Afghanistan once again the top opium producer in the world (Jalali, 2003). Some scholars pointed out the relationship between the opium market and violence in Afghan context (Bove et al., 2012). They demonstrated many weaknesses like inappropriate training, coerced enrolment, low wages, hazing rituals, low re-enlistment, allegations of corruptions, the involvement of narcotics, dependent on foreign advisors and trainers, lack of equipment, taxing convoys and travellers and execution of prisoners. Athasi (2013) argued that even the norms of international justice posed a threat to the Afghan national identity.

Lauri (2013) showed an ethnographic perspective to point out the corrupted nature of Afghan judicial system. While the failures of international democratic norms in the Afghan context have been clearly displayed by other scholars (Wimpelmann, 2013). The international community was unable to recognize the importance of underlying mechanisms in the Afghan society (Wilde et al., 2013). One of the main ingredients of state building is the consent of local people which was missing in Afghanistan (Carver, 2011). Somewhere the role of local leadership in the rebuilding process seems to have been ignored (Edwards, 2012).

The security sector engulfed a huge proportion of the AID. The international security assistance forces took their 'Shape-Clear-Hold-Build' policy in counterinsurgency programme in Afghanistan inspite of being criticized on several occasions. Security could not be provided beyond the city level, and there was a lack of coherent international cooperation in the security sector (Coady et al., 2009). The engagement of international community and the rate of violence seemed to be positively correlated increasing simultaneously in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan had received US\$242.9 billion dollars out of which, 84.6% of the total share was during the first fifteen years. Only 9.2% of the AID went to humanitarian assistance sector. The education sector did improve since 2003. Most of the children were provided primary education in Afghanistan. Women empowerment showed mixed results. The political participation of women also increased. The Afghan parliament consisted of 28% of women. However their role in the labour market was not up to satisfying level. Gender gaps and disparity persists in the Afghan economy. The health sector had improved significantly. According to 2012 MDG report of Afghanistan Child mortality rate reduced by 60% since 2003. However, in spite of much progress in the child mortality and maternal health there were several problems that ailed the local communities (Rassoly et al., 2013).

In May 2002, the leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan agreed to revive the project and sponsors signed a series of preliminary agreements at an inaugural meeting in July 2002, in Turkmenistan. In late 2011, the Asian Development Bank agreed to finance the project, removing what had been a major hurdle. Afghanistan has taken significant steps toward fostering a business-friendly environment for both foreign and domestic investment (Skinner, 2013). To facilitate Afghanistan's ability to enhance trade, USAID funded a five-year project (\$63 million total during 2010-2014) to simplify the customs clearance process. This includes new import procedures that have reduced the time by 45% for clearing customs for imports. On 13th December 2004, 148 countries of the World Trade Organization voted to start membership talks with Afghanistan (Cordesman et al., 2012). Road building was considered as a U.S. and international priority. At least 10,000 miles of roads have been built since 2001 by all donors, of which United States funded about half.

The role of an international security force which started its operation in 2001 has been ended in Afghanistan. The international coalition forces have been reducing its forces since 2010 resulting only 40000 troops as of October 2014 (The Asia Foundation report, 2014). New Afghan President Ashraf Ghani signed the Bilateral Security Agreement with the US and a status of forces agreement with NATO aiming at having assistance from the later in a crisis. The bilateral agreement

was also a sign of long-term commitment between Afghanistan and the international community for its development and peace agenda. Following the new Bilateral Security Agreement signed in 2014 nearly 10000 US troops will continue to provide training and logistical support in security missions in Afghan soil till the end of 2016. The international community is also trying diplomatic tools to reconcile the peace process with the Taliban. Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) improved its capacity building and took the full security responsibility in 2013.

The Afghan forces showed their capabilities during the parliamentary and presidential election in Afghanistan in preserving peace and security. With a little help from NATO forces, the Afghan National Army and National Police designed their planning and executed the plan in many significant and severe situations. The Afghan National Security Forces consisted of the Afghan National Army with 189,000 personnel in the whole country, the Afghan National Police with 153,000 personnel, and the Afghan Local Police with 27,000 personnel (The Asia Foundation report, 2014). But the role of Afghan National Security Forces remained ineffective in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas.

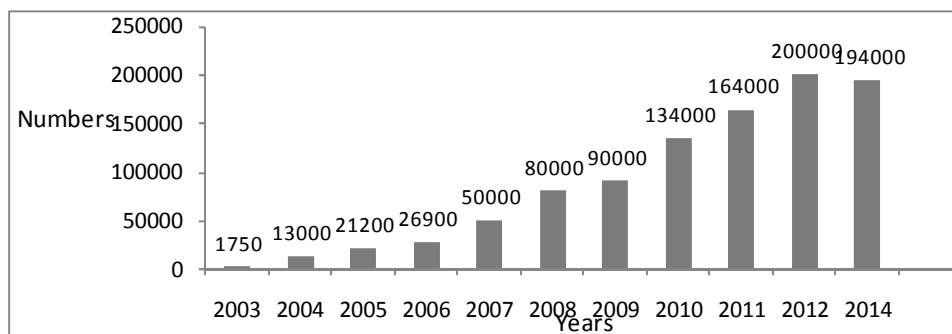
After the withdrawal of coalition forces, the main target of an armed opposition group is the security forces. The increase in violent attacks and civilian casualties proves the growing power of insurgents groups. Reports (Asia Foundations Report, 2014) suggest that, civilian casualties rate grew by 24% in 2014 from its previous year. The Afghan Local Police was established with the aim of maintaining security at the community level which has not shown any significant improvement so far. Even in the army and police level, there are many shortcomings and pitfalls in upholding security situation. More than 2/3 of total aid in Afghanistan was spent in the security sector ignoring all other sectors. The NATO and coalition military forces handed over the security responsibility of Afghanistan to the Afghan National Security Forces. It is already seen how the National forces were incapable of maintaining the security. There is nothing left in terms of international security assistance forces in the country.

The international community was quite active and confident that the Afghan forces are quite likely to handle their own security problems. But the troops withdrawal in 2014 was seen as a victory by the insurgent groups. It visualized that they were gaining their power again. President Ghani in his state visit in 2015 expressed his concern about the security matter and asked for a stronger security partnership with the US. Ghani had plenty of reasons to be afraid of. In the year 2014, when the international security forces were supposed to leave, Afghanistan witnessed the highest number of deaths due to terrorism attacks. From security checkpoints to civilians, everyone was under the Taliban threat. Apparently, the lack of Presence of international forces gave the Taliban an opportunity to rain in their strengths. It was

expected that this kind of terrorist attack was likely to rise in future. The year 2015 experienced a lot of trouble in the Afghan security sector. The Taliban assaults spread widely in the various regions of the country.

In April 2015 the Taliban tried to take control of Kunduz area in the northern Afghanistan. Southern Afghanistan remained the most vulnerable region in the country. The insurgent groups conducted several attacks in various districts of the Helmand province. In 2014 the Taliban attacked the Helmand region but could not occupy any of its part. The success of Afghan national security forces against the insurgents was overlooked by the local media. Most of the reporting and management is provided by the Afghan National Security Forces though the quality of this report is still to be developed. These insurgent attacks did not have any strategic success against the ANSF. One of the affected areas in Sangin district, the terrorists captured the government building and police headquarter. This attack revealed the insufficient equipment with the security forces. The Governor of Greshk district, Mohammad Sharif stated that their units did not have sufficient weapons like AK-47s which is also known as Avtomat Kalashnikova and one of the mostly used weapons in the whole world. The use of these arms is rampant in Afghanistan because of its reliability and stability; “if weapons would have been provided, security would be maintained” (Sridharan, 2015). This indicates the helpless picture of the Afghan government in front of the extremist attack. This district is also ill famous for being used as a drug corridor. Compared to any other districts more people lost their lives due to insurgent attacks in these districts since Afghan National forces took the responsibility of the security (McNally et al, 2015). The security forces successfully drove away the Taliban from the district in the initial period but later they attacked again. In addition the Taliban also attacked Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

Figure III



Afghan National Army

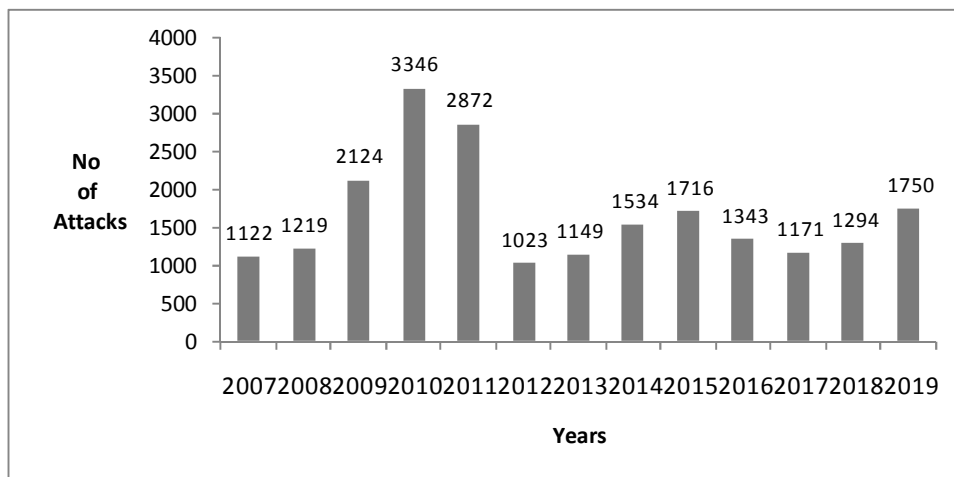
Sources: Chakraborty, 2016, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation (Based on Wikipedia and SIGAR report)

Figure III illustrates the strength of Afghan National Army from 2003 to 2014. International community started to build Afghan National Army since 2002 which is the main defence group in Afghanistan. In 2003 the number of entire Army was 1750 which is the lowest number till now. In the following year, the number rose to 13000 due to the growing need in the security sector. In 2005 the number increased by another 8000 and reached to 21200. The next year, there were 26900 army soldiers in Afghanistan. In 2007 the number almost doubled to 50000. In 2008, 30000 more troops joined the Afghan National Army, the number further increased to 90000 in 2009. By 2010 the NATO and the coalition forces announced its withdrawal and emphasised more on the army building. In that year the army strength was 134000. The next year, it increased to 164000 and in 2012, Afghanistan had the highest number of National Army to the tune of 200000 soldiers. By 2014 the number for the whole army was 194000.

According to 2015 SIGAR report, the coalition forces had 130000 troops in the Afghan soil but after 2015 it reduced to only 13000 just to train the Afghan soldiers. This military personnel had contact with high-rank officials and not any direct contact at the regional level. The army strength in Afghanistan never reached to the expected level. They had no idea as to how many troops were necessary for maintaining peace in Afghanistan (SIGAR REPORT, 2015).

Nevertheless the Afghan security forces fell very quickly against the Taliban government. Some expert believes that in reality the Afghan army was not that strong or big enough and it was a ‘ghost battalion’ which enabled the government of Afghanistan to attract further foreign aid.

Figure IV



Number of Terrorist Attacks in Afghanistan (2007-2019)

(Sources: Statista Research Department, 2021)

Despite the country having a large number of army personal, it could not control the swift rise of insurgent movement across the country. Figure IV shows the number of terrorist attack in Afghanistan from 2007 to 2009. The highest number of terrorist attack took place in 2010 and the lowest was in 2012.

Following the full withdrawal of the Western forces in 2021, the Taliban commanders established the Afghan government. Additionally, they have conducted bilateral contacts with some of the major nations, like China, over the past few of years. The most disturbing aspect, however, is their affiliation with extremist organisations like Al-Qaida, which were directly responsible for several terrorist assaults throughout the globe. Additionally, some of the official designations include terrorists on the UN's blacklist. Therefore, it is likely that their position in the government will undermine Afghanistan's citizens' ability to exercise their political and human rights. The Taliban leaders cannot further assert that they have embraced all of the ethnic groups that exist in Afghanistan. This anti-democratic behaviour is ending the equal distribution of foreign aid in the coming years.

The main goal of the paper is to understand how major countries' aid diplomacy and their own self-interest paralysed an entire nation for a few decades. The international community invested billions of dollars in building the nation from the ground up, yet despite this, the nation has fallen short of expectations. Now that they have left the country, the world community asserts that they have done their duty admirably. In spite of aid being provided, just a few local actors, according to this report, were directly involved in the distributing process. Local stakeholders were left out of the process, which caused the political and economic systems to become stagnated.

With a serious financial crunch looming large before the economy of Afghanistan, international recognition is another challenge for the newly reinstated Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. All eyes are set for the decision of the UN which has clearly washed their hands from any such commitment, stating that, "U.N. doesn't engage in recognition of governments". Meanwhile a sum of more than 1.2 billion USD has been announced by the UN as a humanitarian aid for the people of Afghanistan. There are rumours that bickering and fights have emerged between the various factions of the ruling parties. Prices of local products are sky rocketing. People of Afghanistan especially women and children continue to live in uncertainty and chaos with banks inoperative or allow only restrictive withdrawal amounts. The refugees from the country have crossed the 5 million mark as per some records and several hundred thousand waiting to migrate at the international borders. People living in these areas live in tents where the delivery of newly born babies and the mothers continue to survive without any vaccination or medical attention. Women's empowerment, education, health facilities have all vanished

and most importantly the International Aid over the last two decades does seem like a history which is all forgotten about!

Conclusion

The country is now under the Taliban control and the ineffective aid assistance has made the country vulnerable once more, sending it back to the 1990s, and making it as one of the worst affected places in the world. May be this result was inevitable but the greedy foreign policy goals of the United States made it even worse. Currently, the United Nations declared the country to be facing a humanitarian crisis, as millions of people faced the wrath of the newly formed Taliban government. The government consists of members who are internationally sanctioned terrorists. The refugee influx has started to swell and are waiting at the borders of other countries in the neighborhood. Women inspite of their education, professional degrees and practicing jobs, are forced to forget all the empowerment processes in operation and follow the Sharia law under the Taliban. The withdrawal of the US forces has been too sudden and quick. It ought to have been in a phased manner. The only gainers from all this seem to be the American security firms which made billions out of the Afghans misery.

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Climate Change Negotiations: Agriculture Sector in UNFCCC and UNSC

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Abstract

In 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was established, signalling the start of global discussions in Rio. The Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement were both signed as a result of these discussions in 1997 and 2015. The concerns facing the agriculture sector, such as food security and the means of subsistence for smallholder farmers, failed to translate in the discussions, despite climate change receiving the appropriate attention. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) first discussed climate change as a new danger to world peace and security in 2007. In the international climate change discussions, disputes between developing and industrialized nations on a range of topics, including climate financing, adaptation, mitigation, and other, played out in the open.

The distance between the two sides has widened as a result of the gradual transition of climate discussions from UNFCCC to UNSC and the lack of reciprocation from developed nations regarding issues and concerns of developing nations in UNFCCC, such as the agriculture sector. This paper will understand why the agricultural sector and food security are threatened, and why climate change is being discussed in UNSC as a security threat despite the presence of relevant bodies like the UNFCCC for negotiations.

Keywords: Agriculture Sector, UNSC, Paris Agreement, UNFCCC

Introduction

The first United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was signed in 1992 and went into force in 1994, served as the starting point for climate change discussions. Climate change treaty discussions

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were to be held at the Conference of Parties (COP), which was the chosen venue. The UNFCCC was designed to create a climate deal by consensus and offered each nation an equal vote and the power to veto ideas that didn't serve their interests (UNFCCC 1992). The complicated nature of climate change discussions has allowed for discussion of food security and the agriculture sector from the beginning.

Food security and agriculture were only addressed as sectoral problems in negotiations during the Copenhagen summit in 2008 and the discussions that preceded it (Kalfagianni and Duyet 2015). However the Subsidiary Group for Scientific and Technology Advice (SBSTA), a body that analyses scientific and technological issues and advises and gives information to the COPs, from its 20th session, agriculture was included in debates on mitigation and adaptation in a limited fashion (COP 9 2003). Agriculture was fully incorporated into the SBSTA framework in its 30th session and the Copenhagen Consensus on sectoral concerns (COP 15 2009).

The agreement does not meet the demands of time, although mentioning the primary goal to protect "food security and eradicating poverty, as well as the specific vulnerabilities of food production" (COP 21 2015; Kalfagianni and Duyet 2015). The inclusion of sectoral problems in the discussions and the eventual accord were never accepted by the nations at the time of the beginning of the climate change negotiations. Due to the significance of the agricultural sector in the global economy, food security and agriculture are only briefly mentioned in the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol (Kalfagianni and Duyet 2015). This is because failing to do so would cause serious problems.

Food security and agriculture were only addressed as sectoral problems in negotiations during the Copenhagen summit in 2008 and the discussions that preceded it (Kalfagianni and Duyet 2015). However the Subsidiary Group for Scientific and Technology Advice (SBSTA), a body that analyses scientific and technological issues and advises and gives information to the COPs, from its 20th session, agriculture was included in debates on mitigation and adaptation in a limited fashion (COP 9 2003). Agriculture was fully incorporated into the SBSTA framework in its 30th session and the Copenhagen Consensus on sectoral concerns (COP 15 2009).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that agriculture was prioritised in the SBSTA and was being worked on separately to be included in the Paris Agreement as well as earlier with a draught created before Copenhagen to be included (Kalfagianni and Duyet 2015). Even after the sector's significance for food security, neither the climate negotiations nor the final agreement included the agriculture sector as a sector issue. Before Copenhagen, a document for adoption was created. However, because there

was disagreement on how crucial mitigation and adaptation were for the agriculture sector, it was postponed (Kalfagianni and Duyet 2015).

It was stated by the poor nations in the climate negotiations that despite a consensus being established for its inclusion as a sectoral problem (COP 15 2009; Kalfagianni and Duyet 2015), there was a failure to transform this into specific measures linked to adaptation. The significance of assessing the impact of climate negotiations on developing countries' agriculture sectors is highlighted by the emphasis on food security and ending hunger in the Paris negotiations (COP 21 2015) as well as over problems of finance for adaptation for developing nations' agriculture sectors.

The departure from the Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) idea in favour of a voluntary emission reduction goal programme for poor nations was what stood out the most in Copenhagen (Hochstetler and Viola 2012). This modification, which was eventually solidified during subsequent discussions, insured that developing nations are now included in the scope of emission reductions. India and other developing nations opposed this shift, but due to pressure from SIDS and discussions leading up to Paris in 2015, those that opposed it had to concede the idea. As a result, the Paris Agreement became the symbol of a fresh approach to climate change discussions.

This fresh approach led to countries that have been deeply impacted by climate change to argue for inclusion of agenda of “loss and damages” funding to the agenda of climate negotiations. The argument by poor countries is that, developed countries are historically responsible for GHG's and the damages these countries are facing need to compensate through funding their adaptation and mitigation. After series of negotiations, COP 27 at Sharm el-Sheikh. Egypt finally accepted the inclusion of agenda “loss and damages” fund in the negotiating draft (COP 27 Sharm el- Sheikh 2022). However, the draft talks about implementing the agenda at “local, national and regional levels in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change” (COP 27 Sharm el- Sheikh 2022). However, what would be the definition of particularly vulnerable has not been explained leaving to fears that, this would lead to reduction in countries that will receive the fund. The details on the nature and mobilisation of funds has not been spelt out in the draft decision (COP 27 Sharm el- Sheikh 2022) leading to concerns that “loss and damages” fund will also see the fate of 100 billion dollars climate fund agreed at Copenhagen in 2009 (Copenhagen COP 15 2009), which assured of raising 100 billion dollars per year by 2020 and now stands extended till 2025 post Paris summit (COP 21 Paris Agreement 2015).

To understand the scenario better, OECD (2022) did a detailed analysis of climate finance provided from 2016-2020. A total of 83.3 billion USD were mobilised and provided by developed countries for developing countries. Out of this a total of 58% i.e. 46.6 billion USD was spent on mitigation, 34% i.e. 28.6 billion USD for adaptation and 7% i.e. 6.0 billion USD for cross-cutting activities (OECD 2022). This period of 2016 to 2020 saw a huge rise in adaptation finance both in relative and absolute terms as in 2016 mitigation accounted for 72% i.e. 42.2 billion USD, adaptation counted for 17% i.e. 10.1 billion USD and 11% i.e. 6.2 billion USD for cross-cutting sector. The allocation for agriculture sector in mitigation along with fisheries and forestry “tripled, both in relative and absolute terms, mainly driven by multilateral public climate finance. For example, the share of mitigation finance targeting agriculture, forestry and fishing almost quadrupled from 1.8% in 2016 to 7% in 2020 (i.e. a 2.5 billion USD increase).” Similarly, adaptation finance was divided among a large number of sectors out of which water and sanitation, as well as agriculture, forestry and fishing “accounted for 21% and 19% respectively of total adaptation finance in 2016-2020” (OECD 2022). This data clearly shows, the target of reaching 100 billion USD every year by 2020 has not only failed but makes it difficult to understand how the plan to start a new loss and damage fund will contribute to the existing lacuna. Over this United States, the biggest contributor of GHG’s and also the world largest economy has signalled its intention to shift accountability to climate fund from sovereign countries to private sector for adaptation and mitigation purpose (US President 2022).

Agriculture in Post Paris Agreement UNFCCC Negotiations

Despite the failure of discussions that resulted in international negotiations, the SBSTA workshops provided a venue for the discussion of issues related to adaptation in agriculture. Since circumstances might not be possible to return to "previous production conditions," emphasizing on adaptation as a policy strategy to combat climate change appears as a necessary intervention to improve food and livelihood security, promote sustainable rural development, and reduce poverty (2015B SBSTA). In order to increase production in a resilient, sustainable way and ensure food security, SBSTA seminars stressed the significance of identifying and evaluating "agricultural practises and technology" (SBSTA 2014B).

Discussions and negotiated positions in SBSTA were carried out by nations who declared and implemented their national action plans independently of the talks (SBSTA 2014A). In addition to Switzerland focusing on expanding investment in forecast and prediction technology for improving "adaptation to climate ange effects," the European Union (EU) designated "effective adaptation of agriculture" of vital importance (SBSTA 2014A).Developing countries have similar demands to developed nations, including boosting capacity building,

technology support, research, finance, and organising technology along with appropriate execution and policy outcome. Countries with agriculturally reliant populations, such as India and Columbia, made the case for more robust adaptation, with the former noting monsoon dependency and the latter citing food crops and fisheries dependence (SBSTA 2014A).

The FAO has adopted a pragmatic stance by characterising adaptation as a "social learning process" for improving outcomes and gaining farmers' confidence. The FAO has considered diversity as crucial component for locations that are variable in terms of time and space due to its stance that adaptation should be "location specific" and preserve the productivity of agricultural systems (SBSTA 2014A). Despite the fact that the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), a body that advises the COP on financial systems, indicated that global funding for combating climate change has increased by 15% from 2011–12. This boost had limited benefits for the agriculture industry because there were still financial deficits (UNFCCC Marrakech 2016A). By establishing the Talanoa Dialogue and Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture in Bonn in 2017, nations were able to submit information on subjects like climate financing, mitigation, and other topics that had been compiled and addressed by organisations like SBSTA (UNFCCC Bonn 2017A; 2017B). The SBSTA's "five in-session workshops" (SBSTA 2014B, SBSTA 2015A, SBSTA 2015B, SBSTA 2016A, and SBSTA 2016B) on agriculture, which outlined "the vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and approaches to addressing food security," led to the creation of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (UNFCCC Bonn 2017B). In SBSTA seminars, both developing and developed nations agreed that extreme weather occurrences are seriously harming the agriculture sector, food production, and food security (SBSTA 2015A; SBSTA 2016B).

Small-farmers were identified by developing nations as a crucial population group affected by climate change and warned of the danger they posed, particularly to women farmers. As a result, this population group became crucial in the fight against climate change (SBSTA 2015A; SBSTA 2015B; SBSTA 2016A; SBSTA 2016B). Critical areas of interest for small holder agriculture include, traditional food production methods, availability of credits, boosting irrigation and subsistence farming, and capacity to cope with climate change (SBSTA 2015A; SBSTA 2015B; SBSTA 2016A; SBSTA 2016B). Technology and its role in combating climate change by employing and producing climate-resilient technologies and climate wise agricultural practises is another subject that is growing under SBSTA (SBSTA 2015A). Additionally, a key concern for a small number of developing nations is the stress on value chain vulnerabilities and hazards to industries and services relying on the agricultural sector (SBSTA 2015B).

There is a case to be made for implementing a financial assistance programme since developing nations are prioritising adaptation measures due to budgetary constraints, which would result in fewer safeguards for smallholder farmers in those countries (SBSTA 2016A). Furthermore, the urge to incorporate farmers as direct stakeholders in the agriculture sector has increased among farmer representatives participating in SBSTA, who have identified affordable finance as a crucial factor to be discussed (SBSTA 2016 A).

Through ASEAN, SBSTA has developed into a forum for nations like Vietnam to discuss their experiences implementing climate-resilient agricultural practises in pilot projects (SBSTA 2016A). These climate-resilient agrarian methods are a synonym for Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), an initiative advocated by the World Bank and FAO along with a number of experts and nations to address the consequences of climate change on agriculture (World Bank 2010; FAO 2010). Other nations, like South Africa, are not only implementing CSA as a complete domestic usage, but also evaluating it as a trial project. to evaluate its effectiveness and, in exchange, is pushing its usage (SBSTA 2011). A few NGOs, FAO, the World Bank, developing and developed countries, as well as other stakeholders in agriculture have joined forces to form the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA), and other experts have presented their views on how to adapt CSA as a policy instrument to fight climate change in the agricultural sectors (SBSTA 2021). The proportion of the Adaptation Fund allocated to projects involving climate-resilient technologies and practices—300 million dollars, or nearly 23% of the overall budget allocated to improving market access, irrigation systems, access to finance and market, and other related programs—shows the kind of impact that CSA has in climate negotiations.

For the first time, CSA was defined and discussed at the FAO's Hague Conference on Agriculture in 2010 as "an approach that serves to lead measures needed to reform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support the development and maintain food security in a changing environment. Three key goals of CSA are to address: strengthening resilience to climate change, lowering and eliminating greenhouse gas emissions, and sustainably boosting agricultural output and incomes (FAO 2010). Before the Hague meeting, CSA had its beginnings at an FAO conference titled "Food Security and Farming Mitigation in Developing Countries: Options for Capturing Synergies," when it was first offered as a policy alternative to replace current agricultural methods (FAO 2009; Lipper and Zilberman 2018). But CSA became more well-known as a result of the emphasis the World Bank and FAO placed on it in their separate publications and conferences in 2010. The World Bank explicitly discusses the importance of technology and agricultural methods linked to climate-smart farming practises in

its report "Development and Climate Change" (World Bank 2010). Similarly to this, CSA was extensively discussed in the FAO study "Agriculture Policies, Practices and Financing for Food Security, Adaptation and Mitigation" as a policy strategy to combat climate change (CGIAR; FAO 2010).

By addressing and lowering GHG emissions from the agricultural sector and boosting farmer resilience via sustainable agricultural practises, the World Bank hopes to encourage mitigation while protecting the environment and raising production (World Bank 2012). The CSA's strategy begs the issue of what its true intentions are because, on the one hand, it professes to speak for smallholder farmers and, on the other, it advocates for mitigation in the agriculture sector, which both directly and indirectly undermines the security of livelihood (FAO 2010; World Bank 2012; PAIRVI 2012).

Through their discussions and the socioeconomic and food security report produced by SBSTA in 2021, civil society, NGO's, international organisations, research organisations, the private sector, and other nations have identified a trend of insecurity and vulnerability for agriculture. They understand that in order to battle climate change and its effects, it is crucial to "provide farmers and rural communities with capability, technologies, resources, and knowledge to advance beyond subsistence and contributing to the food security of their and other non-farming families" (SBSTA 2021). The FAO is making an effort to persuade nations to consider solutions for food security that go outside the conventional, globally integrated agrifood system. To develop and implement policies for guaranteeing food security holistically, "post-harvest activities like processing and transport" need to be taken into account alongside other aspects (SBSTA 2021).

The requirement for support through "international cooperation and support for adaptation in agriculture" to developing countries through capacity building, research, and innovative technology to address the effects of climate change on agriculture and food security was emphasised by NGO's, developed countries and other international institutions (SBSTA 2021). The developed nations focused on the agricultural sector's contributions to GHG emissions and the necessity to decrease them while guaranteeing food security through technology and other practises in their submissions to SBSTA. Environmental NGO's advised KJWA to concentrate on moving away from industrial agriculture and toward agroecology through supportive policies, guidelines, adequate investment, and finance. These organisations identified "large-scale industrialised agriculture as a key contributor to climate change and vulnerability, land inequality, and food insecurity." Divergent opinions have emerged regarding the "food systems approach to addressing agriculture and climate change," with developing nations claiming that it would be improper to ascribe these emissions

to the agriculture sector as a whole because 30% of them come from "processing, transport, and consumption of food." Dealing with challenges of food systems approach with variances occurring between nations is outside the purview of KJWA (SBSTA 2021).

Before the Paris Agreement was signed, SBSTA was significant. This significance and expanded function for SBSTA that gave nations room to thoroughly examine and establish strategies for the agricultural sector and food security did not result in choices at the negotiating level. The advent of other organisations and the concerns around climate change being taken up and discussed by nations are to blame for this failure.

Introduction of Climate Change as a Threat to International Peace and Security: Studying the Role of UNSC

The Human Development Report introduced the concept of "Human Security" in 1994. It used a "integrative" framework to describe security, with "freedom from fear and freedom from desire" as its two main components (HDR 1994: 24). The possibility of "global poverty" emerging as a result of illegal immigration, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, nuclear holocaust, and worldwide drug trafficking was taken into account by HDR as a threat to human security. The same research said that climate change will have an impact on human security (HDR 1994: 24). The HDR did not, however, introduce climate change into the security studies debate. Defense departments of the US Navy and the Military have been arguing and discussing dangers resulting from climate change since the 1990s with proactive planning and thought to comprehend and deal with climate change as a social problem, not a military one (Pittenger and Gagosian 2003: 2).

For the first time, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) examined climate change as a security concern in 2007. Themes surrounding the agricultural sector that were examined with an emphasis on how the availability of resources will affect developing nations included food security, crop output, and migration caused by rising sea levels. Climate change was adopted under the purview of the UNSC since peacekeeping had already incorporated HIV/AIDS into its larger framework (UNSC 2007; UNGA 2009A).

The industrialised nations' perspectives and attitudes were centred on the conflict-related aspects of climate change, carrying forth their ideas of conventional security. Their focus was on comprehending the risks associated with the effects of energy and fossil fuels on food security. Migration—both internal and external—has been raised as a potential security issue that might upset the social, political, and ethnic balances of industrialised nations, upsetting peace, and escalating tensions within the area and between nations. The UN Secretary-

General wanted the UNSC to address climate change as a security danger interfering with peace and security, involving nations like the US, UK, EU, and others (UNSC 2007).

At a UNSC meeting on climate change and related security threats in 2009, Ban Ki-Moon, then-Secretary-General of the UN, drew attention to the fact that only 10 of the council's mandated peacekeeping missions—where the nature of the conflict involved natural resources—received funding totaling half of the \$35 billion peacekeeping budget (UNSC 2011). Conflict and migration were the main topics of debate at the UNSC thanks to Ban Ki-Moon's attention on them. In the 2011 UNSC conference, the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) classified climate change measures as "threat multipliers," especially in regions prone to violence and plagued by economic misery (UNSC 2011). Ban Ki-Moon established a link between agriculture and the negative effects of climate change, particularly in areas of China, Pakistan, the Horn of Africa, and other countries. He also raised concern about how environmental refugees are altering the nature of nations (UNSC 2011).

Small and medium-sized farmers will be most affected, especially in emerging nations. However, the security framework does not effectively address the prominence accorded to risks to agriculture and food security. Germany, which was in charge of the UNSC conference at the time, did draw attention to the possibility of food shortages and declining production in Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire, Somalia, and Afghanistan. Floods, droughts, and other extreme weather events might have a negative impact on these countries, as more than half of the labour force is employed in agriculture (UNSC 2011: 4). However, it stressed on the resource conflict element that would result in occurrences of friction and instability by highlighting the necessity to protect human security.

Along with affluent nations like the US, UK, Canada, European Union (EU), New Zealand, and others, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been adamantly advocating for the UNSC to serve as the platform for discussion on climate change as a danger to national security (UNSC 2007; 2011). The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have claimed that sea levels would rise due to climate change, wiping them off the map and posing a real existential danger to them (UNSC 2011). However, since the first UNSC climate change meeting in 2007, nations including Brazil, China, India, Pakistan, Group of 77, Group of 8, the Philippines, and the Arab States have been opposing it. They oppose the UNSC serving as a venue for climate change discussions and have questioned whether there is a clear causal relationship between climate change and disruptions of peace and security (UNSC 2007; 2011). The nations recognised that the danger to security might have a secondary, incidental impact on conflict and urged other

organisations, such as UNFCCC, to take the lead in gaining an understanding of them (UNSC 2011). Even with conflicting viewpoints and the location of the argument, the focus of the security threat remained on the conflict component, with the developed nations supporting SIDS and the developing countries citing concerns about food security and associated issues. The following UNSC meeting, "Maintenance of international peace and security: Water, peace, and security," wasn't until 2016 that the direct relationship between climate change and the agriculture sector at large was not only considered but also the subject of a study (UNSC 2016b). The conversation then turned to the risks that climate change poses to the variations in freshwater supply (UNSC 2016). Despite the North-South divide's agriculture sector facing dangers from climate change, the UNSC, dominated by wealthy nations, was unable to turn this acceptance of uncertainty into a posture of security threat.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), a more democratic body than the UNSC with its veto system for the permanent five, was chosen as the venue for a parallel discussion by developing countries who expressed their displeasure and concerns about the UNSC serving as the forum to discuss climate change as a security threat. Developing nations launched an effort to leave the UNSC in 2009 with a resolution in the UNGA that placed a strong emphasis on "the security of persons and communities" (UNGA 2009B). The resolution strongly discusses the effects of the increased severity and frequency of extreme weather events, such as drought, floods, and tropical storms, on issues such as water shortages, desertification, food security, food production, etc (UNGA 2009B).

The UNGA resolution gives priority to the concerns of emerging nations, including food insecurity, declining productivity, and growing social tensions caused by the allocation and availability of food grains (UNGA 2009B: 11). The flow of immigrants from other locations to the host countries was the cause of roughly 32 occurrences of conflict, according to a research that was done to understand the nature of civil wars between 1945 and 2005. (UNGA 2009B: 17). Climate change will face challenges in the near future since international humanitarian law does not have a clear definition of environmental migrants, which causes societal conflicts, particularly at international boundaries (UNGA 2009B: 17).

"Understanding and tackling climate-related security threats" was the focus of the third open debate on climate change as a security issue at UNSC 2018. (UNSC 2018). The conversation centred on the Lake Chad region and the increased likelihood of conflict caused by droughts and lake drying from climate change. The debate focused on the "threat multiplier" component and the potential for conflict and dangers that may result from it (UNSC 2018). Lake Chad has previously been discussed by the UNSC, particularly during its session in

November 2016 on "Maintenance of international peace and security: Water, peace, and security" (UNSC 2016), during which even African nations attempted to draw attention to the need to ensure food security through water security being compromised by climate change. However, the creation of a coherent agenda surrounding climate security in the UNSC has been hampered by rich nations' limited focus on migration and the challenges it poses.

It took some time for several industrialised nations to come to agreement on the need to press for climate change to be recognised as a security issue by the UN Security Council. In the early 1990s, if US defence departments had discussed the threat that climate change posed to peace and security (Pittenger and Gagosian 2003; USDD 2008). Due to resource availability, the EU, one of the main coalition blocs of industrialised nations, has addressed and begun planning for potential war situations in fragile countries and areas (EU 2008; 2011). The EU, US, and other wealthy nations emphasised the problem of food security and the challenges to agricultural output, but they concentrated on resolving the turmoil brought on by migration (Stevens 2017; EU 2008; US GCC NIA 2008).

The foundation of UNSC debates became the existential crisis that SIDS are facing, combined with wealthy nations' attempts to portray migration as the main danger resulting from food shortages, resource-induced conflict, temperature extremes, and other effects of climate change. The industrialised nations are attempting to restore the physical border-based security rules through the UNSC. The UNSC is the recognised platform for bringing up or creating security and insecurity-related problems. Developed nations have attempted to sanitise climate change by bringing up themes of environmental migration and conflict, while SIDS have called for rapid action out of fear of being submerged by increasing sea levels. The concurrent efforts to debate climate change in a security framework apart from the political framework, i.e. the UNFCCC negotiating framework (Buzan et al. 1998), demonstrate that developed nations are in the lead when it comes to the process of securitization. However, the efforts of the SIDS and developed countries are categorised as a securitization move (Buzan et al. 1998) where audience and other countries inhibit practises in accepting the process because developing countries refuse to accept UNSC platform for discussing climate change as threat to international peace and security and prefer UNGA to it.

Environmental deterioration is seen as an irreversible form and a threat to South Asians by the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the region's leading organisation for regional cooperation (SAARC 1987). The 1987 SAARC summit recognised that South Asia was at risk from rising sea levels, more frequent droughts, landslides, floods, and other natural calamities. South Asia was investigating the population-threatening environmental challenges

before the 1992 Rio De Janeiro conference (SAARC 1987). While Male, Maldives declared 1992 to be the "SAARC Year of the Environment" in recognition of the mounting evidence of climate change, and the 14th SAARC summit declared 2007 to be the "Year of Green South Asia," neither proclamation had a substantial impact on the environment or the climate (SAARC 1990; 2007). Although the 14th SAARC summit in 2010 argued for a cogent and urgent "regional response to meet the challenge of climate change," it also announced the establishment of a food bank to address food shortages and famines and declared South Asia to be susceptible to "climate change and related disasters" (SAARC 2007; 2010). The failure of the region to include these resolutions into UNFCCC discussions gave organisations and developed areas room to convert the climate change issue into a security concern.

For instance, the food bank, which was established at the 14th SAARC summit in 2007, stated that its goal was "to act as a regional food security reserve for the SAARC Member Countries during normal time food shortages and emergencies; and to provide regional support to national food security efforts; foster inter-country partnerships and regional integration; and solve regional food shortages through collective action" (SAARC 2007). Despite this, we can see how the COVID-caused food crisis in Sri Lanka in 2021 highlighted the shortcomings of this approach. The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), a non-governmental track two diplomatic route, recognised climate change as "an growing security challenge for the Asia Pacific area." An organisation called CSCAP, which includes nations like India, Japan, the EU, and others, believes that the Asia Pacific region is experiencing declining crop productivity due to an increase in extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, storm intensities, and coastal flooding, all of which have a direct or indirect effect on the population of South Asia's basic food and livelihood security. The observation of "widespread hunger, malnutrition, and social unrest" caused by food crises as a result of decreasing food production as a result of shifting temperature and precipitation patterns (CSCAP 2010). demonstrates how the security narrative is taking on in South Asia and other regions. This scenario reveals the UNFCCC's shortcomings and the industrialised nations' sway over the climate discussions through the use of fora where they may use their collective influence, such as the UNSC.

Climate Change and emerging Linkages Conflict: Some Recent Case Studies

As a new challenge to global peace and security, the United Nations Security Commissions and the security community have sparked discussion about the danger posed by climate change. It has created a forum for stakeholders to discuss and consider a topic that has not received enough attention in the field of

security studies. The fact that conflicts caused by climate change are being documented has also made the issue receive less attention than it should. I've attempted to highlight a few instances in recent history where disputes brought on by climate change have been acknowledged by the government or society at large. The paper therefore makes a case for the UNSC to co-opt climate change under its security framework.

It is no secret that the poorest countries in the world have suffered disproportionately from the negative effects of climate change. Africa has had to bear the burden of climate change in addition to its struggles with poverty and famine, while having a negligible to no historical contributions to GHG emissions. The sub-Saharan area has it especially tough because of the region's already hot environment having to contend with rising temperatures, which has reduced agricultural production. This has created a more hostile climate where the likelihood of confrontation between communities has multiplied. The severe water crisis that South Africa had in 2018 as a result of a string of droughts was made worse by the country's cities, including Cape Town, being affected by an extraordinary spike in temperatures. In fact, 2017 was noted as having the lowest rainfall since 1933. (Welch 2018; Morabito 2018). Droughts made agricultural communities' everyday needs and food shortages worse. South Africa has had food shortages throughout this time, but despite the department of water and sanitation's 2007 warnings of a water crisis, it was unable to respond when the crisis struck in 2017. The government continues to give the agriculture industry great priority by giving resources to it; in 2015, 40% of the water supply for the western Cape was given to agriculture (Morabito 2018). The crisis made it clear that water allocations to various businesses must remain balanced. More than 300,000 employment in the food and service industries, as well as in agriculture, were impacted by the aforementioned water issue, according to specialists in the industry (Baker 2018). One may contend that the militarization of society is a possible result of the inability to recognise and address problems resulting from climate change through legislative solutions. In order to prevent disputes, Cape Town's water delivery checkpoints were all carefully monitored. In reality, the City Council had to send in the South African police and military to guarantee that residents could use water without becoming involved in a confrontation (Morabito 2018; Baker 2018). In its report, the IPCC, the leading organisation for assembling scientific knowledge on climate change, mentioned the prospect of societal conflicts as well as increased danger perceptions. Recent events in the region imply that the United Nations Security Council and other industrialised nations may already be treating challenges related to water shortages as security concerns.

However, because these improvements may result in tougher controls for them, developing nations have been suspicious of them.

For poor nations, the 2007–2008 food crisis brought on by the global economic meltdown was catastrophic as they battled hunger and famine. A stark reminder of the delicate balance between the growth in food prices, social stability, and food security was provided by the global food security crisis. Since the global downturn made it impossible for them to keep up with the rising food costs, import-dependent impoverished nations were affected the worst. Large-scale protests and food riots were reported in countries throughout Latin America, West Asia, South Asia, and the Caribbean as a result of price increases. A number of nations, including Cameroon, Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, and others, were forced to confront the fact that they could not feed their populations. As more and more individuals became unable to satisfy their immediate requirements, they were forced to rely on emergency food assistance. The food crisis was caused by a number of things. The major offenders, according to UN studies, were crop failures brought on by drought, a rise in biofuel production in Europe and the United States, as well as excessive speculation in the markets for agricultural commodities (UN 2011). Prior to the global financial crisis of 2008, inexpensive oil became more important to agricultural productivity. As a result, the global market's continually rising oil prices during the 2008 financial crisis demonstrated how tightly tied energy and agriculture prices had become. This made the subsequent global food crisis appear inevitable, especially in light of the catastrophic droughts that hit numerous nations that produce food. Therefore, it might be argued that the energy sector urgently has to decrease its reliance on fossil fuels in order to both cut GHG emissions and prevent future food crises. It's also noteworthy to highlight that the biofuel alternative, which takes up a significant portion of arable land, has also added to the food crisis. Thus, it could be useful to research the relationship between food security and food costs (IFPRI 2008; UN 2011).

The Sub-Saharan African area has long struggled to produce enough food on a local level to fulfil its needs. In addition to their local output, they rely substantially on food imports, particularly commercial imports and food aid from overseas donors. Their food security is, at best, precarious because to a lack of infrastructure and resources for the facilitation of power exchange. Consequently, an increase in food costs internationally might have a negative impact on the food security of those nations (Berazneva and Lee: 2013). Despite the unfortunate circumstances, it was not shocking that huge food riots followed unexpected price increases in food in 14 out of 53 African states in 2007–2008. (Berazneva and Lee 2013). Barthwal-Datta and Basu (2017) argue how in South Asia, the role of

transformative politics led by non-traditional actors are making a case for food insecurity. Studying the role of South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) and People's South Asian Association for Regional Corporation (PSAARC), Barthwal-Datta and Basu (2017) through their research argue that “the lived experiences of South Asians, rather than traditional security concerns around political stability and regime security, where food insecurity – as a potential trigger for civil unrest – is seen as a threat to states.” In the shadow of state-centric traditional security narratives discussion on food security “go largely unrecognized even in the non-traditional security frameworks (Barthwal-Datta and Basu 2017).

Both biodiesel and bioethanol are substantially subsidised by wealthy nations. These subsidies, which total around 13 billion dollars in aid each year, fuel the manufacture of biofuel. As a result, roughly 120 million tonnes of grain that would have been used for human consumption are instead converted into fuel. For instance, out of the current 416 million, the United States moved around 119 million dollars' worth of food grains to two ethanol factories. More than 350 million people might have been nourished for a whole year using the diverted food grains. In an unreleased World Bank assessment, it was concluded that biofuels were to blame for the at least 75% increase in world food prices (UN 2011). A 2008 IFPRI Report also discovered a connection between the rise in food prices during the world food crisis of 2007–2008 and the use of biofuels in agriculture. (IFPRI 2008). Researchers and professionals have, however, had a tough time locating empirical data that connects armed conflict with the negative consequences of climate change. However, it is impossible to deny that the 2007–2008 food riots, which enveloped much of the global South, the farmer demonstrations in India, and the Cape Town water crisis all point to a growing pattern of risks to social unrest and occasionally violence. Denying the terrible impacts of climate change, which affect poorer nations disproportionately, is become more and more difficult. Therefore, I made the case that it is crucial for the global security system to be aware of these concerns arising from climate change that may have an impact on international peace and security in the very near future.

Conclusion

Using the complexity argument of climate change discussions does not explain why concerns about the agriculture sector, such as food security, are not discussed in the negotiations or final accords. Sectoral issues were not included into climate discussions initially. It was only after discussions post Copenhagen sectoral concerns, especially agriculture-related ones were included in the dialogue however, their final exclusion from climate agreements reached generated more questions than solutions. Increasingly, industrialized nations are making attempts to

move the climate change issue to the UNSC by examining it as a threat to global peace and security. From 2007 to 2018, discussions and debates have emphasised the urgency of the action needed to address climate change as a security concern. Discussion in UNSC means a departure from the democratic consensus-based order of the UNFCCC. The advocacy of SIDS considering climate change as emergency action finds support among developed nations, as they see UNSC as a body which they can control with power equation skewed against developing countries who are refusing to engage on the subject at UNSC.

The agricultural sector and issues associated to it like food security are not given much attention under UNSC framework of looking at climate change as security threat. The focus of UNSC on resource conflicts and migration raises concerns about whether affluent nations are using the UNSC to securitize climate change as a danger to global peace and security. Also, the shift from the CBDR paradigm for mandated emission reduction programmes to voluntary emission reduction programmes committed through Paris agreement for both developed and developing nations strengthened the political divide between the two and aggravates the utilisation of other bodies to discuss climate change issues.

Despite the fact that the perception of climate change as a security issue came from a non-conventional security lens, UNSC deliberations and stances show a strengthening of the traditional security perspective. Addressing the causes of climate change is necessary, but viewing it solely from the perspective of survival just emphasizes the conventional security model and fails to take into picture the causality of climate change in first place. Other than shifting to climate change discussions to UNSC, the promotion of Climate Smart Agricultural Policy (CSA) by World Bank and FAO outside of the formal negotiating process, is raising suspicion of the intention of developed countries. The problems associated with CSA that were addressed above demonstrate how formerly divisive topics are being repackaged and launched with cooperation from major agribusiness firms. Basic concerns about ownership, finance, control, and involvement from farmers and developing nations are essential to understanding CSA and its role in assisting adaptation and mitigation in the agricultural sector.

It only becomes clearer that, forum shopping to discuss climate change as an issue is emerging as cause of concern. Agriculture sector and issues associated with it like food security and farmer livelihood concerns seems to ignored or kept away from discussions even in forums like UNSC. This clearly shows how disadvantageous developing countries are and how developed countries are using their power and political position to manoeuvre their positions on the former. This is happening at a time when agriculture and its related issues are gaining prominence and space among

climate finance for adaptation and mitigation, though the amount mobilised and spent is less compared to what is needed in reality.

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Commentary

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Protection of Children in Armed Conflicts: A Commentary

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Introduction

“Armed conflicts are defined as political conflicts where the use of armed force by two parties of which at least one is the Government of State results in at least 25 battle-related deaths. A ‘major armed conflict’ is a war between states and a current political conflict within a State which armed fighting or clashes between Government forces and its opponents result in at least 1000 deaths in the course of the conflict”. Armed conflict depletes physical, economic, and human resources and leads to the displacement of populations. It can disrupt children’s education, lead to their death, and expose them to HIV infection when rape is used as a weapon of war. In the scope and severity of its effects, armed conflict not only devastates child protection, but it is also a threat to achieving any of the Millennium Development Goals, from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (Millennium Development Goals 1) to ensuring environmental sustainability (Millennium Development Goals 7). In conflicts across the world, children are on the frontline. In towns and cities, they are bombed in their schools and homes, or maimed by improvised explosive devices. Humanitarian blockades deny them access to food, shelter, and life-saving medicines. In some circumstances, children are abducted and killed by non-state actors because of their ethnicity and faith.

There were 32 armed conflicts were reported in 2021. Most of the conflict occurred in Africa (15), followed by Asia (9), the Middle East (5), Europe (2), and America (1) (reliefwe.int 2022). At the end of last year, more than 450 million children – or one in six –were living in a conflict zone, the highest number in 20

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years. A record 36, 5 million children were displaced from their homes as a result of conflict, violence, and other crises (United Nations 2022).

The UN Security Council report 2022 says the number of children affected by armed conflicts in different regions. Children from the African continent experience more armed conflicts than other areas of the world. In Africa, around 7746 children are affected by armed conflicts. Similarly, children affected by armed conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic (2202), Iraq (9167), Afghanistan (2430), Israel, and the States of Palestine (1208). According to the UN report, the countries in Africa namely- the Democratic Republic of Congo (565 children) and Somalia (1161 children) recruit a high number of children during the time of armed hostilities.

The present paper seeks to examine the role of the United Nations in promoting and protecting the rights of children in the course of armed conflicts. This paper is divided into three segments. The first segment of the paper explains the historical outlook of the international legal frameworks for the protection of children in the course of armed conflicts. The second segment of the paper evaluates the normative and institutional frameworks developed by the United Nations namely- the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* for ensuring security of children in the wake of armed hostilities. The third segment of the paper analyses the contemporary challenges before the UN for implementing the mandates and principles related to the protection of children in armed conflicts.

International Legal Frameworks for the Protection of Children in Armed Conflicts

The plight of children who continued to face the terror meted out through armed conflicts, abductions and killing, recruitment, sexual exploitation, and child labour was a major concern (United Nations 2002:1) to the international community to develop norms and institutions that seek to protect and promote the rights of children in the course of armed conflicts. 'The child protective mechanisms evolved time as the product of many negotiations and discussions held at various levels by the different stakeholders namely- states, international organizations, scholars, social scientists, and non-governmental organizations, etc. Recorded history demonstrates that the most important concerns of international law regarding the rights of the child were the protection of children in armed conflicts. For example, the 1907 *Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land* showed concern for child protection in times of war. It, however – without considering whether children with or separated from their families were entitled to additional protection – only incorporated the principle of respect for family life.

The First World War destroyed the lives of children and violated their fundamental rights. It was the first time a non-governmental organization namely 'Save the Children International Union' under the leadership of Eglantyne Jebb took the initiative to campaign for the protection of children in the wake of armed conflicts and they submitted a '*Declaration of Rights*' in 1924 before the Assembly of League of Nations. The concept of children should first receive relief in emergencies was first pointed out in the Declaration. Later in 1949, *Geneva Conventions related to the Protection of Civilian Persons in the time of War* and its additional protocols I and II were also emphasized for the protection of children from the impact of war and armed conflicts. Later in 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a '*Declaration of the Rights of the Child*' to ensure the protection of children from various illegal practices. Principle 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child emphasized that "the child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society".

Participation by children in armed hostilities occurs too frequently. This participation may range from aiding combatants out to the actual recruitment of children as combatants in national armed forces and other armed groups. The 1977 Additional Protocols were the first international treaties to cover such situations (International Committee of Red Cross, 2022:1). Article 70 includes children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers among those to be given priority when relief supplies are distributed. The most significant provision found in Article 77 of Protocol I, which strictly prohibits the process of recruitment of children under the age of 15 in armed hostilities and an obligation to state parties to take all 'feasible measures' to prevent the participation of children in armed conflicts. The Additional Protocol II, particularly article 4 emphasizes that children should receive care and aid in armed conflicts including education and family reunification services. Article 4 (3) (c) provides that 'Children who have not attained the age of fifteen years shall neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities. The Additional Protocols provide that child combatants under 15 are entitled to privileged treatment in that they continue to benefit from the special protection accorded to children by international humanitarian law (International Committee of Red Cross, 2022:1).

These legal frameworks are limited to securing the rights of children from various challenges and constraints that they face in times of armed conflict. These frameworks are not legally strong enough to address the issues faced by children in conflicts from a different continent. This reality and thought led the United

Nations to develop a comprehensive and progressive child protective mechanism including the Convention on the Rights of Child. The next section of the paper examines the normative and institutional frameworks taken by the United Nations for protecting children in armed conflicts.

United Nations and the Protection of Children in Armed Conflicts

It was in 1989, the United Nations adopted the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* to provide the protection and promotion of child rights. It was a historic movement and several countries accepted the initiative from the UN and domesticated the Convention at national and regional levels. 'The CRC is the human rights treaty that changed the perception of children as passive objects of care to human beings with a set of rights of protection, participation, and decision of subjects related to their own lives'. The Convention defines children as human beings deserving of human rights and dignity. 'It imposes on ratifying certain standards to protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and horrors of war'. The CRC ensures protection for children from all forms of abuse violence, exploitation, and other illegal activities. There are 196 countries are the parties to the Convention and it contains 54 articles that deal with the civil, social, cultural, economic, and political rights of children.

Articles 38 and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasized the protection of children in the wake of armed conflict. According to article 38 (2) "State Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts that are relevant to the child". State Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflicts". Similarly, article 39 says that "State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment that fosters the health, self-respect, and dignity of the child (UNHRC, 2022). These are the two articles that legally ensure the protection of children in the wake of armed hostilities.

For executing the provisions and principles of CRC, the UN established a Committee on the Rights of the Child (hereafter Committee). The formal Guidelines for Reports established by the Committee on the Rights of the Child specifically ask that State Parties "provide information on the legislation" adopted to recognize a right to child care, and "ensure its realization, as well as on the coverage concerning services and facilities by region and urban and rural areas, as well as on their financial implications and the children benefiting from such

measures including by age, gender and national, social and ethnic origin”. The Committee on the Rights of the Child is unique among UN human rights treaties because it gives its monitoring body additional tools that can act as aids in ensuring state-party compliance (Cohen. et.al, 1996). For example, the committee has collected information on the implementation of the Convention not only from state party reports but also from a variety of other sources. The Committee is vested with the duty to build more capacity-building programs and institutions among the member countries which focus on the protection of children from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

Furthermore, since 1990, the United Nations Security Council was produced several resolutions including resolutions 1261,1314, 1612, 1882, and 2068 to ensure the protection of children in various ways during the time of armed conflicts. The Statute, adopted in Rome on 17 July 1998, includes in its list of war crimes within the Courts jurisdiction the active involvement in hostilities of children under 15 or their recruitment into national armed forces during an international armed conflict or into the national armed forces or other armed groups during a non-international armed conflict (International Committee of Red Cross, 2022:2). Furthermore, the UN established an *Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflicts* in 2000 to oversee their protection. According to Optional Protocol “the States Parties must take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not reached the age of 18 years do not take direct part in hostilities (Art. 1), Compulsory recruitment into the armed forces of persons under 18 years of age is prohibited (Art. 2), the States Parties shall raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment from 15 years. This rule does not apply to military academies (Art. 3), armed groups distinct from the national armed forces should not, under any circumstances, recruit (whether on a compulsory or voluntary basis) or use in hostilities persons under the age of 18 years, and the States Parties must take legal measures to prohibit and criminalize such practices (Art. 4). During the time of discussion and negotiation about the new Protocol on Children in Armed Conflicts, the main concern or the issue was the minimum age for entry into the military and involvement or participation in armed conflicts. Many delegations including NGOs, ICRC, UNHCHR, and the special representatives of the Secretary-General for children in armed conflicts urged prohibiting any military services by those under eighteen (United Nations, E/CN.4/2000/74).

The UN proposed institutional mechanisms for protecting children in armed conflicts are theoretically granting protection for children. But when we look at contemporary international politics, the UN faces certain hurdles in implementing its mandates and principles mentioned in the Convention. The

problem with the UN Convention is not compulsory for the member countries of the UN to follow and ratify the convention. This completely stays in the hands of the sovereignty of countries whether they have to accept or not accept the convention. Apart from this issue, the United Nations confronts some challenges and constraints in executing and implementing the Convention. The following section looks at the challenges and constraints.

Achievements and Challenges

Here incorporating the measures (normative and institutional) taken by the parties to the convention into the account of the achievement of the UN CRC. In Afghanistan, the Taliban and other parties, to engage with the United Nations to adopt concrete measures and sign an action plan to end and prevent violations against children, including the recruitment and use of children (United Nations, 2022:6). In Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission engages in a broad range of activities to prevent the use and recruitment of children; from awareness-raising of the right to education to ongoing dialogue with the Government of Iraq and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) to sign an action plan to end and prevent use and recruitment and other child rights violations (Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2022:1). Similarly in South Sudan, the government build a hybrid court for children also recognized as a result of the push from the United Nations. The children's parliament in Nigeria was also established as the result of the negotiations and discussions with the federal government of Nigeria by the UN. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations dialogue with armed groups led to the release of 134 children from FPRC (92) and UPC (42). The FPRC, MPC, and UPC, all of which have signed an action plan with the UN, to comply with their commitments and call upon all parties to adopt concrete measures to cease all grave violations, unconditionally release associated children, and respect the civilian character of schools and hospitals (United Nations, 2022:8).

Children's rights are violated and exploited by both state and non-state actors. The UN framed norms and mechanisms strictly prohibiting the recruitment and usage of children into armed groups. But State itself is violating international law and violating the rudimentary freedoms of children. For example; South Sudan People's Liberation Army, South Sudan National Police Service, and South Sudan People's Defence Forces use to recruit children below the age of 18 years. This tendency of recruiting children into the armed forces by the State shows the violation of the fundamental principles of international law. The recruitment and exploitation of children by non-state actors' namely-terrorists and separatist groups in the time of armed conflicts identified as a major threat to the United Nations to implement the principles of CRC. For instance, Boko Haram in Nigeria abducts,

kills, and recruits children, which became a challenge for the UN to implement the mandates of the Convention. It is difficult for the UN to collect data regarding the non-state actors who are violating the rights of children. In addition, that the non-state actors did not follow the norms and mechanisms framed by the United Nations related to the protection of children in armed conflicts. Furthermore, Inadequate funding to implement protection, prevention, and rehabilitation programs, inadequate number of child shelters to accommodate refugee children, etc are the challenges that affect the working conditions of the UN related to the protection of children. Similarly, cultural practices, ethnic composition, and religious beliefs are also identified as a hurdle for the UN to implement the CRC.

The pandemic aggravated the existing vulnerabilities of children, including hampering the fulfilment of their rights and reducing child protection activities and safe spaces. The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic exposed children to grave violations and threatens to undo recent gains in the areas of child protection, human rights, and Sustainable Development Goals by exposing children, their families, and communities to renewed risks including economic insecurity, exploitative and hazardous relationships: negative coping mechanisms: social isolation; and reduced access to service and humanitarian assistance. In some contexts, girls may never be able to go back to school, because they have to earn an income or were forcibly married to support their families. The UN should continue to monitor and adapt programmatic and advocacy responses toward child protection (United Nations, 2022:4). It has been 33 years since the inception of the Convention, but still, children confront several constraints in the wake of armed conflicts. The UN and other regional organizations are helpless in some circumstances to prevent the participation and involvement of children in armed hostilities. States have the primary responsibility to put an end to this situation. They are therefore urged to ratify the treaties and conventions protecting children in armed conflict and to take national measures adapted to their legal systems to implement these treaties and conventions. Whether in legislative or other forms, these measures are intended to enable States to respect and ensure respect for the rules laid down by the treaties and convention. (International Committee of Red Cross, 2022:1). States can introduce this subject into the curriculum of universities and specialized institutions, and to organize campaigns to raise awareness among the general public, in particular among children and adolescents.

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Book Review

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Nibhanupudi, Medha, Pankaj K Jha, Kritika S Karmakar Joseph Punnen and Grace Cheema (2021), *Envisioning India's role in the Indo-Pacific*, Shipra publications, ISBN-978-93-88691-75-8, First Edition, 73pp

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The book *Envisioning India's role in the Indo-Pacific* addresses the key question of India's approach towards the Indo-Pacific region. The authors aligns India's initial Indo-Pacific Region (IPR) approach to the look east policy of Narasimha Rao government. The focus of look east policy was to forge political connections, increase economic integration, and build security cooperation with Southeast Asian nations. Although political connections are forged economic integration and security cooperation are still in their infancy. The authors argue that with China's surging dominance in the region coupled with one-sided economic interdependence has altered the security environment of the region, therefore, there is a need for India to lay more importance on the Indo-Pacific than ever before.

Meanwhile, the book highlights that India's geographical locational lows it to perceive the Indo-Pacific region as the theatre of opportunities with the ASEAN centrality as its core principle. New Delhi can bring strategic autonomy, better economic integration and value-based order to the region. At the same time, India has to shoulder more responsibilities in countering China's assertive maneuvers, meanwhile safeguarding its own interests in the region. The book explains why India's quest for evasive balancing may not work this time as the threat is at the gates of the Indian Ocean region too.

In the second and third chapters of the book, the authors try to build India's Indo- pacific security architecture around the QUAD initiative. The authors conceptualize the primary aim of QUAD as to secure the Indo-Pacific region while

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actively participating with "like-minded" nations, Interestingly Japanese PM Shinzo Abe's "Democratic Security Dialogue" was also revolving around the same mindedness in 2008 but was not given that much traction. Because of China central approach of QUAD India's quest for strategic autonomy in the IPR is derailed. India's quest in the Indo-Pacific region is guided by the principle of a "free, open, prosperous and inclusive' Indo-Pacific. Also, there lies the opportunity for like-minded countries to collaborate on objectives of mutual interests of regional security, maritime cooperation, counterterrorism, non-proliferation, connectivity and social & economic development.

The book also state that Quad plus needs to be more inclusive to accommodate regional powers like Indonesia, Singapore, and the Philippines because of their strategic location it is also important for India to engage with other regional powers to safeguard its interests in the Indo-Pacific.

The fourth and fifth chapters of the book outline the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and India's Foreign Policy Perspective in the Indo-Pacific which seeks to enable India's proactive and constructive role in the region. The IPOI outlines India's sustainable development goals which aim to preserve and protect the maritime domain. India's Foreign Policy Perspective in the Indo-Pacific. India and ASEAN have adopted the plan of action for 2021-25 that envisions greater cooperation in areas ranging from trade to maritime security and counterterrorism. Joint exercises and military cooperation are key to improving the defence capabilities and counter challenges arising from non-state actors. Also, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance are focused areas of cooperation. Although India is strictly against an alliance of containment targeting any nation but China's increasing presence close to India's territorial waters, and unsustainable projects with neighbours are a direct threat to India's position as the main security provider and regional power.

The sixth and seventh chapter of the book gives a detailed understanding of India's multilateral engagement with ASEAN nations and other Indo-Pacific partners of IPR. The collaborative efforts on military and diplomatic cooperation are empowering states to confront terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, illegal arms trading, maritime pollution and climate change. The Indian Navy regularly conducts exercises with friendly navies enhancing collaborations in Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) training and capacity building. India is committed to deepening trade relations with ASEAN nations through ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA), the economic engagement with the ASEAN states has a lot of potential yet to be explored.

In the last leg of the book, the authors have put forward certain recommendations. It includes, India should deepen its ties with middle powers having democratic values like New Zealand and Canada to further invigorate its Indo-Pacific Policy and bolster India's Indo-Pacific vision in the future. India could aid smaller nations to build their infrastructure, train their security forces, and provide security. Most of the Free trade agreements are underutilized, due to the limited knowledge among Indian exporters. There is a need to create more awareness among Indian Exporters so that they use opportunities and support Indian exports to the region. Smaller industries can create big changes if their potential is utilized properly.

The Indo-Pacific construct has provided an opportunity for India to maximize its strategic interests while responding to altering the security apparatus in the region. This book is an in-depth work on India's concerted policies and actions in the Indo-Pacific region that will determine its evolution as a key player. It is a must-read book for anyone interested in understanding the dynamics of the India-Indo-Pacific connection. The simple narrative of the book outlines a vision of the Indo-Pacific region through India's eyes.