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## **Publisher**

Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies,

4 B Merlin Temple Tower,

115/1, Hazra Road, Kolkata-26

INDIA

Email: [iaaps.iaaps@gmail.com](mailto:iaaps.iaaps@gmail.com)

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# The Sundarbans – A Collaborative Future for India and Bangladesh?

By

Sutirtha Bedajna \*

## Abstract

*'Environmentalism', a global mandate, urges to influence social, economic, and political processes by education and activism in order to conserve natural ecosystems and their inter-connectivity as well as to bring in cohesion and cooperation with their 'developmental' surroundings in the art and practice of living. Present paper would strive to deal with the conservation and protection principles of the world's largest mangrove forest ecosystem – the Sundarbans, which has been shared territorially by two countries of South Asia – India and Bangladesh. Being the only mangrove tiger-land in the world, this coastal, forested wetland is widely known for its adaptations to the double stresses of flooding and salinity and its contributions towards climate stability, water quality improvement, land protection, flood mitigation, wildlife protection as well as providing socio-economic services to the anthropocentric life. The aim of this paper would be to explore the process of conservation of the Sundarbans under collective security framework between India and Bangladesh and to envisage for more new implications on collective policy making within the existing paradigm of global, institutional 'environmentalism'*

## Introduction

'Environmentalism',<sup>1</sup> a global mandate, urges to influence social, economic, and political processes by education and activism in order to conserve natural ecosystems as well as their inter-connectivity to bring in cohesion and cooperation with their 'developmental' surroundings in the art and practice of living. The threat of climate change and global warming, since the mid-twentieth century and its projected continuation in the twenty first century, have been able to consolidate global mandates to move forward towards a

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\*Sutirtha Bedajna is a Ph. D. Research Scholar, Department of History, University of Calcutta  
Email: bedajnas@gmail.com  
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cohesive future with a conviction to bring down degradation of the natural surroundings. The present paper would be an earnest contribution to those initiatives of 'environmentalism' which propose to deal with the conservation and protection principles of one of the most intricate and vital ecosystems of the world – the Sundarbans, which is territorially shared by two countries of South Asia – India and Bangladesh. Being the only mangrove tiger-land in the world and the largest mangrove forest, this coastal, forested wetland is widely known for its adaptations to the double stresses of flooding and salinity and its contributions towards climate stability, water quality improvement, land protection, flood mitigation, wildlife protection as well as providing socio-economic services to the anthropocentric life. This paper would go for an ecological review to find out what measures have been taken yet, institutionally, to conserve and protect the unique ecosystem of the Sundarbans and on the basis of the lessons learnt from that review what would be the futuristic trajectory of institutional conservation initiatives in both the countries of India and Bangladesh in this regard. As the Sundarbans is a transboundary ecological tract, the research undertaken would attempt to explore any possibility before the two countries to collaborate with each other in this particular protection and conservation initiative thus, creating a new scope of sub-regional cooperation on environmental matters.

The phenomenon of global 'environmentalism' was initiated in early 1970s in a consistent way only after the initiatives of 'Club of Rome'; Founex Conference in Switzerland in 1971; and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972 in Stockholm of Sweden. The Stockholm Conference redefined the aim of development and an inter-governmental search began worldwide for a new and more comprehensive as well as collaborative approach towards human development with prescribed limits of usage of natural resource base.<sup>3</sup> These efforts further continued through a number of international conferences on patterns of resource use as well as environment and development strategies and culminated into the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 or the 'Earth Summit'; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development or 'Johannesburg Earth Summit' in 2002.

With this paradigm as backdrop, it would be interesting to take note of the institutional initiatives in India and Bangladesh, particularly since the decade of 1970s, to conserve the ecosystem of the Sundarbans. The research questions undertaken in the present paper are:

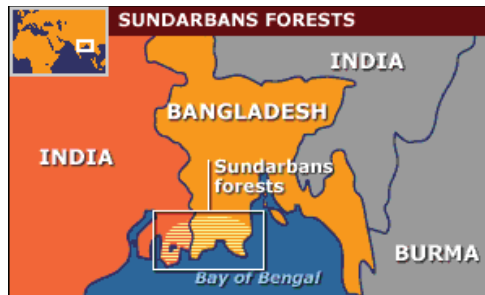
- (a) How can the national perspective of environmental or ecological governance of both India and Bangladesh be contextualized particularly for the ecological structures of the Sundarbans?

- (b) What would be the prospective structure of a joint-collaborative initiative to protect and conserve the critical ecosystem of the Sundarbans?

### The Sundarbans: A Brief Introduction

The Sundarbans, distributed in the far-flung estuarine of the *Ganga-Brahmaputra* deltaic region of Indian coast of West Bengal and that of Bangladesh, bordering the Bay of Bengal on the south and stretching from the *Padma-Meghna* river flows on the east to the *Raimangal-Matla-Thakuran-Hooghly* river-systems on the west, covers 10,000 square kilometers of land mass with almost 60 per cent lying in the sovereign territory of Bangladesh and residual 40 per cent in India. The uniqueness of this forest ecosystem and the ecological as well as socio-economic services it offers to the anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric life of the lower deltaic region of two countries are of similar kind of the general, terrestrial, benthic, and aquatic services a mangrove ecosystem renders to the environment and socio-economy. Moreover, it is the only mangrove tiger-land in the world where the tiger stands at the pinnacle of both the aquatic and the terrestrial food chain.<sup>4</sup> However, excessive human interferences and exploitation of natural reserves along with external threats have caused biophysical disasters to the natural environment and ecosystem of the Sundarbans over the years and the area has shrunk to approximately three-fifths of the physical size of what existed two hundred years ago (about 16,700 square kilometers).<sup>5</sup> Due to the rise in sea level, fluctuating salinity, polluted water-bodies, cyclonic destruction, extensive prawn cultivation, habitat loss of endangered species, large scale deforestation to accommodate human settlements, the integrity of the natural mangrove ecosystem of the Sundarbans has gradually been collapsing over years.

**Map 1.1: Transboundary Location of the Sundarbans**



Source: [http://www.google.co.in/imgres?imgurl=http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/1980000/images/\\_1982670\\_bang\\_sundarbans\\_map300.gif&imgrefurl](http://www.google.co.in/imgres?imgurl=http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/1980000/images/_1982670_bang_sundarbans_map300.gif&imgrefurl), accessed on 27 July 2010

## Environmental Governance in India and Bangladesh: Locating the Sundarbans

It is fair to say that until the late 1980s, environmental governance was not a word heard frequently within the development community. Environmental concern has taken a gradual entry into both discourses on governance and development in an inter-connecting manner.<sup>6</sup> On the global scale, 'Good Governance Principles' and 'Millennium Development Goals' both incorporate environmental sustainability as a prerequisite for governance.<sup>7</sup> So, it is evident that the aim of environmental governance is to reach sustainability and development together retaining environment in focus. In countries like India and Bangladesh, the issue which overwhelms is not only the protection of biodiversity and ecological stability but also the protection of the rights of impoverished society to access to natural resources for sustaining livelihood.<sup>8</sup> To them nature is not a mere reserve of resources but a boon of endowment for securing livelihood. With this note, this section of the paper intends to discuss the principal features of environmental governance in India and Bangladesh regarding protection of the Sundarbans over decades.

- **The Law and Policy Paradigm of Environmental Governance in India: Relevant Conservation Provisions for the Sundarbans**

Complying with the provisions of *Chapter IV* of the *Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972* the 'Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary' was established in 1976 incorporating some core forest areas of the Sundarbans. Although, the core forest areas of the Sundarbans were declared as 'Tiger Reserve' back in 1973. The *Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980* along with the *Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972* might have entailed to the principle of adoption of 'National Park' initiative and subsequently the Sundarbans emerged as a National Park in 1984. Likewise, the *Water (Preservation & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974* laid down some earliest provisions for conserving the precious water resources of India, which had certainly important implications for the principal water-bodies of the unique mangrove ecosystems of the Sundarbans: river *Hooghly* along with its tributaries and distributaries like – *Matla*, *Ichhamati*, *Raimangal*, *Bidyadhari*, *Kalindi*, *Saptamukhi*, *Thakuran* and innumerable crisscrossing channels and creeks of this unique riverine system.<sup>9</sup> Later, the *Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006* put some significant additions for the tiger population of Indian forests, which definitely catered to the interests of the Sundarbans with the insertion of a new *Chapter – IVB* viz. 'National Tiger Conservation Authority'.

In pursuance of State Government's policy of entrusting planning and coordination of the development activities in the backward regions to specified regions, the 'Sundarbans Development Board' was set up in 1973 which made a beginning in planning and coordination of development activities in the Sundarbans and gradually involved itself in actual implementation of development projects. It made best of its efforts under the World Bank sponsored 'International Fund for Agriculture Development' project. But after completion of ten year tenure the project became almost defunct.<sup>10</sup> Yet, thereafter, the Board took to implementing different development programmes under the Annual Development Plans of the State Government.<sup>11</sup>

The *Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 1991* has been perhaps the most significant and specialised legislation for regulating developmental activities along the coast. It recognised India's need to protect the interests of millions of her coastal people while ensuring the overall development, as well as to protect coastal ecology of India. It classified coastal areas into four zones: CRZ-I (ecologically sensitive areas), CRZ-II (built up municipal areas) CRZ-III (rural areas) and CRZ-IV (Islands of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar) depending on the intensity of protection and considering the extent of development already taken place. The mangrove ecosystems of the country have been included under CRZ I and it was designated as following:

*It comprised those areas that were most fragile and in need of absolute protection from any form of development: such as mangroves, coral reefs, national parks, marine parks, sanctuaries, spawning grounds of fish and other marine life etc.*<sup>12</sup>

Almost all the features those make CRZ I a unique zone to be protected are associated with the Sundarbans.

The *National Environment Policy, 2006* (NEP), the first ever National environment policy of India, has generally evoked that the environmentally sensitive zones may be defined as areas with identified environmental resources having "incomparable values" which require special attention for their conservation. The Sundarbans certainly falls under this category evoking the "incomparable" values for mangroves and other coastal resources. Regarding the ratification of international treaties and protocols and several bilateral and multilateral treaties, NEP has unequivocally declared that India will:

a) Avail of multilateral and bilateral co-operation programmes, for capacity building for environmental management, particularly in relation to commitments under multilateral instruments;

- b) Participate in mechanisms and arrangements under multilateral agreements for enhancing flows of resources for sustainable development;
- c) Provide assistance to other developing countries, in particular for scientific and technical capacity building for environmental management;

Aforesaid principles have widely opened possibilities for bilateral and/or multilateral cooperations regarding conservation of a trans-boundary natural tract like the Sundarbans.

As part of the *Man and Biosphere Programme* (MAB), accepted in the general conference of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1970, the Ministry of Environment and Forests of Govt. of India (MoEF) adopted the National MAB programme and declared the entire area of the Sundarbans as the 'Sundarban Biosphere Reserve' in 1987. 'Sundarban Biosphere Reserve' has also been included as the second 'Biosphere Reserve' from India, only after the 'Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve', in the global network of 'Biosphere Reserves' in November 2001.<sup>13</sup> The 'Sundarbans National Park', which is the core zone of the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, was named a 'World Heritage site' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on 11 December 1987 under *Natural Criteria – (II) and (IV)* i.e., as an outstanding showcase of significant on-going geological processes in terms of the effects of monsoon rains, flooding, delta formation and plant colonisation (*Criteria II*) and habitats of rare and endangered species (*Criteria IV*).<sup>14</sup>

- **The Law and Policy Paradigm of Environmental Governance in Bangladesh: Relevant Conservation Provisions for the Sundarbans**

*National Environment Policy, 1992* of the country, advocated for continuous association with all international environmental initiatives especially for protection of country against natural disasters.<sup>15</sup> The same would necessarily take into account of devastating cyclones from the Bay of Bengal on a regular basis. Thick mangrove cover, as a natural shield, has the capability to absorb or to reduce the tenacity of those cyclones. So, as a prerequisite for disaster management the natural shield of mangrove forest of the Sundarbans should be maintained or improved quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Further, to increase the legal enforceability of the institutional environmentalism, the National Environment Policy evokes:

*All concerned international laws, conventions, and protocols which Bangladesh considers ratifiable are to be ratified and existing national laws and regulations in line with the ratified international laws, conventions, and protocols are to be amended or modified.*<sup>16</sup>

Ratification of *Ramsar Convention* declaring the Sundarbans as wetlands is an example of such positive urge. On the other hand, a multiple-use policy is adopted for the Sundarbans, under the *National Forestry Policy, 1994 (NFoPo)* covering forest, water and fish resources management in an integrated manner. Under the *Environmental Conservation Act, 1995* Bangladesh Government can declare any area as 'Ecologically Critical Area (ECA)'.<sup>17</sup> It has been recognised that the Sundarbans mangrove forest is the most important ECA for the country.<sup>18</sup> The Department of Environment (DoE), with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF), has initiated a *Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project* for the management of ECAs. On the other hand, *Sundarban Biodiversity Conservation Project* was set up to develop a sustainable management and biodiversity conservation system for all 'Sundarban Reserve Forest' (SRF) resources' on the basis of 'environmentally sound plans' and 'participation of all key stakeholders'. The project area covered the SRF itself and 17 surrounding sub-districts located in the impact zone.<sup>19</sup> A *National Wetland Policy* has also been drafted by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on behalf of DoE.<sup>20</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that the perspective plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021 has demonstrated the ongoing and upcoming threat of climate change to Bangladesh in this way:

*It is now recognised internationally that Bangladesh is at the forefront of adverse climate change impacts. One key reason is the disadvantaged geographical location of Bangladesh at the bottom of the three mighty river systems—those of the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna, with a long coastal belt and much of the country low-lying and flat. ... Another key reason is that Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world, except for few city and tiny states. Therefore, the per se land unit impact falls on the largest numbers of people, who are mostly poor. In short, as a result of climate change, Bangladesh is likely to face increasing risks to food security, energy security, water security, livelihood security, health security, and habitat security."*<sup>21</sup>

And in response to this threat of climate change, the country has planned to securitize her environment and every vulnerable ecological area. Integrated coastal zone management will continue to be a policy thrust. Also, the country prefers to go for ratification of several international treaties, protocols and conventions, those are ratifiable according to the requirement of the country and particularly for the sake of conservation of her some critical ecological tracts. The most relevant one for this purpose is the ratification of the *Ramsar Convention*. The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an inter-governmental treaty. The convention provides the framework for

national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources for inclusion in the 'Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance'.<sup>22</sup> It aims to stop the progressive encroachment on wetlands including their fundamental ecological functions and their economic, scientific and recreational values. The convention was ratified by Bangladesh in 1992 and has become bound as a signatory State to accept the responsibility to maintain functions and values attuned to the underlying principles of the Convention. Other relevant international environmental treaties and conventions, which Bangladesh became part of, were: Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris 1972 (ratified by Bangladesh in 1983); United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro 1992 (ratified in 1992); Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), 1994; Principles for a Code of Conduct for the Management & Sustainable Use of Mangrove Ecosystems (draft), March 2004 to name a few which have direct and positive implications for conservation and protection of the Sundarbans associated with substantial aid and grant for the protection of the ecology of the concerned region.

A strong and feasible structure of governance has been urged in both countries for conservation of the ecology of the Sundarbans beside dedicated sectoral governance to it. It should also be admitted that ratification of international environmental treaties and protocols have helped both countries, to an extent, in providing governmental remedies to the ecological vulnerabilities of the Sundarbans. However, the fact remains that continuous decline of forest cover in the mangroves, substantial biodiversity loss, and reduction of ecological resilience have been taking place in both countries as far as surveys and statistics on the Sundarbans are concerned. All that required, is much more cohesion in formulating policies and providing governance. From here, a quest may be put forth that if initiation of a collaborative and cohesive policy framework is possible for the governance of Sundarbans as it is a shared ecology between India and Bangladesh showing similar problems and prospects.

### **Feasibility of A Joint-Collaborative Framework of Governance**

Collaboration is a recursive process where two or more people or organizations work together in an intersection of common goals, and with the principle of improving performance in current and future projects. Therefore, for collaboration, a goal has to be set and in that sense conservation and protection of the Sundarbans falls in an intersection of common goals with common vulnerabilities applicable for both countries.

- **Global Principles for Transboundary Natural Environment**

The term 'transboundary' refers to "the movement of physical and biological resources or of impacts associated with these resources, across political boundaries."<sup>23</sup> *Principle 7* of the 'Rio Declaration'<sup>24</sup> has evoked, "States shall co-operate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem."<sup>25</sup> This principle has further been explained in *Chapter 18* of 'Agenda 21',<sup>26</sup> which addresses the need for an integrated approach to the planning and management of natural 'resources'. This in turn calls for cross border political initiatives to assess the issues of transboundary 'resources' and to establish institutional mechanisms to jointly manage 'shared resources'. Now, a point is emerging that how can this global principle to 'manage' or to govern transboundary natural 'resources' be incorporated in the joint-collaborative framework of governance applicable for the Sundarbans. Some serious antecedents for this effort already took place. We may recall, in this context, the most recent initiative of 'Indo-Bangladesh Workshop on Climate Change' organized on 4 April, 2010, which are discussed below.

- **Indo-Bangladesh Joint Forum to Protect the Sundarbans**

The 14 May, 2002 issue of *The Hindu* cited a joint communiqué between India and Bangladesh regarding conservation of the mangrove forest of the Sundarbans and there a handful of discourses on collaborative 'management' of this transboundary natural tract took place. The Ministers of Environment and Forests of both the countries met on 4 April, 2010 in Kolkata and announced a joint 'India and Bangladesh Sundarban Ecosystem Forum' likely to function from September 2010. Speaking at a workshop, with his Bangladeshi counterpart Mr. Hasan Mahmud, Mr. Jairam Ramesh, the then Minister in charge for environment and forests in India stated that the Sundarbans is "ecologically vulnerable and sensitive to climate change" and the entire region is "one ecosystem." The Minister added, "We must share our experiences and working plans for conservation." He was expecting the official nod from the Bangladesh Government for setting up the forum in the near future. The forum would help in afforestation, management of mangroves, and conservation of the tiger. This forum would allow organisations from both countries to interact, and over a period of time enable the governments to take up joint projects. Minister for environment and forests of Bangladesh Mr. Hasan Mahmud said that saving the Sundarbans would require a joint initiative.<sup>27</sup> On this note, the next sub-section would concentrate on the potential of joint-collaborative aspect in the context of overall structure of environmental governance and specific adjustments

relevant especially for the conservation and protection of the ecology of the Sundarbans.

- **Sharing Lessons from Governance**

In both India and Bangladesh, the structure of environmental governance is on continuous evolutionary process especially since the 1990s, in response to changing economic and environmental imperatives on a global as well as a domestic scale. As a part of a joint-collaborative framework of conservation and protection of the Sundarbans, several governmental lessons can be shared by both the countries to improve the ecological condition of the concerned area, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in a non-mutually exclusive way. India can share, with her counterpart, the experiences of weaving of environmental principles and provisions within the fabric of Constitution and Planning. Constitution as a guiding statute and Planning as a proposed form of institutionalism may produce positive inclinations towards parametric desirables like - rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability and thus, may boost the potential of 'good governance' by induction. Bangladesh, on the other hand, could share her experiences of dealing with protective principles against natural disasters like - floods and cyclones and experiences of drafting disaster management plans. On a specific note, India and Bangladesh can share their experiences emerged from the local structures of governance, for instance, the initiatives like - 'Sundarban Biosphere Reserve' from Indian side, taken as national MAB programme, to establish a formal mechanism for coordinating and integrating diverse activities of conservation, research and training for creating a better situation of harmony between man and environment as well as 'Sundarban Biodiversity Conservation Project' in Bangladesh for securing the integrity of the environment and biodiversity of the SRF and to afford storm protection to the southwest of Bangladesh. The coastal zone management programmes in both countries have some common focal points within and the joint-collaborative framework would be able to monitor this transboundary coast dominated by mangrove ecology.

- **Joint-Collaborative Conservation Potential for the Sundarbans within Global Institutional 'Environmentalism'**

The Sundarbans, as one of the sub-sets of world ecology, specific global treaties, conventions, or protocols may be beneficial for the joint-collaborative effort to increase responsiveness of the environmental governance for the Sundarbans on either side and for drawing much global attention and assistance in terms of finance, technical assistance, knowledge sharing and international legal bindings externally.

The 'Ramsar Convention', is a worldwide inter-governmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem, i.e., wetland. Bangladesh joined the Convention on 21 May 1992 designating Sundarban Reserve Forest as 'Ramsar Site' while India joined it as contracting party on 1 February 1982 and now is designated with 25 'Ramsar Sites' in all. India went for 'Ramsar Designation' for Bhitarkanika Mangroves on 19 August 2002. Being a critical mangrove forest and ecology, larger than *Bhitarkanika*, Indian Sundarbans is yet to make an entry into the list of 'Ramsar Sites'. Certainly, it would bring in a new horizon of larger conservation efforts in a framework of joint-collaborative as well as international cooperation if India goes for Ramsar ratification for the Sundarbans. It is because 'Ramsar Convention' has initiated a new perspective of conservation strategy for 'Transboundary Ramsar Sites' (TRS), meaning that an ecologically coherent wetland extends across national borders if the 'Ramsar Site' authorities on both or all sides of the border formally agree to collaborate in its 'management', and notify the Secretariat of this intent. This is a 'Cooperative Management Arrangement'. Surely, for India and Bangladesh, the provisions and modifying guiding principles of 'Ramsar Convention' explore new horizon of a joint-collaborative initiative of conservation efforts for transboundary ecological tract of the Sundarbans ensuring positive financial, technical and guiding externalities if both the countries act as contracting parties for this unique natural phenomenon.

In this context another opportunity can be mentioned, i.e., 'UNESCO World Heritage Mission'. Its declared principles are -

- (a) helping States Parties to safeguard 'World Heritage' properties by providing technical assistance and professional training; and
- (b) encouraging international cooperation in the conservation of world's cultural and natural heritage;<sup>28</sup>

Along with other encouraging and supportive principles India and Bangladesh may be induced to enhance their individual effort as well as collaborative effort in this regard, as the 'UNESCO World Heritage Mission' has recognised the Sundarbans on either side.

Another opportunity, for both countries, to offer positive externalities to the Sundarbans is through BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), the sub-regional grouping territorially distributed in South Asia and South East Asia. The '8th Ministerial Meeting' of

BIMSTEC in Dhaka on 18-19 December 2005, added a number of new areas of cooperation besides its original six priority sub-sectors. The number of priority sectors of cooperation increased from 6 to 13. Among these additions 11<sup>th</sup> addition was the 'Protection of Biodiversity / Environment and Natural Disaster Management' and India was awarded the 'Lead Country' status for this newly added priority sub-sector.<sup>29</sup> This opportunity can be taken by both countries, as members of BIMSTEC, to go for information sharing for the purpose of ecological and disaster management programmes for protection of the mangroves of the Sundarbans from devastating floods and cyclones with the technical and financial assistance from the BIMSTEC forum of technical and economic co-operation.

- **Joint-Collaborative Conservation of the Sundarbans: From Virtual Space to Reality**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh in Dhaka on September 6 in the year of 2011 regarding conservation of the Sundarbans acknowledging the fact that the wildlife sanctuaries of the Sundarbans located in both countries are recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site and in Bangladesh as 'Ramsar site' as well. Seven Articles, included in the MoU, may describe the agreed principles based on which a joint-collaborative initiative to protect and conserve this critical ecosystem may be physically achieved.

Article I of the MoU recognised the need to monitor and conserve the Sundarban as a vital protective barrier protecting the mankind from flooding, tidal waves and cyclones. In Article II both the parties agreed to exploit the potential of the Sundarbans for development of mankind and alleviation of poverty and were ready to

- i) "consider and adopt appropriate joint management and joint monitoring of resources;"
- ii) "explore the possibility of implementing conservation and protection efforts, encourage mangrove regeneration, habitat restoration and rehabilitation programs, which would eventually increase the potential for carbon sequestration;"
- iii) "develop a long term strategy for creating ecotourism opportunities for both countries, which will create synergy and generate greater revenue."

In Article III both the Governments agreed to map and delineate human settlements in and around Sundarbans on respective sides so that a better understanding emerges of the relationship between human settlements and

the ecosystems. The Parties would further develop a management plan that utilizes this information to address issues of livelihood, deprivation by flooding and other climate related disasters, man-animal conflict, pollution, resource depletion, etc. The Parties would, through the management plan, also identify opportunities for livelihood generation that do not adversely affect the Sundarbans ecosystem. In Article IV, both Parties agreed that an exercise needs to be conducted to identify and catalogue the diversity of flora and fauna that are found in the Sundarbans along with their spatial distribution across the countries of Parties. Article V urged that a research would be carried out to develop a common and shared understanding of the impacts of climate change along with adaptation strategies that can be implemented. Article VI evoked that the Parties would be committed to the advancement of collaboration in the following and other areas:

- i) sharing relevant information between the concerned officials, forest and otherwise, of both the countries;
- ii) exploring the possibilities of joint research and management projects;
- iii) sharing technical knowledge with the common goal of conservation and management of biodiversity of the Sundarbans;
- iv) organising joint tiger estimation at regular intervals;
- v) Execution of patrolling exercises by the Forest and other relevant Officials of both the Parties along the respective borders to prevent poaching or smuggling of derivatives from wild life;
- vi) promoting capacity building exercise and exchange visits of Forest Officials of field level in order to better understand and share ideas and problems of management, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and promotion of sustainable socio-economic development, and ecotourism;
- vii) Exchanging personnel for training and promotion of education in forestry, including at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun financed by the Government of India.

It was decided that a Working Group would be set up to define activities, responsibilities, time, and resources involved, according to the activities established as per this Memorandum. In Article VI, it was mentioned that if changes of national policies in either country result in difficulties in the further development and implementation of this Memorandum, both countries will do their utmost to ensure a reconciliation. Article VII demarcated that the period of this Memorandum would be of five years and shall be extended automatically at the end of each period unless terminated by mutual consent by either Party by serving written notice ninety days prior to the date of termination. Termination shall not affect the programmes under implementation. This Memorandum would come into effect on signature and

would continue in operation, until terminated by either Party as stated in this Memorandum.<sup>30</sup>

By default, the tenure of the MoU between two countries ended in the month of September of 2016. Yet, no report has been published by either of the two countries or jointly in the public domain commemorating how much has been physically done in the direction of joint-collaborative effort to protect and conserve the largest mangrove ecosystem of the World. Tenure of the MoU has not been extended yet which is only indicating to the possibility that there might be a jolt in continuing the process with desired smoothness. One of the reasons behind this may be the divergence of priorities of the two countries in viewing and focusing the Sundarbans under respective policy frameworks. It may be mentioned here that while sixty per cent of the demarcated area of the Sundarbans lie in Bangladesh, her Indian counterpart has proportionately more human population concentration. Nearly, 4.5 million people are residing in Indian part of the Sundarbans according to the 2011 population census and only 2.5 million people are maintaining their livelihood at present in Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans. Therefore, land-man ratio is more adverse in Indian part than that in Bangladesh. Subsequently, the focus of Bangladesh in viewing the Sundarbans under policy framework is much more ecology centric while India's concern regarding this ecological tract is more or less anthropocentric in nature. That is why perhaps India has been a bit hesitant to go for ratification under 'Ramsar Convention' regarding protection and conservation of the Sundarbans. However, the initiative of 2010-2011 by both the countries has highlighted the brighter prospects of the structured effort of joint-collaborative conservation strategies as far as the ecological and anthropocentric issues of the Sundarbans are concerned.

Another interesting initiative that has already been taken in a track two level, towards the issue in concern, is known as 'Bangladesh-India Sundarbans Regional Cooperation Initiative' (BISCRI). It was established as a multi-stakeholder dialogue process of policy think tanks, civil society organizations and academics and has been supported by the World Bank. Its key partners are the International Water Association (IWA), Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), Environment Governed Integrated Organisation (EnGIO), World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) India and Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh. In Paris on December 9, 2015, the Environment Ministers of India and Bangladesh, Mr Prakash Javedkar and Mr Anwar Hossain Manju, have unequivocally stressed the need for joint action to protect the Sundarbans at an event organised on it at the sidelines of CoP21 meeting (Climate Change Conference). It was organised by Observer Research Foundation, on behalf of BISRCI, and in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change, Government of India. Besides the ministers from India and Bangladesh, many

experts from both the countries took part the discussion. They discussed in detail various adaptation and mitigation issues concerning the Sundarbans.<sup>31</sup> Further, in 2016 BISCRI organised an international workshop on resilience for delta regions; workshops for media outlets resulting in a media collaboration plan; three Bangladesh-India meetings on landscape cooperation; a number of one-on-one meetings between key influencers in Bangladesh and India; as well as two sessions of the West Bengal State Assembly that discussed landscape development issues and cooperation with Bangladesh. Engagement with officials of the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and the Government of India has led to inclusion of the Sundarbans issues in the agenda of the Sixth Round of India-Bangladesh Friendship Dialogue.<sup>32</sup>

On August 21, 2017 bureaucrats from India and Bangladesh pitched for a joint effort to save the Sundarbans. The joint effort pledge was taken during the release of a vision document on the development of the Sundarbans in Delhi. The plan has again been prepared by the ORF, IDSA and PRI. It has been pointed out that a joint working group already existed on the Sundarbans according to an agreement of 2011 and the time has come to expand the drive further.<sup>33</sup>

The South Asia Water Initiative (SAWI) report of the World Bank also recognised the enormous value of bilateral cooperation on the issues of Sundarbans, reflected in MoUs, agreements, and joint statements. SAWI urges Bangladesh and India to move from statements to joint action on water resources management across the entire Sundarbans. Thrust areas have been located at:

- i) advocacy to generate wider public support;
- ii) Joint research and dissemination to build capacity and confidence;
- iii) Establishment of governance arrangements for joint planning; and
- iv) Development of shared plans and policies for conservation and sustainable development.

Several activities have indirectly strengthened water management institutions in India and Bangladesh, including through exposure to international experience on building delta resilience and joint management of eco-sensitive regions.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

Aim of this paper has been to produce expectations in ecological tune from the structures of environmental governance prevailing in both India and Bangladesh, applicable to the shared ecological tract of the Sundarbans. Certainly, no effort has been taken up to offer any governmental model here.

However, the paper has attempted to reach a favourable framework of governance by suggesting several principles and measures which are applicable for governing the ecology of the Sundarbans. Global principles for transboundary natural environment, discussed earlier in this paper, along with several physical forms of conservation under international ratifications and sharing of lessons from the governance of the Sundarbans on either side may help both the countries in future to maintain a sustainable path towards joint-collaborative protection and conservation strategies for the Sundarbans. At this juncture, importance has been given to the feasibility of a joint-collaborative framework of governance where India and Bangladesh both can enhance their governmental efficiencies and can certainly govern the transboundary ecological tract of the Sundarbans in more comprehensive and convincing scale. Such effort would not only explore a horizon of collaborative governance, based on sharing lessons and rectifications from either side, but also enhance the process of synthesis of collaborative measures with the grand collective initiatives of 'environmentalism' worldwide. It will be beneficial for longer sustenance of this unique and beautiful ecosystem and would certainly produce positive implications for the integrity and sustainability of the world network of ecology.

## Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Environmentalism is a broad philosophy and social movement regarding concerns for environmental conservation and improvement of the state of environment.

<sup>2</sup> The Club of Rome is a global think tank that deals with a variety of international political issues. It was founded in April 1968 and raised considerable public attention in 1972 with its report *The Limits to Growth*.

<sup>3</sup> Mostafa K. Tolba and Iwona Rummel-Bulska, *Global Environmental Diplomacy: Negotiating Environmental Agreements for the World, 1973 – 1992*, The MIT Press, London, 2008, pp. 1-10.

<sup>4</sup> Ranjan Chakrabarti, "Local People and the Global Tiger: An Environmental History of the Sundarbans", *Global Environment*, Vol 3, 2009, pp. 72-95.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/sites/wh/pdf/Sundarbans%20%5Bboth%5D.pdf>, (accessed on 10 October 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Kuldeep, Mathur, *From Government to Governance – A Brief Survey of the Indian Experience*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 2008, pp. 2-10.

<sup>7</sup> 'Good governance' is expected to play basically the role of mitigation or facilitation in the process of development. Efficiency Rule of 'Good Governance' addresses the best and sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment. Goal - 7 of MDGs has called for an urge to ensure environmental sustainability and has advocated for (a) the integration of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes to reverse the loss of environmental resources; and (b) reduction of biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.

<sup>8</sup> Tapan Kumar Chattopadhyay, *India and the Ecology Question: Confrontation and Reconstruction*, Ekushe, Kolkata, 1999, pp. ix-x.

<sup>9</sup> Biswajit Roy Chowdhury and Pradeep Vyas, *The Sunderbans*, Rupa & Co., New Delhi, 2005, p. 115.

<sup>10</sup> Asim Kumar Mandal, *The Sundarbans of India: A Development Analysis*, Indus Publishing, New Delhi, 2003, p. 177.

- <sup>11</sup> Haraprasad Chattopadhyaya, *The Mystery of the Sundarbans*, A Mukherjee & Co., Kolkata, 1999, p. 190.
- <sup>12</sup> Equations, *Coastal Regulation in India: Why Do We Need a New Notification?* Bengaluru, 2008, p. 3.
- <sup>13</sup> [http://www.sundarbanbiosphere.org/html\\_files/sunderban\\_biosphere\\_reserve.htm](http://www.sundarbanbiosphere.org/html_files/sunderban_biosphere_reserve.htm), accessed on 25 April 2017.
- <sup>14</sup> Roy Chowdhury, op. cit., p. 9.
- <sup>15</sup> Alexandra Clemett, "A Review of Environmental Policy and Legislation in Bangladesh", BEEL Project: Working Paper 2, n.d., p. 4.
- <sup>16</sup> [http://poribesh.com/Multimedia/Presentation/Environment\\_%20Policy\\_MEAs.pdf](http://poribesh.com/Multimedia/Presentation/Environment_%20Policy_MEAs.pdf), accessed on 14 June 2016.
- <sup>17</sup> Clemett, note 15, p. 6.
- <sup>18</sup> M. Rafiqul Islam, *Where Land Meets the Sea: A Profile of the Coastal Zone of Bangladesh*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2004, p. 234.
- <sup>19</sup> Asian Development Bank, "Sundarbans: Biodiversity Conservation Project", <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Validation/BAN/in285-08.pdf>, (accessed on 22 April 2017).
- <sup>20</sup> Clemett, note 15, p. 8.
- <sup>21</sup> General Economics Division. and Planning Commission, Government of the Peoples's Republic of Bangladesh, "Outline Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010 – 2021: Making Vision 2021 A Reality", [http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/Final\\_Draft\\_OPP\\_June\\_2010.pdf](http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/Final_Draft_OPP_June_2010.pdf), (accessed on 01 June 2017).
- <sup>22</sup> [http://www.cpd-bangladesh.org/publications/task\\_force\\_reports/Environment.pdf](http://www.cpd-bangladesh.org/publications/task_force_reports/Environment.pdf), (accessed on 29 April 2017).
- <sup>23</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/programmes/areas/water/toolkit/html/1.11.2.description.transboundary.html>, (accessed on 18 July 2010).
- <sup>24</sup> The 'Rio Declaration on Environment and Development', often shortened to 'Rio Declaration', was a short document produced at the 'United Nations Conference on Environment and Development' (UNCED), informally known as the 'Earth Summit', held in 1992. The Rio Declaration consisted of 27 principles intended to guide future sustainable development around the world.
- <sup>25</sup> <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=78&articleid=1163>, accessed on 01 June 2017.
- <sup>26</sup> Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, reflects a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level on development and environment cooperation. The agenda deals with both the pressing problems of today and the need to prepare for the challenges of the next century.
- <sup>27</sup> <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:yzhKW97SKoUJ:moef.nic.in/modules/public-information/home-archive/+India+-+Bangladesh+joint+forum+on+Sunderbans&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk>, (accessed on 30 April 2017).
- <sup>28</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>, (accessed on 30 April 2017).
- <sup>29</sup> <http://www.bimstec.org/>, (accessed on 02 June 2017).
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- <sup>31</sup> <http://www.orfonline.org/research/india-bangla-ministers-for-joint-action-to-protect-sundarbans/>, (accessed on 26 August 2017).
- <sup>32</sup> <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/640441485347353894/pdf/112252-AR-PUBLIC-SAWI-Annual-Report-FY16-date-01-01-2017.pdf>, (accessed on 27 August 2017).
- <sup>33</sup> [https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170822/jsp/bengal/story\\_168508.jsp](https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170822/jsp/bengal/story_168508.jsp), (accessed on 27 August 2017).
- <sup>34</sup> <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/640441485347353894/pdf/112252-AR-PUBLIC-SAWI-Annual-Report-FY16-date-01-01-2017.pdf>, (accessed on 27 August 2017).

# Indian Cities as Engines of Economic Growth

By

Oindrila DattaGupta \*

## Abstract

*Indian economy is a bright star unleashing investment, growth and light of rich opportunities. India today needs thriving and prosperous cities to generate new jobs, contribute to GDP and overall national income and growth. Surging growth and employment will prove to be a powerful magnet in attracting the global market. 21<sup>st</sup> century is an urban century and India is well on track for rapid urbanisation with call for world class cities and 100 smart cities inviting foreign investors from Japan, USA, UK, and Singapore. Cities turn to be the economic power houses and India is now the best bet in global economy as an emerging market with strong, young work force, middle class and growth. However India also needs to keep in mind that the present urban strategy is weak and proper developmental models are required to ensure that urban growth is planned and proper economic and urban reforms are also required to boost FDI to enhance the economic growth and development. India also requires adequate government resources to energise the economy. The paper will analyse the economic scenario and capacity of India to foster development, global economic integration and enhancement of connectivity in the global market. The paper seeks to probe into development of cities that will help to develop business, industries, and infrastructure, mobilise innovation and recognise the diversity and openness in growing economic advantage.*

## Introduction

One of the important features of the world economy in contemporary times has been the emergence of India with propitious economic outlook. The highlights of *Economic Survey 2014-15*<sup>1</sup> outline that the estimate of Central Statistics office point out the revival of Indian economic growth that had started in 2013-2014 and attained further vigour 2014-15. With greater macroeconomic stability and reforms and active governmental reforms along with the willingness to integrate in the world economy and improved business environment, an optimistic picture of India can be painted for the

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\*Oindrila DattaGupta is currently a Ph.D candidate in Centre for International Politics, Organisation, Diplomacy and Disarmament (CIPOD) in the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email: ondgupta@gmail.com  
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years to come. The year 2016-17 has been very historic because the government took a bold step in form of demonetisation and also the road was paved for Goods and Services Tax (GST) which are crucial for curbing corruption, counterfeiting, black money and terrorist activities. Special emphasis has also been given on the role of cities which can act as dynamos of economic growth and development which is evident through various schemes related to Smart cities, urban rejuvenation, housing plans, sanitation drive to name a few. As *Jane Jacobs* outlines, "All through organized history, if you wanted prosperity you had to have cities. Cities are places that attract new people with new ideas," hence the idea of energising the cities as a centre of human capital will redefine our urban trajectory.<sup>2</sup>

Urbanization process in India is fraught with complexities and ill-planning even though the Government has always associated it with economic growth and development. With thirty percent level of urbanization in India at present age it is expected that India will reach the speed of urbanization to 60% in coming years and it is expected that in future it will contribute to 75 percent<sup>3</sup> of the total GDP. The growth of urbanization and the rise of cities in developing countries are unprecedented and it was well predicted that the world will be centred more in the urban locales than in rural set up in the years to come in third world/ developing countries. <sup>4</sup> The growth of many cities is attributed to the historical advantages of location and connectivity for supply of raw material enhancing trade and commerce hence playing an attractive card for big offices, head quarters, think tanks, research organization, educational centres, fashion hub along with it providing job opportunities, easy mobility, freedom from rigidities which are visible in rural areas<sup>5</sup>. The same experience of historical advantage stands true for Indian cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Surat, Hyderabad, and Chennai which have played important roles since the colonial times with their global economic integration.

Twenty first century is no doubt an urban century and India has given the call for world class cities and 100 smart cities inviting foreign investors from Japan, USA, UK, and Singapore ensuring connectivity to the global trade and investment market. India today in the global context has 68 more cities with above 1 million population, 13 cities with more than 4 million and 6 mega cities with more than 10million where Delhi and Mumbai are claimed to be among first 50 global cities. The paper will look into the role of India in the global economy exploring the question whether India manages to compete with China; secondly the analysis of urbanisation in India is crucial which will be studied by reviewing several Government data, reports available. Thirdly, the focus will be on the cities as the centres of commerce, job creation, connectivity, new market productivity boosting national income and the key

challenges that Indian cities face today in the pathway of decentralisation. The cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru have been selected since they are large urban agglomerations with steady rise in their contribution to the growth of economy both at the national level and global economic echelon. These cities have colonial legacy of acting as important port city and administrative centres which brought the cities geographically and financially crucial for the colonial expansion. This also led the cities to become harbour of international finances, investments, traders and experience economic as well as social transformation. Most of these cities even in the contemporary times play a significant role in shaping the economic destinies of the country and the emergence of new cities in the league under the scheme of Smart cities make the analysis of the role of cities in contemporary international political and economic scenario justified.

### **Positioning India in Global Economy: Can we De- Throne China?**

“There is the potential for acceleration in growth in India whereas the rest of the world is still slowing down...India is in a real sweet spot,”<sup>6</sup> India could outpace China as the world’s fastest growing economy according to International Monetary Fund Director, Christine Lagarde observing India’s recent growth that has been the most significant feature of the world economy unleashing new host of opportunities for the youngest workforce in the world thereby opening new chapters in global economy. The globalization forces have impacted India positively and negatively brining in new challenges and responsibilities. It is important to understand how India is positioned in the global economy and in the regional economy vis-a-vis China and how India can play a role in the global order. The global economy since the financial crisis has been knocked by the multiple shocks stemming from economic, social, and geopolitical sources.<sup>7</sup>To outdo the financial crisis problems ,India since 2014 have been undertaking several measures to assist and boost several sectors and most importantly the garment sector which is both export-oriented and labor intensive that can boost employment, especially female employment. It is interesting to note that the Khadi handloom has witnessed a considerable growth in profits since 2014 and has also expanded its markets domestically and internationally.

Comparing the Indian economy and Chinese economy the Director General of Central Statistics Office, shish Kumar has exclaimed that Chinese economy is 4-5 times larger than the Indian economy, even at the growth rate of 7 per cent and it will take 20-30 years to match the Chinese economy<sup>8</sup> Both International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have seen India’s growth rising to 7.5 per cent in 2015 from 7.2 percent in 2014. The figures have been “music to the government’s ears,” especially since the Indian economy, which

never matched the same as China in terms of economic potential, and failed to surpass its giant neighbour's growth rate. Even with a higher growth rate, India's USD 2-trillion GDP is comparatively smaller to China's USD10-trillion economy. It is pointed out that even with the faster pace of growth; India doesn't match China in terms of raw economic power.

As pointed out by Anja Manuel<sup>9</sup>,

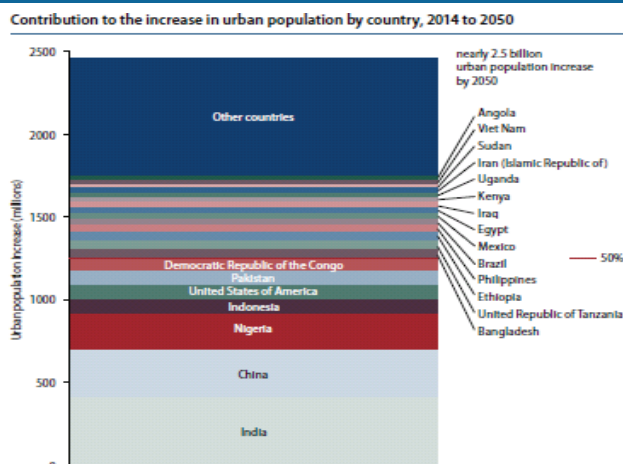
*"The economic weight of the world has already shifted in China and India's direction. It will continue to do so as their economic reforms move forward. By 2030, China and India, respectively, are expected to be the first and third largest economies in the world, with the largest middle classes that U.S. companies will wish to sell to. They will lead the world in demand for natural resources and energy, and be its largest carbon emitters".*

Even though the growth and developmental conditions are ripe for India to reap the benefits of demographic dividend and become a key engine for global growth by opening a new chapter, which is replete with immense promise, it also faces a stiff competition with its Asian competitor China. Given the present scenario of varied structural changes that the Government proposes for India's dynamism will expectedly act as a "booster shot" for the economy. However we also need to keep in the mind the grand initiative of China in terms of One Belt One Road deal signed in Katmandu. The ambitious project of Chinese President Xi Jinping's focuses on not only improvising the connectivity and cooperation amongst all the Asian, African and European countries with the Chinese but also to enhance the economic fortunes by expanding its territorial and maritime routes with a focus on boosting domestic growth. The OBOR can be designated as a grand strategic economic diplomacy especially countering India since all the South Asian countries are the participants of the OBOR plan except Bhutan. Strategically it aims to develop the East Asia economic circle and develop the European economic regions comprising overland routes which will connect China with Central Asia, Russia, and Africa which will link the country with Persian Gulf, Mediterranean Sea boosting the economy. Integration of port cities in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean are part and parcel of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Maritime silk route. The proposal and materialization of One Belt one Road of China's foreign economic policy is a great leap forward in boosting economy by enhancing connectivity with Asia, Africa and Europe with the help of economic corridors, transport networking and also the development of port cities, coastal cities in China which will energise the trade and commerce. It is thereby a challenging task for India to counter the mammoth economic plan of China through India's Act East Policy, Free Trade Zones and building bilateral relations with European and Central Asian countries as well as America to compete with the Asian dragon.<sup>10</sup>

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### Emerging Trends of Urbanization in India

The world urban population has grown rapidly since 1950, from 746 million to 3.9 billion in 2014. The steady growth in urbanization is expected to include 2.5 billion people to the urban population by 2050, with practically 90 per cent of the rise focused in Asia and Africa. Cities are no doubt the chief drivers of development and poverty alleviation site for the inhabitants, as they are the focal point of the national economic activity, government, commerce and transportation, and provide fundamental links with rural areas, between metropolis of both within the national and across the nations. Urban living is often associated with higher levels of literacy and education, better health, greater access to social services, and enhanced opportunities for cultural and political participation.<sup>11</sup> The unprecedented urbanization if not well planned and unruly then it is a threat to the sustainable development as the necessary infrastructure is not implemented for equitable sharing by the future generation. What we observe today is that in spite of relative advantage of cities, they are more unequal than country sides and millions of the world's urban residents live in poor conditions. In India some cities are characterized by rapid urban sprawl, squatter settlements, pollution, and environmental degradation, which have hampered the urban growth and livelihood of our country. The developing countries are today experiencing the highest percentage of urbanization namely Africa and Asia are experiencing a remarkable increase in their urban populations. It has been estimated that the urban population of Africa is likely to triple whereas in Asia it would increase by 61 per cent. Hence nearly 90 per cent of the increase in the world's urban population is likely to take place in the urban areas of Africa and Asia and according to the World Urbanization prospect. By 2014 India and China will contribute more than one-third of the population.<sup>12</sup> The figure below shows the contribution to the increase in the urban population country wise from 2014-2050, as per the World Urbanisation Prospects, 2014:



Source: *World Urbanisation Prospects: The 2014 revision (Highlights)*,  
United Nations, New York, 2014

In 21st century cities and towns occupy the frontline in the developmental basis of the country attracting investment and making international cooperation. Globalization has surfaced major urban restructuring within the countries of developing regions, thereby making a shift from the trade and production points of urban centers and towns demonstrating market advantage in the advanced economies. Urbanization facilitates economic growth and development and can accrue welfare gains if the state may materialize good urban policies and urban governance. The cities which are the hub of industrial and commercial activities account for half to four-fifths of GDP (gross domestic product) in most of the developing countries. The economic clusters that arise as the process of urbanization grows, contributes largely to the growth by enhancing the productivity of output and generation of employment, allowing the accumulation of real wealth in the form of urban real estate, as well as fiscal flows where the cities are providing the lion's share of tax revenues. Globalization has produced transport and communications advancement as the cities are now linked directly to international markets. This trend of city integration, fastened with increasing intensity of information, financial, and other communication, insurance services by firms also create greater competition for foreign and domestic investment in the global financial climate created in the cities.<sup>13</sup>

According to 2011 Census, there has been an absolute increase in urban population. According to the census data analysis, the level of urbanization also increased from 27.81 per cent (or 286 million) in 2001 census to 31.16

per cent (or 377 million) in 2011 Census<sup>14</sup>. McKinsey Global Institute has studied in "India's Urban Awakening: Building inclusive cities, Sustaining Economic Growth" in 2010 reflected that nearly 590 million Indians are expected to live in cities by 2030.<sup>15</sup> The World Urbanization Prospects of 2014 shows that Delhi with a population about 25 million estimated to be the world's second most populous city in 2014 next to Tokyo which has 38 million inhabitants.<sup>16</sup> Mumbai is also envisaged to be the fourth largest city by 2030 with 28 million of the population from 21 million at present. The study also predicts that in India seven cities with 5 to 10 million are capable of becoming mega cities by 2030.<sup>17</sup>

A study by Indian Institute for Human Settlement (IIHS), Urban India 2011: Evidence (IIHS 2012) states that in India top 100 largest cities produced about 43 per cent of the GDP, had 16 per cent of the population with 0.24 per cent of the land area.<sup>18</sup> The cities in India are the key nodes of development and progress which are still undergoing urban transition and the necessity of urban services and infrastructure are a major challenge for the urban growth in India. With this backdrop, the results of the 2011 Census assume the significance in enhancing our understanding of the enormity, growth and variation in the levels of urbanisation in India.<sup>19</sup> The urban population was calculated to be around 358 million in 2011. The urbanisation process in India showed a growth rate of 3.3 per cent during 2001-2011 compared to 2.1 per cent during 1991-2001. The reason behind faster urbanisation can be attributed to economic growth which has increased from 6 per cent in 1990s to 8 per cent in 2000s.<sup>20</sup> The analysis of how urban our country is becoming is measured demographically and there is an evolving definition of census over time. The definition of urban varies from one country to another.<sup>21</sup>

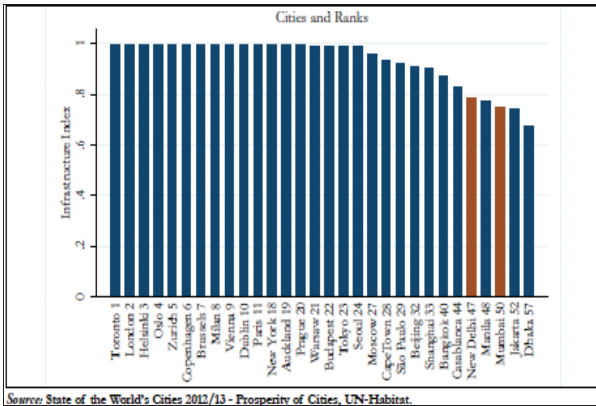
The inter linkages between economic performance of cities and national economy is strong and in the globalised world, cities need to compete globally in terms of infrastructure, investment climate, financial structure, job creation, housing, lifestyle as well as other amenities. Urban population has seen an increase in population due to rise in rural-to-urban migration. During the last decade, fostering of new towns significantly accelerated the pace of urbanisation.<sup>22</sup> According to Twelfth Five Year Plan<sup>23</sup> urbanisation has increased at a pace like never before and urban population has risen to 230 million. This pace also requires systematic management. With the increase in urban population and rise of income the demand for key services such as water, transportation, housing facility will also increase. India needs to cope with the challenge of increasing demand and thrive towards more capacity building. The cities in India especially the metro cities and capital cities have large arrays of global linkages and diplomatic channels. Despite the problems which urbanisation puts before developing countries, they are all structured

around capitalism. The economic and political forces that shape the cities also create their own environment to attract foreign investments to meet the basic demands of the people.<sup>24</sup> The Indian cities which are expanding and growing are also confronted by urban poverty including limited access to resources and opportunities, less housing facilities, unhealthy environment, no social protection and deplorable conditions of living and rise of slums as evident in big Indian cities. Globalization and urbanization as a combined force is manifested in global south and more prolifically in cities. Therefore, a very important feature of post colonial urbanization is no doubt globalization. Urban locales are now acting as sites of flow of global finance capital, the transnational manufacturing firms and the diverse migrant communities from poorer countries. This also reflects the duality of the cities where the locales are cherishing dreams but at the same time they are also a place for struggle for survival as the cities become over burdened with migrants and their expectations making them more competitive.

The McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) which has documented the trend of urban growth in India and China reported that there is a rise of 440 dynamic emerging cities and among these 36 cities are Indian. "China is right in the middle of its sweeping urbanisation, while India is in the early stages of the process", "India is also urbanising, but the process is at a much earlier stage; today. Only 30 per cent of the population lives in cities of all sizes and fewer than one in five lives in its large cities. However, India's cities are expected to generate half of the nation's GDP growth to 2025 as per the report. Richard Dobbs, a director of McKinsey Global Institute based in Seoul, said:

*"At a time when mature economies are facing the challenges of de-leveraging and aging, the urbanisation wave in emerging markets is a positive force for global growth. The urban shift is changing the balance of the world economy, and governments. Investors and businesses need to ensure that they understand, and respond".<sup>25</sup>*

As per the data collected on the ranking of global cities based on urban infrastructure (State of World Cities 2012/13), New Delhi and Mumbai are placed at 47th and 50th positions respectively reflecting comparatively lower levels of infrastructural growth in the top performing Indian cities in the global cities map.



The Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) is aimed at granting the Urban Local Bodies for 2015-2020 of almost 277 per cent higher grant than what has been recommended by previous governments. Along with the flagship programme (JNNURM) initiated by the Centre in 2005 across 65 cities, the present Government has also launched several new initiatives for rejuvenating the urban areas such as Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), HRIDAY for development of the heritage cities, Digital India for rapid digitization, Skill development, Housing for All, Metro transport for improving the livelihood, urban mobility etc. The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) is a city rejuvenation programme for 100 cities in India which aims at developing the basic infrastructure, IT connectivity, transportation, health care, governance for the safety and security of the citizens. The city renewal schemes and the city extension in terms of Greenfield development aim to cover a larger part of the city developmental plans. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) which was launched on 25.06.2015 aims to improve the basic urban infrastructure in 500 cities/ towns which would be known as Mission cities/ towns such as water supply, sewerage, septage, storm water drains, and urban transport.<sup>26</sup>

**Indian Cities as Magnet of Growth and Economic Power**

Rapid urbanization is shifting the locus of global economic power where 364 million people already live in cities and 590 million urban dwellers are expected by 2030. The augmentation of Chinese, Latin American, Indian, African and Southeast Asian cities are playing crucial role in boosting the national productivity and income, building new markets, business climate and increasing trade opportunities. Cities in the global south or developing nations

are equally important since they play a major role in global and regional economy just like the cities in the global north.<sup>27</sup> In India there emerges a new architecture of investment and urban governance. These investment strategies are also bringing in competitiveness among the cities and the policy structure of the respective state governments. The rise of new tier of world cities/global cities have attracted several transnational policy networks and expertise such as Mc Kinsey, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, UN agencies, Global cities forum with their focus on enhancing investment climate and better connectivity of Indian cities to global markets as well as make them technologically advanced, providing better lifestyle to the citizens.<sup>28</sup> Some of the Indian cities have flourished rapidly in terms of investment, infrastructure, attracting investments, encouraging digitization. Hyderabad and Bengaluru are fastest growing world class cities which are expanding and progressing like Shanghai and Shenzhen in China attracting investments from Microsoft, Apple and Uber. Mumbai has evolved, developed and globally engaged itself with rapid economic expansion and attracting massive migration cross border as well as within the country. It has been distinguished as the most globalised city in south Asia; it is a hub for small business, entrepreneur, designers, fashion, tourism and large informal networks. Mumbai is designated as a centre of creativity and consumption; with high average income and tax generation by regional standards<sup>29</sup> since it was the first city to be exposed to the economic, technical and social change associated with rise of capitalism. It has been a home to many migrants, film artists, businessmen in the world. Rapid urbanization along with global integration enables regional growth, job opportunities, and wealth creation having its position in money market and foreign transaction as well as home to the National Stock Exchange, Bombay Stock Sensex thereby dominating the capital market<sup>30</sup>. It is expected that Mumbai being a focal point of regional growth and a new pattern of urban development will make India reach the peak of world's third largest economy by 2030. The study of *Globalization and World Cities*<sup>31</sup> group outlines that Mumbai rank 12th as most interconnected economy; whereas *The Institute for Competitiveness review of Indian Cities*<sup>32</sup> had rated Mumbai as the city with strongest human resource capacity, capital availability, business incentives and retaining confidence of investor and firms in 2014.

*Master Plan for Delhi 2021: Vision-2021* is to make Delhi a global metropolis and a world-class city' where it is considered as a "city in transition".<sup>33</sup> Both Delhi and Mumbai aspire for a greater economic and political player. The phase of liberalization has brought about a change in context of development in large cities. The urban strategy which they follow are described as decentralization, deregulation, privatization aiming at the economic efficiency of city, infrastructural development, housing facility, public-private

partnership and inviting private sectors. The call for urban reforms also shows that the Cities in India are responding positively to globalization process. Delhi has reached the urban agglomeration of 12.8 million in 2001 and it is also a hub of migration from not only South Asia but also from other countries of the world. Delhi has also been expanding to the periphery to accommodate the growing population. Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon have now come in the ring town with ample educational sectors, thriving IT hubs, MNCs and private offices like IBM, Dell, Nokia to name few; banking, and hotels, automobile, BPO sectors.. Due to the population reaching 24 million Delhi is India's largest metropolis (ahead of greater Mumbai at 21 million) and "as a megacity that ranks among the largest on the planet".<sup>34</sup> Delhi contributes 19,396.2 million of absolute GDP though it is behind 21,743.4 million of Mumbai at current price in 2008-2009. The private foreign investment was 27 per cent of the total investment that was generated in Delhi and 50 firms has been registered in Delhi as compared to 200 firms in Mumbai.<sup>35</sup> Both Delhi and Mumbai are portraying a global image along with Hyderabad and Bengaluru which have also developed many urban economic corridors that have enabled a rapid growth in investments and the commercial spaces which are provide high quality life to the people.

The MGI study pointed out that growing consumer classes are accelerating the growth in demand for many goods and services where 10 per cent of global growth in residential and commercial floor space by 2025 will come from the Indian cities alone. As reported "cities will require annual physical capital investment to more than double from nearly USD10 trillion today to more than USD20 trillion by 2025." The urban industrial corridors include the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, the Chennai-Bangalore Industrial Corridor and the Bangalore-Mumbai Economic Corridor. The Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), which is spread across six states, seeks to allow international corporations to invest and operate in India. Indian cities will give a dynamic turn to economic growth and development and will generate 70 per cent of net jobs by 2030, produce 70 per cent more GDP, and drive fourfold increase in per capita income across the nation. Indian cities will be great employment magnet providing financial development nationwide. The recent report by Economic Times show that Mumbai, Delhi are ranked at 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> position whereas Bengaluru, Chennai and Kolkata at 75<sup>th</sup>, 81<sup>st</sup> and 147<sup>th</sup> rank reflecting their performance in the economic, political and cultural growth, city integration, connectivity with rest of the world.<sup>36</sup> The figure below shows the economic strength of cities in the world where the Indian cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru appears to play a key role.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover addressing the issue of city is not simply to look at prosperity but also to address the problem of unplanned urbanization and growth of urban

Rank		Overall economic strength score/100*	GDP 2010-2016 (% real change p.a.)**
1	Tianjin	56.6	12.9
2	Shenzhen	55.4	11.5
3	Dalian	55.0	12.7
4	New York	54.0	2.4
5	Doha	53.7	8.3
6	Guangzhou	53.6	11.3
7	Shanghai	51.8	9.5
8	Tokyo	50.5	1.7
9	Chongqing	49.9	12.2
10	Beijing	49.8	9.4
11	Qingdao	49.4	11.4
12	Chengdu	49.2	11.7
13	Suzhou (Jiangsu)	48.1	10.5
14	Hangzhou	47.6	10.3
15	Singapore	46.0	5.7
16	Bangalore	45.9	10.3
17	Los Angeles	45.7	2.7
18	Houston	45.6	4.4
19	Ahmedabad	45.3	10.1
→20	Hong Kong	43.8	4.9
→20	Hanoi	43.8	10.2
22	Paris	43.6	2.2
→23	Washington	43.4	3.6
→23	Dallas	43.4	4.1
25	Abu Dhabi	42.5	4.7
→26	Mumbai	42.4	8.4
→26	Delhi	42.4	8.9
28	Seattle	42.0	4.2
→29	Taipei	41.9	5.1
→29	London	41.9	2.7

Source: The Economist (2012),  
[http://www.citigroup.com/citi/citiforcities/pdfs/eiu\\_hotspots\\_2012.pdf](http://www.citigroup.com/citi/citiforcities/pdfs/eiu_hotspots_2012.pdf),  
 (accessed 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015)

slums. Cities already matter a lot to India where growth is concerned if we have to make them vital for economy because bulk of tax revenues comes from here. This also requires dramatic investments for proper urban development and dispersal of resources are essential. However, India needs to invest USD1.2 trillion capital expenditure in city to increase urban infrastructure in next 20 years to match the economic growth and this daunting task for India. Cities also need good governance, technocrats and optimum development of technology and talent to make them a hot spot for economic growth. It is a necessity for the central government to decentralize the powers to the urban local bodies so that decisions can be taken at the lowest level without depending on the centre. There should also be proper

understanding about the allocation of power and the finances which can help in transforming the cities for a better tomorrow.

## Conclusion

The cities are critical for assessing the developmental goals of the country's economy which not only helps the urban but also the rural areas adjoining the city. The growth of cities also sets the policy priorities for the state to promote integration and international cooperation for the development of the cities and also to extend better quality life to the people. Indian cities in order to be productive and thriving ground for economic growth must try to develop in 4 crucial areas- job creation, affordable housing, public transport, ecology. It also requires well planned policies and timely implementation. India needs to make cities a hub of skilled, innovative and talented human resource with inclusivity in the nature of growth of cities. Most of the cities reflect dualities, polarization as on one hand we can see beautiful parks, buildings, glass offices, 5 star hotels, malls and on other hand the slums, urban poor, beggar reflect the abject poverty of one section of urban society. It needs to be accounted that cities of developing countries are though second level players yet they are important players in field of manufactures and provide a good ground for investment. The cities of China, Asian Tigers, and India have become markets for foreign exchange whether it is automobile, consumer electric goods. Most of the TNCs, MNCs have them based in poor country.<sup>38</sup> These cities play a global role in propagating ideologies, leading producers of films, television, music which reaches beyond borders. They are also dynamic where political structure or governance is concerned thereby ensuring varied reforms as well as strategy for the kind of functions they can play in the global scenario. What differentiate these cities from other cities are the heavy industries which are required to meet the standards expected by foreign investors and professionals. The financial, infrastructural, capital opportunities attract a large number of foreign investors and open a huge market for goods and services. They become a destination for best human capital from within the border of their countries or beyond. These cities are blessed with expanding population of middle class which offers employment to large number of low income service workers, especially in domestic work, security services. With increase in global investment and access to global markets and products the life style of the people have changed significantly for the better standard of living giving rise to new consumer elite and the consumer fetishism. The sign of rising consumerism is visible in growing number of shopping malls, office, luxury hotels, show rooms, up scaled restaurants which have to an extent also widened the gap between high and low income group. Most of these cities are home to the country's only stock exchange for example Mumbai stock exchange.<sup>39</sup> With India in deep inertia to

urbanise itself, there is a need for large scale urban reforms. With 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, JNNURM took to urban reforms. The central government has to play a role of catalyst for urban development. Both states and cities need to realise that Indian cities are powerhouse of economy and will give comparative advantage as well a fertile ground for investment and job creation. The role of citizens and the private institutions are also important to realise this transformation.

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# Selected Aspects of Pakistan's Post-2013 Foreign Policy

By

**Agnieszka Kuszewska & Agnieszka Nitza-Makowska \***

## Abstract

*Pakistan's first democratic transition of power in 2013 raised illusive hopes for democratization and strengthening the position of civilian institutions vis-a-vis security establishment. In fact, under a fairly elected government, citizens' opinions rarely shape state policies in strategic areas including foreign affairs. Nawaz Sharif government will complete its term in 2018, provided that nothing unpredictable happens (which cannot be excluded). The chapter recapitulates Pakistan's foreign strategy under Nawaz Sharif's tenure by discussing selected aspects of Islamabad's relations with the United States, India, China and Afghanistan.*

*Complicated relations with the United States are determined by regional geopolitical dynamics. There are three major factors which shape current bilateral relations: Donald Trump's presidency, Pakistan's strategic and economic shift towards China, and the US position on strategic alliance with Pakistan with reference to Washington's presence in Afghanistan. Relations with India remain tense and escalation-prone. Attempts made at the beginning of Sharif's tenure turned out to be insufficient. Bilateral relations are based on jingoism and there is no prospect of resolution in the foreseeable future.*

*Pakistan's security-centric approach towards Afghanistan focuses on cross border terrorism and Afghan refugee flow. The relations between two fragile states rely on their internal stability since disturbances that one faces spreads continuously through their common, leaky border. While citizens of Pakistan understand the casual nexus, security establishment seems to ignore it. Contrary to relations with Afghanistan, Sino-Pakistani alliance hardly recognizes security concerns in the post-2013 period. Unveiling China Pakistan Economic Corridor in April 2015 extended it to the economic and political realm. Rather than benefiting Pakistani citizens, the bilateral project serves primarily Chinese interests by sustaining its economic growth.*

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\*Agnieszka Kuszewska is Professor, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw, Poland and Agnieszka Nitza-Makowska is associated with Collegium Civitas, Warsaw, Poland. Email: [agnieszka.kuszewska@gmail.com](mailto:agnieszka.kuszewska@gmail.com) ; [agnieszka.nitza@civitas.edu.pl](mailto:agnieszka.nitza@civitas.edu.pl)  
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## Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the sixth most populous country in the world and also the only Muslim nuclear state, plays important role in shaping the regional security system of South Asia. Strategically significant location near Arab Sea, in direct neighbourhood of such states as Iran and Afghanistan, the threat from numerous radical outfits active on the territory of Pakistan, the engagement of the state in protracted conflict with India, are just a few factors that foster the necessity of understanding unique specificity and variety of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan remains a pivotal state in foreign policy of such significant actors as the United States, China and India, although bilateral relations of Islamabad with these three states are marked with different historically inherited determinants.

Pakistan's historical democratic transition of power in 2013 raised timid hopes for democratization which could conclusively lead to some commendable shifts in its foreign policy. Despite this seemingly landmark step towards democracy, the dominance of security establishment remains unchallenged; it continues to play the leading role in the strategic decision-making process, at the expense of the civilian leadership. The essential governing areas, including foreign affairs, suffer from this imbalance of control, quintessential to an authoritarian military regime, which results in policies that ignore the Pakistani people's interests and hamper the initiatives aimed at fostering an intra-regional cooperation. The civilian leaders are virtually deprived the opportunity to act independently in the strategic sphere of foreign affairs.

The absence of the Foreign Minister in the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government symbolically demonstrates the dominance of the security establishment over civil services in that particular area. We begin the analysis with the brief description of the Ministry structure. The major aim of the article is to outline the selected aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy towards the United States, India, China and Afghanistan.

## A Fragile State without Foreign Minister

Pakistan's last Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar ended her term in March 2013. Since then "the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has a foreign adviser (Sartaj Aziz) who doubles as national security adviser and a close Sharif aide who serves as the special adviser to the prime minister on foreign affairs"<sup>1</sup>. However, a democratically committed civil servant, exclusively devoted to foreign policy, is missing.

Foreign Affairs seem a sensitive area to the state of Pakistan due to its tumultuous regional relations and dependency on foreign, particularly American and Chinese, aid. The Fragile States Index recognizes a country's level of external intervention, which includes, for instance, foreign assistance and imposed interventions, as one of the highest in the world.<sup>2</sup> The absence of such a political figure as a Foreign Minister undermines the position's

importance suggesting that the Pakistani state manages to perform without such an official. Furthermore, Pakistan has been witnessing the neglect of civilian leadership responsible for foreign affairs since the early 1950's. Stephen Cohen argues that General Ayub Khan then serving as the Commander in Chief of Pakistan Army was "engaged in negotiations with the U.S. for arms assistance without formal political approval"<sup>3</sup>. By not appointing a Foreign Minister, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif exposes the weaknesses of the civil government, in a roundabout way, suggesting that, as the Stratfor put it precisely, in the case of Pakistan it is not a state with an army but an army with a state.<sup>4</sup>

### **Pakistan and United States: The Alliance of Disillusionment**

The United States–Pakistan relations are very complex and may be assessed as "the alliance of disillusionment", which has its roots in the Cold War era. The regional strategic goals of these two allies differed significantly from the beginning and that was the major reason for frequent breakdowns. For Washington the security collaboration with Pakistan was a part of its broader superpower regional policy, firstly aimed at containment of communism, and in post–Cold War era – on the so called "global war on terror" in Afghanistan. In the post 2001 military campaign in Afghanistan, Americans applied the policy of carrot and stick towards Pakistani establishment. The CIA and FBI wanted to restrict the cooperation of Pakistani intelligence with the Islamists: the surveillance through sophisticated chains of contacts prevented the ISI from enhanced (pre-2004) cooperation with Lashkar-e-Toiba or Hizb-ul-Mujahideen<sup>5</sup>. The carrot involved financial elements which had enormously "convincing" power. The drone strikes campaign along Af–Pak border, which was aimed at targeting Islamist groups were expanded by President Obama's administration. It was one of the major conflict areas in U.S.–Pakistan relations when Nawaz Sharif became prime minister. The strikes eliminated many Al-Qaida and other groups operatives (including TTP amir, Hakimullah Mehsud), but at the same time many civilians were killed in FATA, which provoked extensive outrage among local population. The anger was intensified and articulated by some popular politicians, such as ex-cricketer Imran Khan. The Nawaz government was put under augmented pressure to stop the United States from striking on the territory of the sovereign state. Nawaz Sharif made attempts to convince Washington to reduce the number of the strikes. It happened in 2014 when Nawaz Sharif entered into (unsurprisingly, unsuccessful) negotiations with Pakistani Taliban (TTP).

For Pakistan the security interests remain focused on constant existential fear of India, which has always shaped Pakistan's army narrative. The military aid from the U.S. gave hope to counterbalance India's regional domination and Pakistan's military/intelligence establishment saw the chance to pursue its territorial claims in India-administered Kashmir. Christine Fair emphasizes that this persistent revisionism stems from the institutional survival strategy for the Pakistan army. She writes; "should relations with India improve, the army would find it more difficult to justify its claim on national resources"<sup>6</sup>. Not much has changed till today. Pakistan–U.S. strategic interactions are

overwhelmed with paradoxes and contradictions, but Pakistani military has played crucial role in bilateral relations since early 50's. Today, on the one hand Pakistan is America's a strategic ally in the war on terrorism, and the third-largest global recipient of American aid. On the other, Pakistan's military establishment pursues the policy which mostly does not overlap with Washington's regional goals.

The U.S-Pakistan relations are strongly interconnected with the regional security strategies towards India and Afghanistan. The attempts of India to establish a new strategic equation with the U.S. started during India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's tenure. It has had deeply unsettling effects on the Pakistan-India relationship, especially regarding the U.S-India civil nuclear agreement and defence partnership. The latter has become the linchpin of the U.S' rebalancing strategy, based on the pivot to Asia. The New Delhi-Washington possible rapprochement has always been a matter of concern for Pakistani establishment and it seems that this anxiety is justified. India has emerged as an important element of the Washington's strategy aimed at balancing China's growing power. Being the only state in Asia comparable to China in geography and demography, India seems a natural strategic choice for Washington<sup>7</sup>. There is no doubt that the American President shares with Narendra Modi the right-wing rooted perception of "strong leadership" even at the cost of liberal democracy and civil liberties. They both met at the White House in June 2017 with the hope to reaffirm bilateral relations based on "true friendship". Similarities may clash, and it will be difficult to introduce a win-win cooperation between "America first" and "Make in India"

Donald Trump has already showed the ability of flattering whomever he considers important in his political maneuvering. In November 2016, the president-elect described Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the phone call as "terrific guy with good reputation" (although Nawaz Sharif and his family members were accused of corruption, ownership of illegal assets, tax avoidance and money laundering in Panama Papers scandal) and Pakistani people as "amazing" and "one of the most intelligent"<sup>8</sup>. These commendations were obviously not followed by any significant rapprochement in the bilateral relations. Pakistan's leadership was apprehensive towards upcoming Trump administration and his potential hardened approach to Islamabad. Consequently, Pakistanis were gravely concerned about being added to the so called Trump travel ban to America (which finally did not happen). The US administration may however consider withholding some of aid and even downgrading Pakistan's status as major non-NATO ally if Pakistan does not tackle successfully the issue of militant activities, especially the deadly Afghanistan-focused outfit of Haqqani network<sup>9</sup>.

In 2017, the relations with the United States remain invariably determined by regional geopolitical dynamics. There are three major factors which shape current mutual interactions: Donald Trump's presidency and its impact on Washington-Islamabad contacts, Pakistan's strategic and economic shift towards China, and the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. The strategic cooperation between New Delhi and Washington has raised Pakistan's doubts over the future of its alliance with Washington. In January 2017 Dr Zafar Nawaz Jasper from prestigious Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, wrote in the journal *Hilal*, an official magazine of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR): "The sustainability of the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership is significant for both the regional and global strategic chessboards. The general impression is that India's economic potential is the primary determinant of Washington and New Delhi's cordial relationship. The critical examination of their bilateral agreements highlights that India is very significant in the United States' military calculations. On December 8, 2016, during his visit to New Delhi, United States Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter signed an agreement with his Indian counterpart Manohar Parrikar to declare India as a major defense partner of the United States. Being a major defense partner, India is qualified to receive not only military equipment, but also defense technology. In simple words, the major defense partner agreement ensures uninterrupted defense trade and transfer of sophisticated military technology to India. Perhaps, the American Military Industrial Complex would be the major beneficiary of India's military shopping spree. The Indo-U.S. strategic partnership may receive positive trajectory in 2017. Conversely, Pakistan and United States may continue their bilateral strategic dialogue, but the developments are not favourable for both the states' cordial relations in 2017. The latter's strong inclination towards India alarms the former. Many analysts acknowledge probability of the worst-case scenario, i.e., the likelihood of American sanctions"<sup>10</sup>. As Daniel S. Markey rightfully observes, the United States cannot address its vital security goals in bilateral relations with Pakistan through a strategy of pure cooperation or pure coercion<sup>11</sup>. Pakistani military and civilian leaders seem to realize that fact perfectly well.

For decades Pakistan has been active in internationalization of the conflict with India, unlike the latter, which perceives it as the problem which should be settled bilaterally. Under Nawaz Sharif Pakistan continues efforts to engage the international community, focusing mostly on human rights violations by Indian security forces in the Kashmir Valley and overlooking its own negligence. In his own specific and already recognizable manner, interviewed Donald Trump termed Kashmir a "very, very hot tinderbox".<sup>12</sup> It is highly dubious indeed that president Trump will be capable (or even interested) to address the complex issue of South Asian rivalry and introduce any positive changes into it.

### **Pakistan and India: On Collision Course**

The protracted conflict with India has perpetuated the uneasy tension in the subcontinent for seven decades. The sense of permanent threat allegedly coming from more powerful India is purposely sustained merely by Pakistani

military-intelligence establishment and this has largely contributed to overwhelming indio-centrism of the state foreign strategy. This policy was thoroughly planned and introduced by the mighty army. In theoretical analysis of conflicts I emphasize the fact that in the conditions of protracted escalation of the conflict religious and ethnic differences gain symbolic meaning and they serve as a tool for mobilization of particular groups by strengthening ties within the community and providing common identity. The actual problems which are the real causes of conflicts (economic deprivation, social exclusion) are implemented in the sectarian or ethnic discourse, which further antagonizes the contending parties, but prevents the real roots of conflicts to be eliminated. Political/military/religious leaders are especially interested in (mis)using these differences as strategic tools to escalate violence, jingoism and achieve their own benefits at the cost of society<sup>13</sup>. These assumptions may be adapted to India-Pakistan antagonism. Nawaz Sharif has accused India many times of interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs by fomenting unrest in Balochistan and making attempts at diplomatic encirclement of Pakistan. India is presented as the guilty one, responsible for undermining the regional stability or provoking firing across the Line of Control. These mutual accusations are a tit-for-tat strategy: on Indian side Pakistan is blamed on exporting terrorism and armed support for the insurgency in India-administered Kashmir. Addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2016, Prime Minister Sharif accused India of escalating the arms race and added that his country will "take whatever measures are necessary to maintain credible deterrence"<sup>14</sup>.

A specific self-perpetuating phenomenon may be identified: the intentionally sustained sense of threat is the basis for the development of military potential (including nuclear capabilities), transferring huge amount of money to arms race at the expense of economy, education, etc. The rivalry with India where Kashmir remains the main flashpoint successfully prevents South Asian states from introducing effective formula of enhancing regional economic and political cooperation. The escalation of the conflict to the highest level is barely possible, but low intensity tensions along the border continue to be a part of reality in bilateral relations and nothing indicates that there will be any significant change.

The problem is deeply rooted in the history which has interceded and interfered with the growth of both nations. Pakistan's sense of permanent threat allegedly coming from more powerful India is purposely sustained merely by the military-intelligence establishment and it largely contributed to overwhelming indio - centrism of Pakistani foreign strategy, which has been thoroughly planned and introduced by the mighty army. During Nawaz Sharif's tenure not much has changed. The specific self-perpetuating phenomenon may be identified: the intentionally sustained sense of threat is the basis for the development of military potential (including nuclear capabilities), transferring huge amount of money to arms race at the expense

of economy, education, etc. The rivalry with India where Kashmir remains the main flashpoint, successfully prevents South Asian states from introducing effective formula of enhancing regional economic and political cooperation. The escalation of the conflict to the highest level is barely possible, but low intensity tensions along the border continue to be a part of reality in bilateral relations and nothing indicates that there will be any significant change. The enhanced process of politicization of Islam as the binding element uniting the extremist jihadi fighters in their struggle against enemies on one hand and creating politically powerful military establishment on the other, are the two major side effects of this protracted conflict.

Relations with India remain tense and escalation-prone. Attempts which were made at the beginning of Nawaz Sharif's tenure turned out to be insufficient. Terrorist attacks and rise of militancy in India-administered Kashmir soon eviscerated the short-term progress. Bilateral relations are based on jingoism and there is no prospect of resolution in the foreseeable future.

Their concurrent pursuit of conflicting objectives has become a new structuring element of international relations which has cast new uncertainty on the efforts of calming the new Pakistan India rivalry.

The rise of religiously motivated nationalism is always worrying phenomenon, especially in religiously and ethnically diverse states, and it generally leads to escalation of violence and paves the way for adoption of forceful solutions. The impact of fundamentalist religion-oriented nationalism and growingly belligerent stand seems to rise both in India and in Pakistan, which is deeply worrying. Both countries engage in mutual accusations of human rights abuses and ceasefire violations across the LoC and at the same time pass over in silence, their own negligence.

With the inception of the insurgency in India-administered Kashmir, a new era began in the valley, where ordinary people found themselves permanently caught between Pakistan-supported militancy and India's massive military presence. These people are the biggest victims of the protracted rivalry between the two establishments and their regional power game, which is strongly connected with the seven-decade geostrategic dynamics of South Asia. Realistically, territorial changes in Kashmir are barely possible as both states will fight to the last drop of blood to defend their territorial integrity.

The historically inherited conflict has disastrous consequences on different levels. It not only influences the situation of all people living in the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The persistent rivalry has direct negative impact on the whole South Asia. Despite being one of the most dynamic regions in the world with a population exceeding 1.6 billion people, it is faced with huge development impediments and limited cooperation prospects. Deeply rooted mistrust makes it one of the least economically integrated regions, with severe challenges including 400 million people living in poverty. According to World Bank data<sup>15</sup>, intra-regional trade constitutes only 5 per cent of total trade of South Asia (within ASEAN it is 25 per cent).

Intra-regional investment is smaller than 1 per cent of overall investment. Taking into consideration the prevailing tendencies of the states to integrate regionally, these indicators are truly appalling. Both countries need to address these issues, engage in enhanced cooperation instead of making futile attempts to materialize their territorial claims and engage in jingoistic rhetoric.

### **China-Pakistan: Economy First**

China-Pakistan all-weathered friendship complicates both countries' rocky relations with India. Beijing's "String of Pearls" geopolitical strategy – that aims at creating a network of Chinese facilities located in the foreign states including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and the Maldives – encroaches India's traditional spheres of interest. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) recognized as a flagship initiative under One Belt One Road significantly influences the triangular dynamic between China, Pakistan and India.

In the post-2013 period, with deepening economic cooperation, Beijing hardly addresses security concerns towards Islamabad. However, the profitability of the China-Pakistan initiatives as the CPEC depends on the political stability of the fragile state including the effectiveness of its counter terrorism strategy. The Stratfor confirms that "The projects make easy targets for local separatist or jihadist groups and fodder for political factions leery of China's increasing sway."<sup>16</sup> In November 2014, the countries signed 19 agreements regarding the \$46 billion project that aims at building networks of highways and railways as well as energy infrastructure to connect Gwadar Port in Balochistan with Kashghar in Xinjiang in the northwest China. The CPEC promises to benefit both states as well as the regional cooperation since it<sup>17</sup>:

1. Provides an alternative energy supply route to Shanghai, to the one thought the Strait of Malacca that transports 80 per cent of China's oil. It will reduce shipments' time, cost and security risks;
2. Upgrades Pakistani transport infrastructure with a planned Karachi-Lahore motorway and a rebuilt Karakorum Highway as well as an extended railway network that reaches Chinese Xinjiang. It will a) physically connect Asia's regions, and b) boost economies of the underdeveloped Pakistani that the routes reach;
3. Expands Pakistani energy infrastructure. It will a) improve resources' transportation as for instance a Gwadar-Nawabshah gas pipeline will serve for, b) help Pakistan to decrease common energy shortages, c) connect the energy-abundant Central Asia to the energy-deficient

South Asia, and d) provide China with the access to crucial energy supply routes in the continent;

4. Advances Gwadar Port and Gwadar International Airport. It will a) provide Central Asian Republics with an efficient trade route, and b) increase the significance of the least populous and underdeveloped province of Baluchistan.

These CPEC's apparent profits boost Pakistani civil leadership's expectations. The Minister for Planning Development and Reform Ahsan Iqbal foresees that the project will encompass "agricultural development, and poverty alleviation, financial cooperation as well as livelihood improvement including municipal infrastructure, education, public health and people-to-people communication which will result in thousands of new ventures and millions of jobs in every part of Pakistan."<sup>18</sup> The optimism around the CPEC – along with the Pakistani economy's recent performance including growth in corporate profit, higher consumer spending as well as the World Bank's favourable forecast assuming its economy to grow 5.2 per cent in 2017 and 5.5 per cent in 2018<sup>19</sup> – attracts investors.

However, as hope in the investment rises, it may appear as dreamlike as the promise of the Gwadar Port. Apparently, its development has not benefited Pakistani citizens as China leases the facility until 2059. The failure hardly influences Sino-Pakistani alliance and attitudes of Pakistani population towards China. According to the Pew Research Center, 82 per cent of Pakistanis had a favourable opinion of China in 2015. During the decade of 2005–2015, it varied from 69 per cent in 2006 to 85 per cent in 2010 and 2013.<sup>20</sup>

The lack of transparency surrounding the CPEC and the investment's size suggest that Islamabad while ignoring the nation's interests, sells its sovereignty to Beijing. Further, the project's goals particularly expanding railway network remains the British colonial policies towards India. However, New Delhi hardly sees similarities between the CPEC and the East India Company. Officially, its unfavorable attitude towards the initiative stays Kashmir-oriented as the route passes through the Pakistani-administrated Gilgit-Baltistan that New Delhi recognizes as its integral part. Nevertheless, in the dispute around the CPEC, this India's claim remains sound. In fact, what worries New Delhi is a power shift within the China-Pakistan-India strategic triangle that the project will eventually bring.

The Pakistanis living in the areas of the CPEC are concerned about being forced to relocate due to the project's development. These fears are justified as Islamabad already implemented its authoritative decisions to acquire land without any compensation, just to establish Special Economic Zone in the province of Gilgit-Baltistan.<sup>21</sup> According to the *Long Term Plan for CPEC (2017–2030)* (LTP) reviled by the Dawn in May 2017, the project endangers Pakistani farmers since it brings unfair competence from Chinese companies. Beijing declares to support financially and politically its enterprises entering

agriculture by, for instance, providing them with “a mechanism that will help Chinese agricultural enterprises to contact the senior representatives of the Government of Pakistan and China”,<sup>22</sup>

Another LTP's provision that ignores Pakistani citizens' interests regards developing coastal tourism that never existed in the Islamic Republic due to the state's religious character and security concerns. The hidden agenda behind the idea is to introduce visa-free tourism for Chinese without mentioning of a reciprocal solution for Pakistani citizens travelling to China.

The CPEC suits China's economy model called GDPism that focuses on economic indicators rather than nation's well-being. The initiative that promises to expand Pakistani economy neglects its citizens' interests leaving them uninformed and fearful. Beijing's political culture that potentially challenges Pakistani' democratization might follow Chinese funds as the CPEC “envisages a deep and broad-based penetration of most sectors of Pakistan's economy as well as its society by Chinese enterprises and culture”<sup>23</sup>.

### **Pak-Afghan Relations: Old Problems and New Challenges**

Khurshid Hasan's characteristics of Pak-Afghan dynamics from the early 1960's suit its current state as he argues: “Pakistan and Afghanistan have much in common. Yet the irony of the situation is that relations between these two countries, bound by historical and geographical links, have not been cordial but rather have been marked by pronounced hostility since 1947.”<sup>24</sup> Upcoming Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the American “war on terror” fuelled mutual distrust, equally between countries' establishments and citizens. These invasions saw waves of Afghan refugees into Pakistan placing pressure on both the local communities as well as the state's establishment. Consequently, the periods of refugees' inflow were “characterized by extremely poor relations between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan.”<sup>25</sup>

The 1.5-million of registered and estimated 1 million undocumented Afghan refugees<sup>26</sup> which constitute the largest protected refugee population in any single state<sup>27</sup>, suffer from negative perceptions prevailing in Pakistan. Additionally, some sections of media and society blame these refugees for terrorist incidents as well as criminal cases. In the post-2013 period, the hostility escalated due to the attack in Peshawar School, by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, in December 2014, widely spreading Afghanophobia to social media, with “hash tags like #KickOutAfghans and #AfghanRefugeesThreat.”<sup>28</sup> This negative rhetoric has limited impact on real-life interactions as acts of violence between Afghan and Pakistani populations seem rare. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the government of Pakistan initiated a campaign aimed at forcing the return of refugees to their homeland. Consequently, their situation in Pakistan sharply deteriorated: arbitrary detentions, police raids on their homes, closing schools for refugees and at the same time refusing Afghan children in Pakistani schools, belong to numerous examples of the policy of intimidation. Forced repatriation may also

contribute to the major humanitarian crisis in war – and poverty-stricken Afghanistan.

The Pakistani civil society's representatives suggest that the peaceful coexistence of the two communities follows "economic benefits associated with the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The success of many Afghan businesses in Pakistan, for example, may have helped create jobs and reinvigorate the local economy in many areas."<sup>29</sup> As is a tendency in international relations, successful economic cooperation remains a foundation of peaceful political relations. Notably, the solution appears invisible at the international level in that particular case of Pak-Afghani relations. "The precondition to any economic trade between the two countries is security along their common border"<sup>30</sup> that crosses monotonous terrain that neither government controls. Apparently, the border remains porous due to these geographical conditions along with political challenges as the dispute over the Durand Line division of Pashtunistan.

The assumption of democratic peace theory claiming that wars harm predominantly ordinary citizens, perfectly applies to Pakistani conditions. Cross-border terrorism causes fatal casualties among civilians, whose numbers on the Pakistani side, contrary to Afghani one, gradually decreased, from 3001 in 2013 to 612 in 2016<sup>31</sup>. This violence poses a threat to local communities and inhibits their daily life. The Peshawar attack that killed nearly 150 children traumatized public opinion<sup>32</sup> provoking a one-dimensional shift in Pak-Afghani dynamics. Accordingly, the rise of regional and transnational jihadi movement caused the Pakistani population to expect Islamabad to establish pragmatic relations with Kabul to fight terror groups. Sharif's diplomatic efforts to improve the situation between the two states seem to follow nation's expectations. As he declared to Ashraf Ghani during his stay in Kabul in May 2015, "I assure you, Mr. President, that the enemies of Afghanistan cannot be friends of Pakistan."<sup>33</sup> However, as long as "Pakistan outsources borders to the military"<sup>34</sup>, which recognizes the unstable Afghanistan as the legitimization of its superiority over civilian leadership, the Sharif's consent stays only declarative. Therefore, security establishment continues to differentiate between the so-called "good" and "bad" Taliban supporting the first ones whose performance in Afghanistan and Indian Kashmir seems to serve the Pakistani army's interests. The controversial strategy based on that unclear distinction exposes Pakistani society to a disastrous performance of terror groups as it energizes jihadi movement and increases radicalization of Pakistani society.

Afghan refugee inflow and cross-border terrorism continue to challenge the Pak-Afghan dynamics in the post-2013 period. Furthermore, the relations seem sensitive to a third states' performance in the region. The Sharif era experienced the American troops' withdraw from Afghanistan at the end of 2014 increasing India-Pakistan rivalry to influence the country's transition. The Pakistani security establishment's a zero-sum approach to its relations with India assuming that what profits New Delhi harms Islamabad, identifies

any Indian policy towards Afghanistan as a manoeuvre against Pakistan leading to the country's encirclement.<sup>35</sup>

The limited democratization under Prime Minister Sharif omits the domain of foreign affairs since the security establishment, regardless civilian leadership's efforts and citizens' interests, continues to fuel external threats that legitimize their dominant position. It allows establishing safe havens for the particular radicals whose performance serves Pakistani army's interests. However, the counter-terrorism strategy exposes the population to its fatal outcomes: particularly terrorist attacks and radicalization of society.

## Conclusion

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's tenure will come to an end (if not interrupted) in 2018. He has not introduced any significant shifts in his foreign policy prerogatives. The civil-military relations remain strained, with the former being held in permanent contempt by the latter. Obviously, this "state within the state" role of the army has a direct and indirect impact on Pakistan's foreign policy. The relations with most Pakistan's neighbours remain strained, in some cases (India, Afghanistan) they significantly escalated in the last few years. Kashmir conflict supported by jingoistic policies remains an important reason keeping apart both nations of India and Pakistan. The relations between the two, ipso facto, impact and permeate other nations in this region, which in turn has an impact on international relations. The United States under President Donald Trump may introduce more tough policy towards Islamabad and Pakistani establishment may seek closer relations with China.

In the Nawaz Sharif era, the problem of security and enhancing intra-regional cooperation has not been tackled successfully. The bilateral relations with Afghanistan face challenges that have been ghosting Pakistan since its early days, starting from the lack of recognition of the Durand Line border by Afghan governments. Among numerous threats, the consequences of the two conflict-prone phenomena, particularly Afghan refugee flow and cross-border terrorism jeopardize an ordinary Pakistani citizen to the largest extent. Contrarily, Sino-Pakistani relations seem to neglect security threats in the post-2013 period. The relatively stable alliance that celebrated its 65th anniversary in 2016, including the multi-billion "game changer", CPEC, helps China to materialize its two strategic goals: strengthen its role in Pakistan's economic and security-related issues and counterbalance the India's position in the region. Many Pakistanis, not only those successfully convinced by some pro-government media, appear to perceive the common initiatives and cooperation with China with enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the architectures of the bilateral agreements may in the end mostly serve the Chinese economy and Pakistani (predominantly Punjabi) establishment while largely ignore the needs of the citizens of other provinces and territories.

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# Cooperation and Conflict in South China Sea: Implications for Sino-Vietnam Relations and the Emerging Dynamics

By

**Mohor Chakraborty \***

## Abstract

*The history of Sino-Vietnam relations is interspersed with animosity and conflict, having oscillated from one of 'comradeship plus brotherhood' to one between 'the most direct and most dangerous enemies'. Among the diverse issues that have been a source of bilateral hostility, the conflagration in the South China Sea happens to be a major issue of trepidation and discomfiture. The South China Sea littorals form the cockpit of Sino-Vietnam contention, hinged on conflicting claims to sovereignty over ocean areas, and the Paracels and the Spratlys - two island chains in the littorals. While on the one hand, Vietnam's claim reaches past a conventional Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), 200-nautical mile from its Indo-Chinese coastline into the Spratly archipelago, among other places, China claims by far the largest portion of territory - an area defined by the "nine-dash line", which stretches hundreds of miles south and east from its extreme southern province of Hainan, on the other. Moreover, both China and Vietnam have historical claims to sovereignty over the islands, though these claims are mutually contested. Of late, both countries have embarked on a spree of re-claiming land for military and strategic purposes. These reclamation endeavours, have, as expected, raised the strategic sensitivity of the South China Sea, making it a hotbed of rivalry and one-upmanship between China and Vietnam.*

*Given this backdrop, the article analyses the factors leading to the emergence of the South China Sea littorals as a major bone of contention between China and Vietnam and Vietnam's policy responses vis-a-vis Chinese assertiveness and ambitious spree of construction in the disputed strategic islands. In conclusion, the article argues that, notwithstanding differences over territorial sovereignty in the South China Sea, under the emerging circumstances, particularly in the context of the Hague Tribunal verdict (2016), Vietnam and China are following a mutual policy of simultaneous containment*

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\*Mohor Chakraborty is Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, South Calcutta Girls' College, Kolkata. Email: mohor\_5@yahoo.co.in  
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*and engagement, with engagement predominating. Perhaps, such a stance will act as a source of succour for the wider Asia-Pacific region, and facilitate early conclusion of the draft Code of Conduct on the South China Sea.*

## Introduction

The South China Sea has emerged as a major source of tension and discomfiture in the bilateral dynamics of China and Vietnam, catapulting it to a cockpit of rivalry and volatility. An important junction for navigation between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, the South China Sea connects with the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Straits to the southwest, and commands access to the East China Sea to the northeast. The strategic location of the South China Sea and its rich reservoir of natural resources (both organic and inorganic, including minerals, marine livestock/flora and fauna, and energy reserves) make it a vital naval lifeline for neighbouring littorals, including India, particularly as a major Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC), facilitating the passage of commercial and passenger vessels through its waterways and accounting for approximately USD 5 Trillion trade. The South China Sea littorals form the cockpit of Sino-Vietnam contention, hinged on conflicting claims to sovereignty over ocean areas, and the Paracels and the Spratlys - two island chains in the littorals. While on the one hand, Vietnam's claim reaches past a conventional Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) 200-nautical mile from its Indochinese coastline into the Spratly archipelago, among other places, China claims by far the largest portion of territory - an area defined by the "nine-dash line", which stretches hundreds of miles south and east from its extreme southern province of Hainan, on the other. Moreover, both China and Vietnam have historical claims to sovereignty over the islands, though these claims are mutually contested. China views the South China Sea as an exclusive Chinese sea and claims almost the entire territory. Its historical assertion is based on the discovery and occupation of the territory.

As history demonstrates, Sino-Vietnamese relations have oscillated from one of 'comradeship plus brotherhood' to one between 'the most direct and most dangerous enemies'.<sup>1</sup> For centuries, parts of Vietnam existed under the suzerainty of Chinese dynasties. Subsequently, by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as Vietnam was engaged in a struggle to overthrow the French colonial yoke, it received military and moral support from Beijing. However, relations took an awkward turn following the conclusion of the Vietnam War in 1975, when Vietnam exhibited its allegiance towards the Soviet camp, thereby antagonising Beijing. Meanwhile, the January 1974 clash between Chinese and South Vietnamese forces over the Paracel Islands, during which dozens of Vietnamese sailors and soldiers were killed, left a bitter after-taste in bilateral

ties. As a consequence of this event, China gained control over the entire group of islands.<sup>2</sup>

Although until the reunification, Vietnam had recognized Chinese sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands, since 1975, it has claimed both Islands based on historical claims of discovery and occupation. Besides, both countries have embarked on a spree of reclaiming land for military and strategic purposes. For instance, Vietnam has land-filled 27 islets, and is presently investing in the extension of Spratly Island's runway, as an ideal infrastructure for landing air force maritime surveillance aircraft, and building hangars. On its part, China has land-filled about 3,200 acres of land to beef up tiny, partly-submerged islets and even stationed surface-to-air missiles on Woody Island in the Paracel chain. These reclamation endeavours, have, as expected, raised the strategic sensitivity of the South China Sea, making it a hotbed of rivalry and one-upmanship between China and Vietnam. It is in this context that the present article analyses the ramifications of the South China Sea conflict on the overall visage of Sino-Vietnam relations and Vietnam's policy responses vis-a-vis Chinese assertiveness and ambitious spree of construction endeavours in the disputed strategic islands.

### **Conflicting Dynamics in South China Sea: Ramifications for Sino-Vietnam Ties**

The South China Sea has been fraught with tensions between China and Vietnam and the situation has been exacerbated by certain factors and events, with their respective insinuations on bilateral relations. The present section anchors this analysis on the following: first, the signing of an Agreement between the State-owned Indian and Vietnamese oil companies – ONGC Videsh Ltd./OVL and Vietnam Oil and Gas Group (Petro Vietnam/PV) respectively (in October 2011) for conducting joint oil drilling exercises in two blocks in the Phu Khanh Basin of the South China Sea and Vietnam's responses; secondly, China's ambitious land reclamation and construction spree in the islands; and finally, differences over the means of resolving the issue.

### **Indo-Vietnam Joint Exploration in South China Sea**

To begin with, the singular event which perturbed China enough to take qualms and assert its trepidation in the regional waters was the signing of an Agreement between the State-owned Indian and Vietnamese oil companies – ONGC Videsh Ltd./OVL and Vietnam Oil and Gas Group (Petro Vietnam/PV) respectively – in October 2011, for conducting joint oil drilling exercises in two blocks in the Phu Khanh Basin of the South China

Sea, which, Vietnam claimed to be its sovereign territory, in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provisions. In this backdrop, Beijing voiced its vehement opposition to India engaging in oil and gas exploration projects in the disputed South China Sea, and warned Indian companies against entering into any agreements with Vietnam. This was in addition to China's harassment of PV oil survey ships that were searching for oil and gas deposits in Vietnam's EEZ and deliberate severing of the cables of its survey vessels. Although Vietnam restrained from the use of force, it not only held its sway, but also pledged to continue efforts to exploit new fields for exploration. In response to China's aggressive posture, the spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Vishnu Prakash highlighted that its engagement with Vietnam for oil and gas exploration activities in the South China Sea served commercial purposes and expressed in no uncertain terms that, "China's objection to OVL's explorations in South China Sea has no legal basis as the blocks belonged to Vietnam."<sup>3</sup> The Indian representative also categorically pointed out India's financial stakes in the blocks, citing an investment of USD 400 million in Vietnamese hydrocarbons sectors, with OVL having invested USD 500 million in oil exploration projects. Thus, such an essentially pragmatic stance not only exhibited new dynamics in India's China policy, but also manifested New Delhi's greater assertiveness in its neighbouring maritime domain, signaling that energy politics could no longer be left to the monopoly of any single power. Meanwhile, amid tensions emanating from China's state-owned oil firm, China National Offshore Oil Corporation's (CNOOC) call for bids from foreign companies offering exploration of oil in nine blocks in the South China Sea in June 2012, which sparked off protests in Hanoi, Vietnam decided to extend the contract for exploration of hydrocarbons in a crucial oil block in the region to OVL in July 2012. This came in the context of OVL's indication to the Vietnamese authorities of its plans to terminate operations in Block 128, citing its inability to begin oil exploration due to hard sea bed and other 'techno commercial' reasons. From the Vietnamese standpoint, this gesture followed its desire to hold on to Indian presence in the resource-rich South China Sea, defying increasing Chinese assertiveness. On its part, OVL agreed to re-examine its decision of withdrawing from block 128 if PV renewed the contract.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly enough, while instilling the strategic quotient into this issue, in the backdrop of the spectacular modernization of the Chinese Navy, through advanced air defenses, submarines, anti-satellite weapons and anti-ship missiles that could be used to deny an adversary access to strategic areas like the South China Sea, the then Chief of the Indian Navy, Admiral D.K. Joshi, taking stock of the imperative of Indo-Vietnamese cooperation in joint exploration initiatives in the South China Sea,

asserted: "It is not that we expect to be in those waters very frequently, but whenever the situation required, with the country's interests at stake - we will be required to go there and we are prepared for that."<sup>5</sup> This statement laid it threadbare that the Indian Navy would guard and protect the OVL's assets in this arena of escalating tensions, subject to the Government's approval. Such an assertion by the Chief of the Indian Naval Staff was a distinct indicator of the Indian Navy's ambitious outreach, exuding its potentiality to checkmate Chinese hegemony in the South China Sea. Further ballast was added to Hanoi's welcome move, when in course of a meeting between the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Pham Binh Minh and his Indian counterpart, Salman Khurshid in New Delhi in July 2013, Minh urged him to continue with 'exploration and exploitation work' in the South China Sea, declaring that New Delhi was within its rights to do so because the area came under its 'exclusive economic zone'.<sup>6</sup> The Indo-Vietnamese collaborative endeavour scaled yet another height following the official visit of the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Nguyen Phu Trong to India in November 2013, in course of which, Vietnam offered 7 oil blocks in the South China Sea - including three on an exclusive basis - and joint prospecting in some Central Asian countries on a nomination basis to OVL. Towards this end, the Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of this official sojourn highlighted: "The leaders reiterated their desire and determination to work together to maintain peace, stability, growth and prosperity in Asia. They agreed that freedom of navigation in the East Sea/South China Sea should not be impeded and called the parties concerned to exercise restraint, avoid threat or use of force and resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the UNCLOS."<sup>7</sup>

Finally, in furtherance to the 2011 Agreement, OVL and PV signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote joint cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector in Vietnam, India and other countries, in course of this visit. Through the MoU, PV offered 5 blocks to OVL, which the latter would assess and subsequently present a proposal to PV.<sup>8</sup> In April 2014, Vietnam offered two more exploration blocks to OVL without competitive bidding.<sup>9</sup> Summarily then, the Indian and Vietnamese responses and cooperative strategy vis-à-vis joint exploration endeavours in the South China Sea in the face of stiff Chinese resistance and trepidation was a clear reflection of the reality that Beijing's monopolistic stance in the resource-rich archipelago would not go uncontested.

### China's Construction Spree and Militarisation of South China Sea

The speed and scale of China's island building spree, enhanced with military surveillance, communications and logistics infrastructure in the form of port facilities, military buildings and airstrips, christened by Adm. Harry Harris Jr., Head of the U.S. Pacific Command as a "Great Wall of Sand", have alarmed Vietnam considerably. Over the past couple of years, China has transformed spare reefs and rocks in the disputed islands large enough to boast sports fields and airplane runways. For example, Fiery Cross Reef, once just a couple of rocks jutting out at high tide, has grown into a 665-acre island with dozens of structures and a 3 km runway that can accommodate military jets. Mischief Reef, another one of the 7 artificial islands constructed by Chinese engineers in the Spratlys, also hosts extensive sports facilities among its roughly 1,400 acres of reclaimed land. The U.S. Department of Defense's Annual Report (2016) to Congress on China's military estimated that the Chinese have fashioned at least 3,200 acres of new land in the Spratlys over the past couple of years (2014 onwards). This is in striking contrast to 50 acres of land reclaimed by other claimants combined over the same period. A close scrutiny of Chinese activities, particularly exposed and confirmed through satellite imagery reveals that in 2016 itself, several missile batteries, support vehicles and surface-to-air missiles were deployed in Woody Island, the largest of the Paracel archipelago. Pentagon's detailed assessment of China's island-building programme revealed three of the land features in the Spratly Islands have nearly 10,000 ft runways and large ports in various stages of construction. Besides, it has excavated deep channels, created and dredged harbours, and constructed communications, logistics and intelligence gathering facilities. The report argues that airfields, ship facilities, surveillance and weapons equipment will allow China to significantly enhance its long-term presence in the South China Sea.<sup>10</sup> In August 2016, satellite images released by Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, a project of the Washington-based think-tank, Centre for Strategic and International Studies confirmed that China has built aircraft hangars on disputed islands in the South China Sea and Chinese military fighter jets could, at some point, be based on Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief Reefs, further stoking tensions in the region. Besides, the report also highlighted that in December 2016, China installed anti-aircraft and anti-missile weapons on its artificial islands in the strategically vital South China Sea. Satellite images demonstrated three new air bases built on artificial islands nearing completion in the Spratly islands at the heart of the South China Sea. Beyond the hangars and air defence systems, three naval bases readying for operation, including large berthing facilities and harbours for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, the coast guard and other maritime law enforcement agencies were also visible. In addition, the bases will be able to host Chinese strategic bombers such as the H6-K,

early warning and surveillance aircraft and long range transport and tanker jets. It also added that anti-aircraft guns and close-in weapons systems designed to guard against missile attacks have been placed on all 7 of China's newly created islands.<sup>11</sup> These evidences of China militarising the volatile South China Sea region have definitely been a cause of serious concern to Vietnam.

### **Difference over Conflict Resolution in the South China Sea**

Differences persist over the means of resolving the South China Sea dispute. In 2002, China together with other ASEAN countries signed the Declaration on the Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the South China Sea, followed by China's accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia in 2003. The signing of these two agreements marked the official consensus between the claimants and as the first multilateral agreement, the DOC revealed three purposes: promoting confidence-building measures, engaging in practical maritime cooperation, and setting the stage for the discussion and conclusion of a formal and binding Code of Conduct (CoC).<sup>12</sup> Vietnam supports the full implementation and compliance with UNCLOS including an early conclusion of the CoC on a multilateral basis, involving the claimant nations. However, China states that it prefers to resolve disputes peacefully with individual claimant states on a bilateral level rather than through arbitration provided by the UN or other forms of what it sees as "imposed" dispute settlement, notwithstanding the argument by Vietnam that China's relative size and clout would give it an unfair advantage bilaterally. Although China is a party to the UNCLOS, it views its compulsory dispute settlement mechanisms as "inappropriate" and to which it has rightfully opted out. In a Position Paper issued in December 2014 by Beijing, it maintained that: "With regard to disputes concerning territorial sovereignty and maritime rights, China has always maintained that they should be peacefully resolved through negotiations between the countries directly concerned."<sup>13</sup> In August 2016, a meeting was held between Senior Officials from China and the ASEAN at Manzhouli, in course of which, both sides agreed to complete the framework for the CoC by mid-2017 by raising the frequency of the negotiations in a situation without interference, in addition to approving guidelines for a China-ASEAN hotline for use during maritime emergencies.<sup>14</sup> Evidently then, the existence of diverging perspectives between China and Vietnam with respect to the resolution of the conflict has been a severe thorn in the complexion of bilateral relations, exacerbated by the fact that the issue has been languishing for over a decade since the DOC was signed, pending an early conclusion of the CoC.

### **Sino-Vietnam trepidations in South China Sea: Vietnam's Policy Responses and Options**

Given these circumstances, Vietnam has been following a pragmatic policy of simultaneous containment and engagement with China on the South China Sea issue. On the one side of the spectrum, as a means of containing Chinese posture in the littorals, the instance of Vietnam inviting India to explore and exploit natural resources in the South China Sea in February 2016,<sup>15</sup> in the context of burgeoning bilateral defence cooperation is a case in point. Subsequently, in course of the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's visit to Vietnam in September 2016, the Vietnamese leadership sought New Delhi's participation in oil and gas sectors within its EEZ,<sup>16</sup> unveiling a sense of déjà vu in the complexion of embittered Sino-Vietnam ties reminiscent of 2011. Besides, Vietnam's responses to China's construction of military facilities in the South China Sea have been demonstrated in the form of expanding its own capabilities in the littorals. Satellite imagery revealed by an American think-tank (Report of Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative) in November 2016 suggests that Hanoi is significantly upgrading its sole runway on Spratly Island and constructing new hangars there. In fact, Vietnam had lengthened its runway on Spratly Island from less than 760 metres to more than 1 km. The upgraded runway would be able to accommodate maritime surveillance aircraft and transport planes, as well as combat aircraft. Furthermore, it was reported in August 2016, that Vietnam had discreetly fortified 5 bases in the Spratly Islands with mobile rocket launchers capable of striking China's runways and military installations. Such a development was the most significant defensive move Vietnam has made on its holdings in the South China Sea in decades and it underscored Hanoi's concerns about China's assertive pursuit of territorial claims in the disputed region.<sup>17</sup>

These initiatives of containment have been juxtaposed with cooperative endeavours between Vietnam and China to properly manage maritime differences and further enhance substantial bilateral cooperation. In this context, three landmark events, which have significantly influenced Sino-Vietnam ties, deem analysis: first, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA/Hague) verdict of July 2016, which rejected Beijing's claim to sovereignty over the South China Sea waters as having no legal basis. This ruling also opened an avenue for China to reconsider its overall position and perhaps undertake a softer diplomatic approach and for other claimants to work for practical solutions. Following this ruling, Vietnam's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Le Hai Binh, while towing a moderate and balanced approach, welcomed the PCA's verdict and skirted any direct condemnation of China.<sup>18</sup>

Vietnam's further malleability towards China was evident when Prime Minister, Nguyen Xuan Phuc paid his first official visit to Beijing in September 2016. In course of Phuc's meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Li Keqiang, the latter underscored the indispensability of bilateral cooperation, and stated that, "China and Vietnam need to work together to abide by agreements reached by the leaders of the two countries, safeguard stability in the South China Sea, and build consensus to advance bilateral ties and safeguard maritime and regional peace". This cooperative sentiment was reiterated by the visiting dignitary, when he asserted the need for properly resolving maritime issues with China in the spirit of equality, peace and mutual respect through the conduct of maritime cooperation in areas of low sensitivity as well as maintaining a stable situation in the South China Sea to prevent the maritime issue from casting a shadow over bilateral ties.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, in May 2017, China and ASEAN agreed on the rough outline of a legally binding CoC on the South China Sea. The CoC draft intends to provide a rule-based framework containing a list of norms to guide the conduct of parties and promote maritime cooperation in the littorals. In this backdrop, Vietnam has exhibited its willingness to "make joint efforts with China to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and reach agreement on a code of conduct in the South China Sea through consultations at an early date."<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, China appreciated the Vietnamese President, Tran Dai Quang's active support and participation in the grandiose inaugural Belt and Road Forum, organised by Beijing in May 2017. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aimed at building an infrastructure and trade network that spans across the globe, linking Asia with Europe and Africa, along the ancient Silk Road trading routes, has spurred more than modest enthusiasm in Vietnam. In a pragmatic push to encouraging cooperation in this sphere, Hanoi and Beijing are mulling the alignment of the former's "Two Corridors and One Economic Circle" plan with the BRI.<sup>21</sup>

It follows from the discussion above, that notwithstanding differences over territorial sovereignty in the South China Sea, under the emerging circumstances, Vietnam and China are following a mutual policy of simultaneous containment and accommodative engagement, with engagement predominating. This becomes all the more significant from an economic standpoint as well, since China has been Vietnam's top trade partner since 2004. Bilateral trade accounted for over USD66 billion in 2015 and it is predicted that this figure would enhance to USD100 billion by end-2017. As figures indicate, China ran 1346 valid projects in Vietnam (March 2016) with a total registered capital of over USD10.4 billion. It is a principal

supplier of raw materials for Vietnam's export sector as well as a source of foreign investment. On the other hand, Vietnam is expected to serve as an entrepot for China and Guangxi in particular to boost bilateral and ASEAN trade.<sup>22</sup>

In the context of the Hague ruling of July 2016 and the China-ASEAN agreement on the rough outline of a legally binding CoC on the South China Sea, the situation has been "stabilized" and as noted by Fan Changlong, Vice chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission, in course of his meeting with Vietnamese leaders in June 2017, "is turning positive". He further urged both sides to step up strategic communication, properly control divergences, and maintain the overall situation of China-Vietnam relations and peace and stability in the South China Sea. This was amply reciprocated by Vietnamese Defence Minister, Ngo Xuan Lich, with his commitment to "deepen the communication and cooperation with China and carry forward their traditional solidarity and friendship."<sup>23</sup>

Under the present circumstances, it would be contingent on the leadership of both countries to grasp each other's strategic intent, forbidding the spill-over of the impact of their rivalry in the South China Sea into the broader arena of bilateral dynamics. Perhaps, such a stance will act as a source of succour for the wider Asia-Pacific region, facilitate attempts towards the early conclusion of the draft CoC on the South China Sea and take greater cognisance of the strategic vitiation of the region by North Korea's ballistic adventurism.

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# BRICKSJAM: Integration for the Creation of New Global Balance

By

**Kriengsak Chareonwongsak \***

## **Abstract**

*Nowadays, the first power pole, NAFTA, led by the United States, has still to recover from economic downturn. The second power pole, the European Union, faces a serious issue of Brexit (leaving of the Great Britain) and public debt crisis that remains unresolved at this time. The imbalanced state of the world today, with the global over-dependence on the existing power poles could cause worldwide recession with ensuing economic, social and political problems. Hence, a new third pole of power is needed to help pull the world back from a coming recession for all nations.*

*BRICKSJAM is proposed as a solution for the creation of a third pole of power. BRICKSJAM is an acronym for a reasonable selection of countries, in which B is Brazil, R is Russia, I is India, C is China, K is South Korea, S is South Africa, J is Japan, A is ASEAN and M refers to the Middle Eastern countries. The integration of BRICKSJAM could function through the foundation of ASEAN support with an expansion of ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+6. Additionally, though they have different levels of development, ASEAN nations are able to function together with an attitude of neutrality, which makes it an excellent coordinator for all parties.*

## **Introduction**

Events in today's current global context have exposed a scene of recession. While the US searches an exit from economic depression, the European Union's debt crisis and exit of United Kingdom from EU has weakened the current status of European Union both economically and socially. Thus, at such a time, what the world really needs is a mechanism or a structure that

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\*Kriengsak Chareonwongsak is Senior Fellow, Harvard University and President, Institute of Future Studies for Development. Email:kriengsak@kriengsak.com, [http:// www.kriengsak.com](http://www.kriengsak.com)  
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will help to support a forward move for humanity, which will benefit all people, regardless of nationality.

This article will explain a mechanism that may be a solution. In the first half of the article, the reason for a real third power in the world will be explained. The second half of the article will describe how to create the world's third power pole and will describe BRICKSJAM and how to create BRICKSJAM.

### **Why does the World Need a Real Third Power?**

There are many reasons for the world needing a real third pole of power.

#### **The Current Poles of Power in the World are in a Downturn**

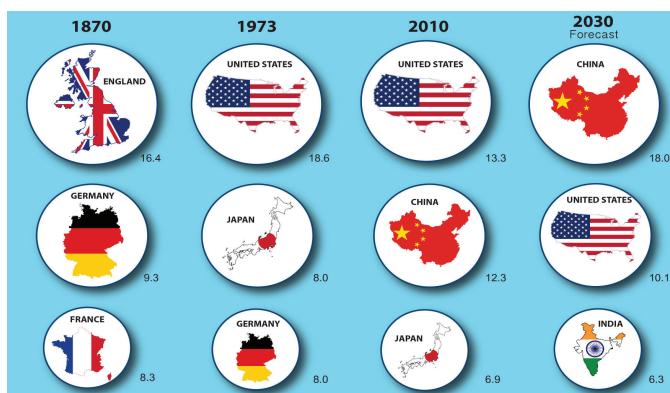
Consider NAFTA, the first pole of power, which is led by the United States of America (U.S.), though the U.S. still must recover from its economic recession. The economic growth rate of the U.S. showed a sunken trend as compared to its unemployment rate for a very long period. In the first quarter of 2016, the economic growth rate has been reduced and showed a quarter rate of 0.8 percent. In comparison, the unemployment rate remained at 5.0 percent in March 2016. Although the unemployment rate has been rectified as compared to the previous 7 years, it still prevails at a higher multiple than economic growth.

In addition, there are many risk factors and uncertainties that could restrain US economic recovery. The US economy expanded at its slowest pace in the first quarter, as American consumers reined in spending and companies tightened their belts in response to weak global financial conditions and a plunge in oil prices. Shaky global markets and oil's tumble resulted in the biggest business-investment slump in almost seven years and household purchases climbed the least since early 2015, as shown in the data published by commerce department.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of the difference between short and long term yields, the U.S. has a 60 per cent chance of entering a recession in the next 12 months - the highest probability since the Great Recession.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the so called Brexit (The Great Britain exiting EU) will negatively impact the US economy with volatile markets, revised FED rates and strong dollar which results in expensive products and low exports.<sup>3</sup>

The second pole of power, the EU, which is led by Germany and France, has been facing a public debt crisis that started with Greece and has grown steadily in many countries, such as Italy, the third largest economy in Europe. Many plans to bail out these countries have been launched, but haven't worked. Therefore, it seems that the European Union will be in trouble for a long time.

The Great Britain's decision of Leaving EU ('Brexit') will badly affect the EU and UK economy. As EU is the UK's biggest trade partner, which accounting for more than half of the trades between UK and EU, the growth of Britain's economy will depend on the future trade relationship between EU and the UK. Also, EU will become a less attractive partner at a time when it is only the second priority for the US and Japan and lower priority for many emerging countries.

**Figure1: Top Three Countries by Economic Dominance, % Share\* of Global Economic Power<sup>4</sup>**



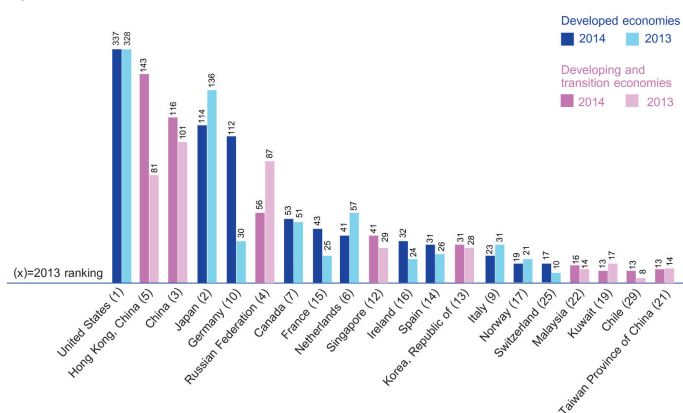
*\* Weighted by share of world GDP, trade and net capital exports*

It could be observed that civilizations generally last for about 400 years. Western Civilization, led by Europe has lasted for about 300 years. Later, the U.S. was a superpower for 100 years. However, there is a clear signal that the civilizations of the world led by the US and the West are declining and there are also signs of economic momentum moving away from America and Europe to other places. As illustrated in Figure 1, in the 1870s, economic dominance centered around the US and Western countries. In 1973, Japan replaced Germany at second rank. Then in 2010, China emerged and overtook Japan and the Western countries, with the US still being leader. However, by as soon as 2030, China is now expected to become a world economy leader, with the US in second place, India in third and the European countries stepping down. Moreover, the IMF forecasts the GDP of Emerging countries such as India, Mexico, Russia and Brazil to overtake the GDP of such developed countries as Germany, Britain and France by 2040.<sup>5</sup>

### An Over-Reliance on US and EU in Economics may bring the World towards Recession

The world has highly depended on the economies of the US and Europe. In 2013 & 2014, the US had the highest investment flow to all countries with the value of USD328 and 337 billion respectively, which contributed to economic growth and employment in other countries. After the US, major foreign outflows trend can be seen in China, Japan, Germany, Russian and Canada. Overall, most are western countries (Figure 2). When looking at the amount of foreign merchandising trade in the world, the United States had the highest amount of foreign trade, followed by China, Germany, France and Japan respectively (Figure 3). If not for the US and European countries, the world economy would have grown more slowly, to be less than at present.

**Figure 2: Top 20 Countries Foreign Investment to All Countries 2013 & 2014<sup>6</sup>**



**Figure 3: Leading Foreign Merchandising Trading Countries<sup>7</sup>**

Exporters			Importers		
	US\$ billions	% share		US\$ billions	% share
China	2343	12.4	US	2409	12.7
US	1623	8.6	China	1960	10.3
Germany	1511	8	Germany	1217	6.4

<b>Japan</b>	684	3.6	<b>Japan</b>	822	4.3
<b>Netherlands</b>	672	3.6	<b>UK</b>	683	3.6
<b>France</b>	583	3.1	<b>France</b>	679	3.6
<b>Korea</b>	573	3	<b>Hong Kong**</b>	601	3.2
<b>Italy</b>	529	2.8	<b>Netherlands</b>	587	3.2
<b>Hong Kong*</b>	524	2.8	<b>Korea</b>	526	3.1
<b>UK</b>	507	2.7	<b>Canada</b>	475	2.8

*\* Of which US\$ 508b are re-exports*

*\*\* Of which only US\$ 151 b are retained imports*

However, at present, the US is not as influential as it used to be. According to Jacob Lew, the US Treasury Secretary, “while the recovery in the U.S. economy has helped to drive global growth, the rest of the world cannot depend on the United States to be the sole engine of growth”.<sup>8</sup> Last year’s slump in oil prices that extended into early 2016 led to an 86 percent annualized plunge in capital spending on wells and shafts, the most in records back to 1958. Similarly, Soft export totals, less robust consumer spending and contracting business investment collectively dragged down GDP growth rate in 2016.

When the West declines, if there is no third pole of power, the world will fall deeply into problems, beginning with economic problems, leading to social problems and political conflict, as we have seen in Europe. To create a new balance by forming a real pole of new power could pull the world out of this recession, and would benefit the entire world, including the West. Therefore, it is necessary to have three poles of power in this era in order to realign the world in peace and to develop to its full potential.

### How to Create the World's Third Pole of Power?

The concept of integration as “BRICKSJAM” is herewith proposed, in which BRICKS in English refers to several bricks at the core, with JAM as the connectors. These will build a new integrated civilization outside the West.

### What is BRICKSJAM?

BRICKSJAM is an acronym of country names, with this group of countries selected for a reason. Each country in BRICKSJAM is important to a worldwide rise to power. These countries are;

### **1) B – Brazil**

Brazil's economy is the largest in South America, having just overtaken the UK as the ninth-largest economy in 2015. The advantage of Brazil is its vast population, forming a domestic market of 203 million. Though its population is smaller than China's 1.4 billion, Brazilians have much higher purchasing power on average. Moreover, Brazil also has a huge volume of natural resources, for example in minerals and fresh water. Importantly, Brazil has just found vast reserves of oil and gas, and the country is now the world's 12th largest oil producer.<sup>9</sup>

### **2) R – Russia**

Russia is a superpower and has its influence on many non-NATO members. The continuous expansion of Russia's economy has seen an average annual growth rate since 2000 of over 5 percent.<sup>10</sup> Russia is attractive due to its consumer market of over 142 million people, vast natural resources, a highly educated workforce, and technologically advanced research and production capabilities.<sup>11</sup>

### **3) I – India**

India is a rising superpower in Asia. With a population of about 1.2 billion, India is the world's largest democracy. India has had the highest growth rates in the mid-2000s, and is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.<sup>12</sup> According to the report 'Doing Business in India' by Ernst & Young, India is the second most preferred destination for foreign investors because India's workforce has a high number of highly skilled, educated, English speaking employees, with low wage rates<sup>13</sup>.

### **4) C – China**

China has the largest population in the world, totaling 1.4 billion. China's annual GDP growth has been about 10 percent for many years. China overtook Japan in 2010 to become the world's second largest economy behind the US. China will soon become the economic superpower that the US was in the mid-20th Century.<sup>14</sup>

### **5) K – South Korea**

South Korea is now the 11th largest economy in the world in terms of GDP (USD 1377 billion as of 2015). Korea now ranks 9th in world imports and 7th in world exports. From 1970 to 2010, Korea's trade volume surged over 300 times from less than USD 3 billion to USD 900 billion. At present, many Korean companies are performing highly on the global market. It was expected that

Korea will equal Italy before 2016 to become the world's 11th largest economy and it has achieved its goal.<sup>15</sup>

#### **6) S – South Africa**

South Africa is the economic leader of Africa, leading in industrial output and mineral production and generating a large proportion of Africa's electricity. This country has developed continuously due to its abundant natural resources, well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy and transport sectors, a stock exchange ranked among the top 20 in the world, and modern infrastructure supporting the efficient distribution of goods throughout the southern African region.<sup>16</sup>

#### **7) J – Japan**

Japan is the 3rd largest economy in the world behind the US and China with its industrial production growth rate highest among the G20 nations.<sup>17</sup> Japan is the 5th largest importer and exporter in the world. Moreover, the country is often ranked among the world's most innovative countries, leading several measures of global patent filings.<sup>18</sup> Japan has large numbers of global companies and SMEs that support global firms. Some Japanese SMEs, as well as large firms have the largest share in specific global markets. Japan has played an important role as a "bridge nation" connecting Asia and the world, which contributes to Asia's growth.<sup>19</sup>

#### **8) A – ASEAN**

The group's ten member countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) control 40 percent of the oil and gas resources in the Asia-Pacific region and boast a strong industrial base benefiting from relatively low wages.<sup>20</sup> ASEAN's regional advantages include its excellent location in connection with international trade, a large market of 560 million people, rich natural resources, skilled labor, and an export industry concentrated in global high-growth sectors. In 2015, The region became more comprehensively integrated to emerge as ASEAN Community, built on three pillars – economy, politics and security, along with its social and cultural pillars.<sup>21</sup>

#### **9) M – the Middle Eastern countries**

The Middle East is a region that includes southwest Asia and Egypt. Most of the countries located in the region have rich deposits of oil and therefore rely on mining to run the economy. These countries are both rich and poor. Rich countries are the Gulf State countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman) which will be the mainstay in the Middle East.<sup>22</sup>

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### Why BRICKSJAM?

There are many reasons to support BRICKSJAM as the solution for the new global balance:

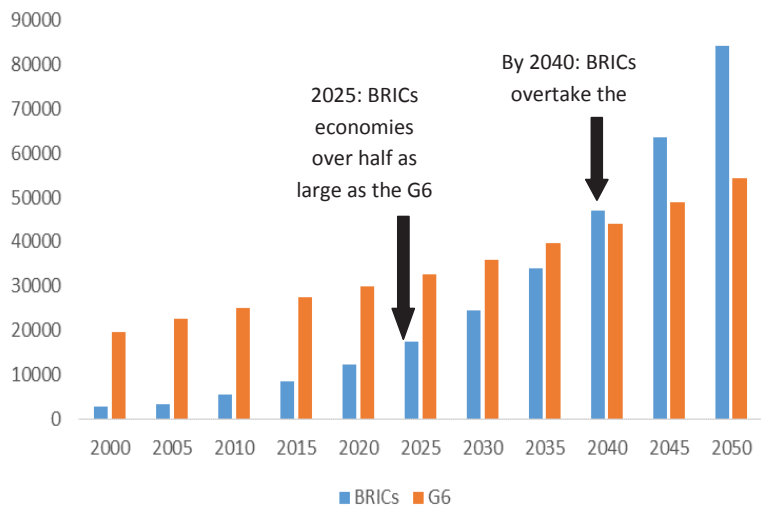
- **China alone is not Strong Enough to Replace the US and become the World Superpower**

Despite the fact that China is now the second largest economy of the world and expected to be the largest economy in the near future, China alone could not be a superpower, as the US once was. This is because China's economy is still volatile. China must still face the challenge of deflating its huge property bubble without creating a financial crisis. Another reason is that China has depended greatly on exports, making it vulnerable to crises in the rich world. Moreover, Chinese society is still in conflict. They have to manage their intensifying social conflicts. They also experience thousands of riots and strikes each year<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, China will need to cooperate with other alliances in order to create the new global balance.

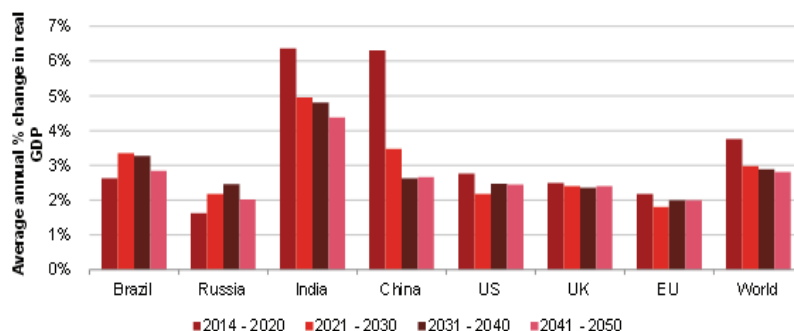
- **BRICs has High Potential, but is Still not Strong Enough**

BRICS is a high potential bloc. The BRIC's economy is growing at a pace with a prominent increase in China's economy. The economic size of BRICs, measured by GDP, has overtaken the economic size of many countries in Europe already. It is expected that BRICs' GDP will increase rapidly and will overtake the GDP of the G6 countries (France, Germany, UK, Spain, Italy and Poland) by 2040 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Economic Growth forecasts for BRICs<sup>24</sup>



It has been forecasted that BRICs will grow at a faster pace as compared to the US and EU. As Shown in Figure 5, China’s economy is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 6.3 percent for the remainder of this decade, but with a marked deceleration in the longer term beyond 2020. This is because, as China’s economy continues to mature, it is expected to transform from being an export-led to a consumption-driven economy. This process will be speed up by a rapidly aging population and increasing real labor costs. Rising costs will mean that many off-shored jobs are likely to exit China over time and move to other cheaper economies such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, Philippines and Indonesia, while Chinese exporters will find themselves competing more on the basis of quality rather than price in US and EU markets.

**Figure 5: Growth Projections for the BRICS, UK, US, EU & the World<sup>25</sup>**

Similarly, the Indian economy is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 6.4 per cent in 2014 –2020, but is likely to see some moderation in the longer term. However, its average growth rate should remain stronger than China after 2020 due to its younger population and greater scope for catch-up growth, but with a requirement of sustained economic reforms and increased investment in infrastructure, institutions and mass education (notably for women in rural areas).

However, BRICs alone can't become a superpower. All these countries still suffer from huge internal tensions due to high inequality and, in the case of India, growing corruption. Moreover, these countries only represent 20 percent of the gross world product in together. Similarly, India and Brazil are still small world economies, with 2.9 per cent and 2.4 percent of world output, while South Africa has 0.43 percent of world output.<sup>26</sup> BRICs are not strong enough to be a superpower because BRICs economies have not produced the kind of innovations and competitiveness critical to long-term global growth. Besides, they have over-depended on their governments in terms of economic development, with three out of four of China's biggest companies today under government control, which is an increase above half of what it was ten years ago.<sup>27</sup> In India, the government still essentially dictates what will be in the major business sectors, including retail and infrastructure. Therefore, by integrating BRICs with highly competitive and innovative countries, such as South Korea (K in BRICKSJAM) and Japan (J in BRICKSJAM), this bloc will increase its influence on the world economy.

### **How to create BRICKSJAM?**

When these countries join together, it will create, in the long run, a civilization outside the US and Western civilization that is weakening. The combination of BRICKSJAM will support and balance a world that is in the midst of problems. However, to create the new pole of power in the world, or the new civilization, economic, social, and political coordination is needed (just as a civilization will collapse where these elements are not synchronized). BRICKSJAM, at the beginning, needs to combine its economic, social, and political elements together, with ASEAN proposed as the core of the integration.

- **ASEAN has the Institutions that are Able to Support the Integration**

ASEAN countries have had a history and an institution of their own for at least fifty years, whereas other countries have not. ASEAN's institutional structure has been developed and based to a certain extent on political, security, economic, social and cultural aspects. Now, ASEAN countries will become the ASEAN Community in 2015, within the next three years.

ASEAN has expanded from ASEAN to ASEAN+3 or ASEAN+6. Therefore, the development of BRICKSJAM would not be difficult. The integration of BRICKSJAM could use the same kind of structure as utilized in ASEAN.

- **ASEAN is Composed of a Variety of Countries that can Associate with Any Group**

The ten countries of ASEAN can link to all the other countries in BRICKSJAM. For example, some ASEAN countries are Muslim countries that can link with the Muslim countries of the Middle East. Diversity in ASEAN countries at different levels of development and with harmless attitudes will usher in good cooperation for all parties.

### **What might be Obstacles to the Creation of BRICKSJAM?**

The integration of BRICKSJAM may encounter difficulties.

- **Internal Conflicts within BRICKSJAM (Especially with China)**

Though these countries are not historical competitors, there are political conflicts between each other at present.

Indian officials say their relationship with China has seldom been worse. The two nations have had conflict over borders and naval supremacy in the South China Sea, while Indonesia and Vietnam (ASEAN members) seek to counter

China's growing military might. Moreover, nearly every BRICs country feels annoyed and impatient about Beijing's undervalued currency.<sup>28</sup>

- **If no Appropriate Mechanism, there will be Negotiation Delays**

The framework for the Integration of BRICs must be well designed, combining South Korea, Japan, ASEAN and the Middle Eastern countries. Each country has different national interests and their own agenda and to have consensus within the group would seem very difficult and take a long time to negotiate. This is also a problem in other multilateral agreements.

Besides the concerns presented above, there are still many other issues to consider, such as the level of the integration, mechanisms and structures of power, etc. Further serious discussion and debate on these issues is needed.

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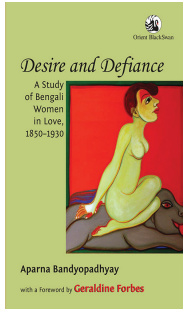
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# Book Review I

By

Sarvani Gooptu \*



**Aparna Bandopadhyay, *Desire and Defiance: A study of Bengali women in love (1850-1930)* (Orient Blackswan: Hyderabad, 2016)**

Aparna Bandopadhyay's *Desire and Defiance: A study of Bengali women in love (1850-1930)* is a relevant study today considering the apparent dichotomy of attempted experimentation of bringing out of the closet, women's sexuality and covert defiance through popular cinema in films like *Arth*, *Paroma*, *Astitva*,

*Kabhi Alvida naa kehna*, or the recent *Lipstick under my burkha* and the proliferation of real life incidents of clampdown on expressions of freedom of Indian women all over the country. Bandopadhyay's work would be most welcome to women today as testimony that some Indian women have never allowed social conventions or socio-legal constraints to control or determine their affect and sexuality. This book deals with the phenomenon of women in love as well as the resultant action and repercussions she faced through the different chapters, using a very large amount of evidence from different primary sources like archival records, newspaper and journals, biographies as well as secondary evidence. In the book she creates first the ambience of women's desire and defiance in the first two chapters and then in the next four she outlines how women act as a result of their affect and how society, media and the judiciary act in conjunction to subvert her agency. Bandopadhyay has tried through the book to seek a feminist significance of

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\*Sarvani Gooptu is Professor Asian Literary and Cultural studies, Netaji Institute for Asian Studies.  
Email: sarvanigooptu@gmail.com  
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women's transgression through love in the face of patriarchal social control of their affect and desire.

The history of emotion in Bengali life has been explored by scholars in the past few decades though Bandyopadhyay's book is unique in its aim to outline though detailed descriptive examples the fact that the women in love in the 80 years between 1850 and 1930 were not passive victims of emotion or control but rather active in the exercise of their choice. She starts the book with a discussion about marriages of choice, inter- caste or inter-religious and their inevitable rejection by their families and society. Sometimes the support by some women members of the family- sisters, mother or even friends was significant. (p. 61) In this context Bandyopadhyay discusses the differences in the Brahmo Samaj Marriage Act and how it affected the Bengali society and how it was viewed with suspicion by the Hindu press and educated elite. In this context she also discusses the search of women for legitimacy for their emotional choice from within the society or through extra social unconventional means like conversion.

Chapter 2 is a masterly discussion on the Bengali novel and its readers. It is a testimony to the author's wide reading as she surveys the novels of the time and their criticism – literary and otherwise. There is an interesting discussion on the reading habits of women in Gautam Bhadra's work on the reading habits of the Bengalis (*Bangalir Bangla Boi pora, Nyara Bottolay jay ko bar, Chhatim, Kolkata p.79*) where he discusses about the Rashsundari Debi dreaming about reading and then reliving that dream during the day, fearful all the time that her deviance would be discovered. It was this very notion of privacy that women enjoyed through reading, not only religious literature but novels as well, that the society could not afford to give their women. Bandyopadhyay shows how women's novel reading habits were attacked summarily by all sections of the society and it was considered to be the real reason for their deviance. The very fact of women having a private mental world was probably unacceptable for patriarchy. Yet surprisingly, novels written by women though they too dealt with love outside marriage and social defiance, there was very little social censure towards them. This was even more surprising since the male novelists who wrote on similar subjects, especially Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, were attacked viciously. As Bandyopadhyay says, "women authors were patronised, acclaimed and at worst ignored by the critical establishment". (p. 123). It is possible of course that the Hindu-revivalist-nationalists who attacked male novelists wanted to marginalise the women writers in the hope that they would not make any impact on the reading public at all.

Chapter 3 deals with 'deviance' of single and married women emotionally and physically and the consequences they faced in this regard, the punitive

measures taken socially as well as legally. Not only ostracism but some Brahmo women were punished by defaming them in the newspapers and magazines edited by Hindu intelligentsia who not only blamed English education but also Brahmo social rules for this 'spirit of licentiousness and a sense of freedom'. The writer asserts that she could not find any evidence for the allegations that were raised in the press and in fact believes that it was the 'non-consensual character of Hindu marriage, lack of opportunity for divorce and remarriage as well as the dogged societal resistance to the idea of widow remarriage that rendered Hindu wives and widows more susceptible to non-marital involvements.' (p. 150) This opens up an interesting angle which the author could have probed further which was whether this was a part of a larger tussle existing within the society related to the Brahmo movement whose 'modernity' and 'liberality' regarding women may have been looked upon as a threat to the 'traditional values' which were clung to by Hindu intelligentsia. The chapter also has an excellent section on the non-marital relationships of the widows and the collaboration between the traditional and colonial instruments of punitive justice. Interestingly these 'transgressive women' were not passive victims of the patriarchy and fought legal battles to fight for their rights.

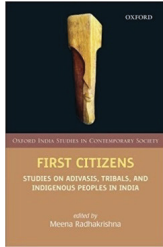
Chapter 4 deals with elopement and cohabitation and how women's role in elopement was perceived and handled differently from that of a man by society, media and the colonial judiciary. -after all the word 'kulatyagini' (deserting her kul or family/society which was the repository of honour and respectability) referred to the woman and not the man who was accompanying her. This transgression of leaving her family was a punishment as it indicated ostracism yet it was an act of defiance by the deviant woman, an active agency for the woman since the severance was irreversible unlike in the case of the deviant man. The guardians of the women always tried to subvert this agency by making the woman a victim of transgression rather than an active transgressor in which the media and the judiciary were active conspirators. In the next chapter she deals with how the society pushed the so called deviant women towards the social edge and at attempts to rehabilitate them, though these attempts were sometimes too stifling for women. In the final chapter Bandyopadhyay brings in an interesting deviance in the narrative by assessing how the 'Hindu nationalist intelligentsia deployed their knowledge of a psychopathological category like hysteria, appropriated from the West, to launch a cultural critique of the west'. (p.234)

It is to the credit of her writing ability that despite the very large number of examples and evidence that Bandyopadhyay uses in her book, she never makes it boring or cumbersome. In fact the book is a very interesting read not only for those with an academic interest but also for the general reader.

# Book Review II

By

Mihir Bhonsale\*



**Meena Radhakrishna (ed.), *First Citizens-Studies on Adivasis, Tribals, and Indigenous Peoples in India*** (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2016)

The title of the book makes a deliberate reference to “First Nations”, an ethnonym for indigenous people living in North America, Latin America and Australia. The title under review “First Citizens” is chosen to situate the adivasis, tribals and indigenous people of India amongst the world’s first, original people and hence world’s first citizens.

Divided in three parts the authors of this edited volume highlight the various dimensions of the indigenity discourse in India while situating them in the global context. As the editor states in the introduction, the book is an attempt at breaking away from the shackles of anthropological studies in India that often has defined their disciplinary boundaries according to administrative criteria. Hence, the book seeks to go beyond administrative nomenclatures and includes similarly placed communities that have been subjected to similar historical processes and destitution.

Contributors in the first part of this volume, ‘Categories and Identities as Historical Process’ traces the evolution of the overlapping colonial administrative categories of race, tribe or indigenous people. Virinus Xaxa in his chapter traces the origins of the term indigenous to the nineteenth century when the term indigenous was used for non-Europeans living in colonies. Indigenous has an equivalent word “adivasi” in India excluding north and

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\*Mihir Bhonsale is a PhD Candidate at University of Calcutta and a Junior Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata. Email: mihirshekhharb@gmail.com  
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northeast that was first used in Jharkhand by the communities themselves though the idea underlying the concept of adivasi or indigenous originated from British administrator-scholars, ethnographers and missionaries. Savyasaachi, in his chapter writes that primitive accumulation of capital cannot recognize labour potential of adivasi people. The author of this chapter suggests, so long as labour and economy are in the state of nature, they cannot have an exchange value and hence labour is constituted in relation of alterity with nature, labour potential cannot be recognized. Adivasi sensibility is at loggerheads with the primitive accumulation of capital and an insurgency is an expression of this disavowal, Savyasaachi argues.

Conversions and identity formation among adivasis in Orissa and in North-East India are discussed by Bishomoy Pati and David Vumlallian Zou. Through the example of colonial and present day Orissa, Pati contests the myth that Hinduism is a non-proselytizing religion. Through the rituals of purification or "Shuddhikaran", initial converts to Christianity were recovered through re-Hinduization. Zou discusses the role of proselytizing religions as catalysts of social change and new political possibilities. Two missionary sects viz. the Protestants and Vaishnavities left an indelible mark in the plains as well as hills in northeast India. While religious change assisted the process of Sanskritization in sixteenth century Assam and eighteenth century Manipur, Christian conversion of hill peoples spoke the idiom of modernization.

Rudolf C. Heredia in the chapter calls for going beyond 'vague' descriptions of indigenous or colonial administrative categories or an ideological category. A historical-evolutionary approach is what needs to be taken for deciphering folklore metaphors and symbols for tracing the past of the people. The chapter by Arjun Rathva, Dhananjay Rai and N. Rajaram discusses the implications of the move of denotification of the Rathvas as adivasis in Gujarat.

The second part of the book, 'Destruction, Loss, Dislocation', begins with a chapter by Felix Padel who posits a contrast between the adivasi idea of sustainability and modern definitions of sustainable development. Adivasi accord value community and sharing in stark contrast to mainstream societies that give emphasis on private property and controlling nature for maximizing production and profit. The idea of sustainable development ignores the contested nature of the meaning of development.

Indrani Mazumdar and Sarit K. Bhowmik in their respective chapters, list some of the historical causes of large-scale adivasi migration and integration into developing markets and absorption into the informal economy. Mazumdar's chapter with a focus on women shows how from the late nineteenth century migration has remained an evil necessity and not a choice

for Adivasi women as a whole. Bhowmik shows how, modern-day organizations of workers like trade unions act as mitigators of inter-ethnic conflict in tea gardens of West Bengal and Assam. Neetha N. explores an important area of migration of Adivasi women for domestic work and how migration brings about a transformation in their identity.

The third section of the book "Negotiations and Redressals" discusses the intervention of law and its effects on adivasi and indigenous communities. The chapters ask whether the legislations like Forest Rights Act (FRA) and Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 (PESA) have led to the empowerment of Adivasis or are mere devices in the hand of the state dominating the Adivasi communities? The FRA is subjected to critique in chapters by SudhaVasan and Madhu Sarin. Vasan suggests FRA must be evaluated against the success of implementing individual private property rights in forest land and shifting focus away from collective rights. Sarin in her chapter shows how poor recognition of customary communal tenures and resource rights in forest property-based administrative revenue system of British is the root cause of marginalization of India's indigenous communities.

Archana Prasad in her chapter deals with the evolution of adivasi political consciousness as opposed to the state in the post independent India. The author identifies two major strands of political formations the class-based and non-class, identity-based adivasi formulations.

The final chapter by Ashish Kothari and Neema Pathak Broome is an attempt at documenting some of the initiatives by Adivasis to conserve their own resources in the wake of an attack on adivasi habitats and livelihoods. The editor of this book has written two pieces besides introducing the volume, Radhakrishna in the epilogue. Radhakrishna establishes that the environment movement is divided on the FRA. She also posits the dilemma that mining poses to environment movement.

The book through its multi-pronged approach of discussing ethnic life-worlds of the subject (i.e. indigenous people) succinctly foregrounds their struggle as a common identity and right. Having said this, the book has touched little on the lived culture of the indigenous people including language, folk-traditions, mythology etc. which forms a distinct part of their ethnic life-worlds and is a distinct part of their identity struggle.

## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles submitted for consideration of publication in **IAAPS Perspective** should be around 3500 words. Book Reviews can be around 1000 words and review articles can be around 1500 words. Articles will have endnotes. Endnotes should be restricted to the minimum. Enquiries about possible submissions are welcome.

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