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Debating the Principles of Fairness and the Affirmative Action

- Dasarathi Bhuiyan

Introduction

For most of us who are born and live in India, social inequality and exclusion are facts of life. Social inequality is a product of Hindu caste ridden society. Two third of India's population are socially, economically and educationally backward. The social hierarchy of the Indian society operating through several centuries imposed a number of burdens on the so called lower classes. The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and women have long suffered from discrimination and exclusion. The discrimination and exclusion experienced by these groups has resulted in severe deprivation and poverty.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes comprise about 16.6% and 8.6%, respectively, of India's population. A tribe possesses certain characteristics that make it a unique cultural, social, and political entity. They are called by different names such as "primitive, 'tribal,' 'indigenous,' 'aboriginal,' 'native,' and so on. Adivasi is a generic term for this group. They are officially recognized by the Indian government as the "Scheduled Tribes" in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The constitution of India, Article 366 (25) defines Scheduled Tribes as "such Tribes or tribal communities or part of groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to the scheduled tribes (STs) for the purposes of this constitution "in Article 342, the procedure to be followed for specification of a scheduled tribe is prescribed. However, it does not contain the criterion for the specification any community as scheduled tribe. An often used criterion is based on attributes such as:

1. **Geographical Isolation-** they live in cloistered, exclusive, remote and inhospitable areas such as hills and forests.
2. **Backwardness-**their livelihood is based on primitive agriculture, a low-value closed economy with low levels of literacy and health.
3. **Distinctive Culture, Language and Religion-** communities have developed their own distinctive culture, language and religion.
4. **Shyness of Contacts-** they have a marginal degree of contact with other cultures and people.

The scheduled tribe groups who were identified as more backward communities among the tribal population groups have been categorized as 'Primitive Tribal Groups'(PTGs) by the government at the centre in 1975. Although terms such as *atavika*, *vanavasi* ("forest dwellers"), or *girijan* ("hill people") are also used for the tribes of India, *adivāsi* carries the specific meaning of being the original and autochthonous inhabitants of a given region, and was specifically coined for that purpose in the 1930s. (Barnes, Gray and Kingsbury 1995) All tribal groups refer collectively to themselves by using the English word "tribes". There are 461 tribal groups in India out of which 424 are considered as the Schedule Tribes.

The Scheduled Castes are also known as Dalits refers to the untouchable castes. In the annals of Indian history, Scheduled Castes were referred to with different nomenclatures like-Chandals, Avarnas, Achhuts, Adi-dravidia, depressed classes, oppressed Hindus, Harijans, etc. at different points of time. The Hindi term *Dalit* had a longer exposure in India through two divergent personalities. Mahatma Gandhi coined the term *Harijan*" (God's people) for the Dalit untouchables and his approach was one of compassion and amelioration. Scheduled Castes are underprivileged in all social, economic and political fronts which lead to their misery, discrimination, exploitation and oppression by the caste dominated society. The overall percentage of Scheduled Castes in India is 16.23 per cent. They are underprivileged in all social, economic and political fronts which, leads to their misery, discrimination, exploitation and oppression by the caste dominated society. Attempts by Dalits and Adivasis to secure their human rights and lawful entitlements have sometimes been met with resistance, and even violence, including from representatives of the state. Inequality and social exclusion have a gendered aspect as well (Ghurye 1980).

This pitiable condition of Scheduled Castes was seen and well addressed by some eminent social and political philosophers like Joytiba Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and others and during their long careers they had taken some remedial; measures in order to raise their social status. Throughout the

century they have been victimized religiously, socially, culturally and most of all economically.

Pattern of Exclusion

Inequality has a face and a history: some groups have been systematically held back over centuries, while others have held the majority of power and assets (Human Development Report 2018: 3). In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality.” This tension between policies and practice remains to this day. While in some cases social and economic inequality is decreasing, those facing multiple inequalities in particular remain deeply marginalised. (Dreze and Sen 2001) In India, the list of groups experiencing some form of inequality or social exclusion is great, although perhaps most frequently mentioned, and most numerous, are the Dalits (Scheduled Castes) and Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes), who together make up about a quarter of the population of India. Their exclusion is reflected in a lack of access (or unequal access) to political institutions, to public services (education, health care), to public places (police stations, government ration shops, post offices, schools, water facilities and village council offices), and to income-earning assets (in particular, land), among many others.

(i) Identity-Related Issues: Identity markers (particularly dress pattern of physical appearances of STs) often lead to discrimination by people and institutions. Pattern of exclusion includes-

(ii) Educational Issues: Literacy rates among the Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes are not increasing fast enough to converge with literacy rates of other groups. The percentage of SC and ST children who never attended school is high. Dropout rates are the highest among the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and this seems to go up significantly after middle school. School enrolments rates are interestingly have *improved* in recent years. Limited access to good quality schools is a major problem that affects female students of these communities. Apart from education, employment is the other major concern. Low participation in government jobs is partly seen as a result of discrimination. This, coupled with low bargaining power of workers, results in low incomes. This discrimination in various economic areas coexists with low political participation

(iii) Exclusion from Goods and Services: The location of public goods, its accessibility and ability to pay are a few factors leading to exclusion. Poverty has been viewed as an important factor leading to exclusion in terms of low consumption levels, education and health care.

(v) Exclusion from Land: The exclusion from land is a critical issue which is

widely associated with poverty and insecurity. Land is not only a source of livelihood but also of social integration in a broader sense.

(vi) Exclusion and Macro-Economic Eevelopment: Differences in the development paths and in macro-economic and structural adjustment strategies imply equally varied patterns of social exclusion. Similar aggregate economic development may lead to quite different patterns of income inequality, quite different patterns of distribution of the benefits of the growth. In this context, the institutional arrangements which mediate between economic and social development are crucial.

(viii) Employment Issues: The conditions of work are more precarious for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and women workers than most other workers. Their earnings are relatively low among regular workers. In other words, their participation in the informal sector is much higher than most other Social Religious Communities, especially in own account trade and manufacturing enterprises. A detailed analysis of employment in different government departments also revealed that the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes representation is very low and very often they are located in low-end jobs., a large section of Dalits still work in the “lowest” occupations (being at the very bottom of the occupational hierarchy, even a small shift results in upwards mobility) and only few are in the upper occupations (Deshpande and Palshikar 2008).

(ix) Access to Infrastructure and Other Facilities: Access to health facilities is very poor for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Muslims. The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women have very poor access to tap water and their households have the lowest access to this facility. Larger proportions lives in cuchia houses and have no access to toilets. Broadly, the availability of *other* facilities like bus, road and medical is relatively less in *small* villages with a high density of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population.

(xi) Living Standards and Poverty: In general, the mean per capita consumption expenditure is low for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In rural areas, the intensity of poverty is clearly visible among the SCs/STs.

(xii) Internal Differentiation: Internal differentiation in the community is a reality. There are several sub-castes within the SCs and STs that divides themselves.

Compensation for Historical Wrongs

What does it mean to say that a group of people is entitled to compensation as a result of a given act of injustice? The whole point of compensation is to provide

counter-balancing benefits to offset losses. (EAI Center for Values & Ethics) Inequality is a big challenge in building a just and impartial society. Our constitution makers realized that the upper echelons of society are always taking the socio-economic advantage and the lower classes are being deprived of it. The key to building an egalitarian society by addressing these disparities was reservation. According to the reservation policy, restrictions were imposed on the upper classes and certain privileges were given to the lower classes. The big argument behind this is that the marginalized sections of society, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and Women, have been deprived of equal opportunities and have been marginalized for centuries. So the reservation policy was applied to compensate them. Such programmes were named as Protective Discrimination, Reverse Discrimination, Affirmative Action Policies, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, and Redistribution of Resources and so on. Various forms of this policy include job protection and access to educational institutions, age reduction, special training programmes, financial assistance, quotas, and so on. It is to bring special benefits to the victims of socially excluded and bring them into the mainstream of society (Galanter 2002).

Whether Affirmative Action Violates Principles of Fairness?

Affirmative action is a process of social inclusion. It is understood as a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, so that they can achieve their full potential in life. Whether affirmative action violates principles of fairness or not depends on three concepts of distributive justice i.e. “Deserve”, “Equality” and “Need”. The first concept of “Deserve” rejects the notion of “Affirmative Action”. The second concept of “Equality” conditionally supports to “Affirmative Action”. The third aspect “Need” based distributive justice fully supports “Affirmative Action”. The three concepts of distributive discrimination that either rejects or supports are discussed below.

Deservedness: The concept of deservedness is also known as desert. People get what they deserve on the basis of the efforts they make. A person's idea of a just reward depends on his effort. Reward is a function of inputs given by an individual. One person's claim to the deservedness will be higher one's effort is more than the other person's effort. Only in such a scenario an individual is motivated enough to be more productive for him as well as society, since the incentive gives an inner urge to excel. Morally also, it is argued that getting of what is deserved is “just” and not getting what is deserved is “unjust”. Now what can be the measure of deservability, the base for a 'desert'? So the desert principle becomes one of the basis on which any special consideration to any

individual or group of individuals is considered to be unwarranted besides his deservedness, be it past discrimination, social disadvantage, race or caste. So this principle may not agree with the measures for “Affirmative Action”. So a 'fair' society will be the one which distributes goods to the individual in proportionality of the inputs and efforts. People having greater productivity ought to be rewarded and those who have not must not be compensated from the hard work of the others. Thus any policy of affirmative action will be a complete violation of “fairness” according to the principle of “desert”. David Miller notes that 'merit' is used to refer to a person's admirable qualities whereas 'desert' is used in cases in which someone is responsible for a particular result. (Miller 1999)

Equality: This principle believes that in order to bring equality among the people in their income and resources the state interference is necessary. It is important to understand that social integration is not an end-state that societies can achieve, but a dynamic process in which societies engage in order to further human development. (United Nations 2007) Both the privileged and unprivileged sections of the society often come into clash with each other when they try to protect their interests. It is the function of the state to maintain peace by keeping this conflict within limits. The government achieves this objective by trying to fulfill the just demands of each section. This involves a changing allocation of resources. Thus in most democratic countries there is progressive taxation through which the rich are taxed more than the poor; the resources so obtained are then utilized more for the welfare of the poor. In this way, resources are transferred from the rich to the poor. Thus governmental policy determines the allocation of resources among the various sections of the people. Intervention in the liberties of the individuals is justified. Thus, such steps by the state may be the 'affirmative action or 'progressive taxation' or any other redistributive programme. In short Equality for them is a prior concern than Liberty. Equality means 'equality of opportunity 'for all.

Need: This principle believes that in order to establish an Egalitarian society all people should get equal material goods and services since all the humans are equal. Any step to equalize the people in terms of income and resources by the state the intervention in the liberties of the individuals by the state is inevitable. To achieve it the state may take steps like the 'affirmative action or 'progressive taxation' or any other redistributive programme. In short Equality for them is a prior concern than Liberty. It is not possible nor is it desirable to equalize the outcomes of distribution in a society, there must be a formal 'equality of opportunity 'for all. Luck should not play a part in determining the access to the opportunities people get in their lives.

Different Views on Affirmative Action

Robert Nozick's View: Robert Nozick opposes to the redistribution of resources by the state for any purpose. Either for the welfare of the society, upliftment of the downtrodden or common good he is an ardent critic of it. Though his argument seems very simple but it a forceful appeal for the autonomy of the individual. Nozick theory of justice is known as “The Entitlement Theory”. His theory is basically a libertarian criticism of Rawls conception of “justice as fairness”. (Nozick 1981) Nozick gives three very basic principles of his 'Entitlement Theory' to answer this question: A justice in distribution can be said to be taking place if there is

- (a) Justice in acquisition- A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to that holding.
- (b) Justice in Transfer- A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principles of justice in transfer from someone else entitled to the holding is entitled to the holding.
- (c) Rectification of injustice- No one is entitled to a holding except by (repeated) application of (a) and (b).

John Rawls's View: Rawls is famous for his contemporary discourse on Justice. He has propounded his theory of justice “Justice as Fairness” in which he believes that in order to compensate for the inequalities faced by the deprived in the society an unequal distribution of the resources and primary goods in by the state may be considered just. (Rawls 1971) Rawls is basically against Utilitarian notion of justice, which says that the actions on the part of the state which benefit the greatest number of people are best guarantee of justice being done.

Challenging the tenets of Utilitarianism, Rawls says that Justice as Fairness must be the virtue on which all the social and political institutions of the society must be based. But how to arrive at principles of Justice which are just and fair to all? Basic problem here is what ever principles of justice we may try to derive; our biases arising out of our social, economic and political identity are bound to hamper their fairness. Because we know our particular standing in the society (caste, class, religion, talents etc) we are most likely to create laws which will support our particular identity. To overcome such a scenario and to arrive at principles of justice which are fair to all, Rawls proposes a thought experiment. This is a hypothetical Social Contract, initial stage of which is called “The Original Position”. Here people are blinded about their social standing behind a “veil of ignorance”. “They are supposed to know a very thin (blurred) version of what is good for them .People are ignorant about [their] place in society [their] position in respect of class or social status. Further,

[they] do not know specific details of the society [they] inhabit.” Rawls argues, in such a situation where individuals are unknown to their social information, two principles of justice are arrived at with consensus:

1. “Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all; and
2. Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:
 - a). To the greatest benefit of the least advantaged... and
 - b). Attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair opportunity”

David Wiggins's View: David Wiggins provides a critique of the existing notions of justice. With the intention of establishing idea of meeting “need” as the basic criteria on which distributive justice need to be based. He believes that enough consideration has never been given to the philosophy of “human need”. He strongly feels that there should be an intimate connection between the needs of human beings and their abstract rights. Providing a critique of Rawls and Nozick he asserts that what they have merely provided is a single dimensional view of justice either based upon entitlement or assumed notion of fairness, but he adds, justice will be difficult to be accomplished fully if it fails to achieve a multidimensional proportion. For Wiggins justice in itself may contain many ideas which need to be achieved in each sphere of human life because a human life is multidimensional and in each sphere there must be a semblance of justice by meeting basic human needs, then only justice would have occurred in a substantial sense.

For him delineating the concept of pure need actually provides the notion of “need” a moral undertone which gives “need” argument a humanistic force. The critiques try to mix “need” with “desires”, “wishes” and “want” and try to take away the moral component from the argument.

But Wiggins propounds that there is a difference between “need” and “want”. Need must not be reduced as a mere urge to have something like “desire” or “want”. He elaborates that “need” may be a “pure instrumental need” a means in order to have something, or it can be an “absolute” need without which the life will be blighted or harmed. Former are the needs which are more materialistic like having something in order to feel comfort but the latter are the ones whose absence will actually harm anybody's life or make it miserable for e.g. access to pure drinking water. This is the second type of need, the non instrumental “absolute” needs, which Wiggins argues must determine the parameters of justice. Having delineated “need” from “whims” “desires” and “wants” and types of need Wiggins puts forward his argument as to why

meeting an “absolute” need must become the criteria of justice.

Gopal Guru's View: An Indian scholar Gopal Guru gives an interesting and alternate view regarding social/distributive justice and 'protective discrimination'. (Guru 2005) He is against the government of India's measures to promote Social Justice, such as 'protective discrimination'. His view can be aptly termed as a distinct view from “below” the initiation should start from the victims. It should not be imposed from above by the government. He says that it will not be fair if the agenda of social justice is not set by the victims themselves and is implanted over them. The fair situation will be only when the victims get a chance to question and uproot the inherent structures of discrimination. The modern welfarist state, he argues, has appropriated the agenda for Social Justice and has coined its protocol in terms of “compensatory justice”, which at best is an ad-hoc and superficial attempt. While the “contest” or the “struggle” notion of justice, which questions the modes, structures and institutions of discrimination has been advertently hidden from the debate.

Arguments Favouring Affirmative Action

- A) Redress the historical deprivation and discrimination: Affirmative action is essential to redress the historical deprivation, discrimination and societal imbalance.
- B) It brings the marginalised groups to mainstream: Without Affirmative action measures the marginalized groups will never be linked to the mainstream, since it is the only avenue which opens the doors for them for assimilation in to the broader society.
- C) It ensures social justice: It ensures social justice by distributing the resources in accordance to the needs of the individuals rather than just looking at its merit at a macro level.
- D) Unequal's are treated equally through protective discrimination: Equality of opportunity does not suffice rather equality of outcome has to be the guiding principle. How can unequals be treated equally, only affirmative action can lead us to a truly competitive society in the long run.
- E) Materially help and psychologically hope: Social exclusion does not only limit itself to segregation and deprivation. Social seclusion and isolation also provide a base for a sense of superiority and inferiority among members of the same society or culture. It also culminates in a system of domination and subjugation. All these processes ultimately lead to oppression and exploitation. Thus, affirmative action acts as a trigger of inspiration and hope for the hitherto deprived and discriminated groups, not only materially but psychologically as well.

- F) Liberty, Equality and Justice, are made complimentary instead of contradictory: Liberty, Equality and Justice, instead of being contradictory, are, indeed complimentary to each other. Thus affirmative action or social justice measures are much needed steps to realize these ideals.

Critique of the Affirmative Action

Many people are opposed to affirmative action because they believe it violates a sense of fairness. According to Stanley Coren, people tend to feel that the world is where people generally get what they deserve and deserve what they get. Those who are rewarded must be good, and those who must deserve their fate. The following points are raised against affirmative action and positive discrimination:

1. **Merit Argument:** The Merit principle says that social goods should be allotted on the basis of one's merit or ability, whether natural or acquired. Admission to the institutions of higher education or appointment to the state's services should be selected on the basis of their individual merit, i.e., their ability in terms of achievement of certain grades or marks in an objective test, generally a test of intelligence plus knowledge held for that purpose. Supporters of this principle claim that it assures best justice in so far as it allocates the rewards or goods on the basis of an objective criterion having nothing to do with such personal characteristics of an individual such as his birth, race, colour, sex, caste etc. Jodhka and Newman (2007), in an employer attitude survey, find that employers, including MNCs, universally use the language of merit.
2. **Rights Argument:** The affirmative action is also criticised on the ground of violation of the theory of rights. It is generally argued that affirmative action in favour of one group is discriminatory against others who are denied the same benefits, and this is itself a denial of equality, which is the right of every individual as an individual and not as a member of any group and therefore, cannot be denied to him simply because he is labelled as a member of an advanced group etc. because another individual is labeled as belonging to a backward group. Every citizen has a constitutional right that he is not made to suffer disadvantages, at least in a competition for any public benefit, because the race or religion or section or region or other natural or artificial group of which he is a member is the object of prejudice or contempt. Prof Andre Beteille, in an incisive article on "Distributive Justice and Institutional Well Being" articulates a critique of the "group rights" argument. He argues that at a deeper level, the caste system has changed fundamentally. The moral claims of castes over their individual members have weakened at all levels of society, and especially in the urban

middle class where the battle over benign discrimination is being fought. It will be safe to say that no caste today has the moral authority to enforce on its middle class members any of its traditional sanctions.

3. **Efficiency Argument:** It is implicit in the idea of positive discrimination that a less meritorious person is preferred to another who is more meritorious. The supporters of this argument stress on the point that if for redressing grievances of the past, we undermine the efficiency of public institutions; we would be doing unimaginable harm to the generations to come. However, the proponents of this argument should also understand that by segregating a few sections from public space could do more harm than the quest for efficiency, which they seek to achieve at the cost of social fragmentation.
4. **Balkanisation Argument:** It has been noted above that positive discrimination underlines class, caste and race differences and enhances social divisions, which are already acute in the Indian socio-political system. Affirmative programmes tend to consolidate a caste ridden and racially conscious society already divided into racial and ethnic groups, each entitled as a group to some proportionate share of resources, careers or opportunities.

The extension of reservations, first, for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and then to the Other Backward Classes (OBC), has already caused a lot of friction and led to the tremendous recriminations. Now, the economically weaker sections amongst the forwards too are demanding reservations. Demands by Christians and Muslims for reservations, though subdued now, are being made. That turns the whole concept of positive discrimination into a political tool, seeking to perpetuate the policy of reservations and dividing the people rather than encouraging them to stand on their own and compete in a world of excellence. All this leads to an acute kind of anxiety about the integrity of the country.

The proponents of positive discrimination respond to this type of argument by terming it as a displaced argument trying to discredit the affirmative action programme. Their argument is that failure on the implementation front should not be the reason to discard the policy itself. Prof. Dworkin responding to the argument of balkanisation in the American context, dispels the fear that affirmative action programmes are designed to produce a balkanised America, divided into racial and ethnic sub-nations. They use strong measures to uplift the weaker and the deprived or else they will fail, but their ultimate goal is to lessen and not increase the importance of race in American social and professional life.

One-sided and Biased Practice: Affirmative action favours particular individuals or groups. It is meant for a particular caste, class, religion, sex, race

of the society. So that it is a one-sided and biased practice.

Neglects of the merit: Affirmative action neglects merit: By reserving seats in favour of a particular class, section, group of people it is going against the standards set for a particular job. It is a denial of the right to equality which is guaranteed under the constitution as a fundamental right.

1. **Penalty for the present generation:** Social exclusion is an institutionalised and socially/religiously sanctioned attempt since unknown past. It was not generated by the present generation. Therefore, present generation should not be penalized in form of reverse discrimination for acts such as untouchability practiced in the past by their predecessors.
2. **Failed to benefit the real needy people:** Benefits of the Affirmative action policies have actually failed to reach those who need it the most due to lack of “trickledown effect”. The powerful and opportunists in the unprivileged sections benefited in the name of protective discrimination.
3. **Inequality is natural:** Nature has made inequalities in body and mind of the people. Actual equality by the efforts of the state is impossible. Since inequality is natural hence there should not be a deliberate effort on the part of the state to eliminate it; instead, there should be the survival of the fittest.

Conclusion

Our society has always been full of inequalities. It is a stratified hierarchical society. A particular segment of the society had been denied the human rights. Their education, wages, living conditions, social status was dictated by the whims of upper strata of society, reducing them to destitution. This inhumane condition perpetuated for centuries. Any democratic society faces the challenge of harmonising two essentially contradictory political concepts--one, equality before the law irrespective of religion, caste, creed, race, and gender, and the other, social justice at the cost of the same commitment for equality before the law. In India large numbers of people have experienced social discrimination through centuries on account of its peculiar institution called the caste system, efforts have been made to provide redress for these under-privileged sections, through the policy of reservations or quotas for them in jobs, seats in educational institutions and legislatures, and in governmental aid, loans and other developmental assistance. The need to discriminate positively in favour of the socially underprivileged was felt and the state taken affirmative action in order to bring equality in society in the form of Protective discrimination. It is the policy of granting special privileges to the downtrodden and the underprivileged sections of society.

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Friedrich Nietzsche and Sri Aurobindo on Superman: A Comparative Analysis

- Abha Chauhan Khimta

The Conflicts and confusions have prevailed almost everywhere in the world are some of the signs of evolution in the life of the individual. Mystics and prophets of all ages and climes have averred that the brightest dawns are always preceded by the darkest Nights. Evolution of human race has remained a natural course of the nature. Since ages many philosophers has been fascinated by the idea of evolution of man into a new species. The ideal of the superman has been brought into notice. It is a call to man to do what no species has yet done or aspired to do. The replacement of present imperfect man by future perfect man has remained the basic idea behind the visualisation of superman by many philosophers. Thus many philosophers like Nietzsche, Teilhard and Bernard Shaw brought the ideal of superman hood into notice. Friedrich Nietzsche propagated the idea of new race of superman.

Friedrich Nietzsche echoed the tone of mid Victorian cowardice of the English Darwinians, the bourgeois respectability of French positivists and German socialists that if life is a struggle for existence in which the fittest survive the strength is the ultimate virtue and weakness the only fault. Good is that which survives and wins while bad is that which gives way and fails. They rejected Christian theology, but did not ignore the moral ideas, the worship of meekness and gentleness and altruism grown out of that theology. In this sense they were less logical. (Durant 1933: 401) Friedrich Nietzsche argued, "The secret stimulus of the French free thinkers from Voltaire to August Comte was not to remain behind the Christian ideal...but to outbid it if possible. Comte, with his

'Live for others,' out Christianizes Christianity. In Germany it was Schopenhauer, and in England John Stuart Mill, who gave the greatest fame to the theory of sympathetic affections, of pity, and of usefulness to others as the principle of action...All the systems of socialism placed themselves unwittingly...All the systems of socialism placed themselves unwittingly...upon the common ground of these doctrines". (Faguet 1918: 71) It seemed to Friedrich Nietzsche that instead of goodness strength is required, not humility but pride is required and instead of altruism resolute intelligence is required.

Nietzsche envisaged the formation of social, political and cultural elite. He gave clarion call to free spirits of Europe to unite and seek social power. Nietzsche followed Machiavelli and Aristotle. He had great admiration for the political and constitutional achievements of ancient Rome. According to Nietzsche, the task of the greatest architects of human history resembles that of founders of constitutions who aim at " a grand organisation of society, the supreme condition for the prosperity of life" (Abbey and Appel, Fredrick 1998:83-114). Similarly Ansell Pearson puts it; Nietzsche's philosophers should interpret the world and seek to change it. (Pearson, 1994: 148) David Owen also contends that " Nietzsche's agonistic politics is more conducive to human flourishing than liberal politics". (Owen 1995: 169) This approach to Nietzsche and politics is often associated with postmodern philosophy and especially Michel Foucault's and Jacques Derrida's influential readings of Nietzsche. He also believed that democracy and equality are against the grain of survival and selection and instead of justice power is the real arbiter of differences and conflicts. As ultimately geniuses are the goal of evolution. (Durant 1933: 402)

Aurobindo constructed a metaphysics which reconciled the demands of both matter and spirit. According to Aurobindo, both spirit and matter are reconciled in cosmic and transcendental consciousness. The existence of both matter and spirit is rooted in undeniable experience and hence they have to be reconciled. Aurobindo's philosophy of realistic *Advaita* has harmonized the two fundamental categories of philosophy- spiritual reality and the material multiplicity. It can be argued that his philosophy has got rid of the ethical and epistemological difficulties of a mere materialism. (Varma 1960:28) According to Aurobindo, human mind is like a mirror which reflects the truth. It works in collaboration with actual facts of experience and infinite mind create a world full of the defects of mental creation. Hence, Aurobindo prefers to call it Real Idea in contrast to Hegelian Creative Idea. According to him, " a power of conscious force expressive of real being, born out of real being and partaking its nature". (Sharma 1977 : 113) Thus according to Aurobindo *Sacchidanandais* bliss, not

only Absolute idea, existence and consciousness. Supermind is the intermediate link between Sacchidananda and universe, knowledge and ignorance. As he said, " We call it supermind or Truth Consciousness because it is a principle superior to mentality and exists, acts and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of things, and not like the mind, in their appearance and phenomenal divisions". (Aurobindo, *Vol.I*, 1970:174) Supermind creates, governs and upholds the worlds. There is no conflict between ideas, will or force. It is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. According to Aurobindo, supermind is the creator of this universe and directs the evolution of this universe. There is no distinction of knowledge, knower and known. (Sharma 1977:114) Sri Aurobindo distinguished between two types of materialism. According to him, barbarian materialism identified self with the body and pursues a sensational activism. While scientific materialism identified the self with the vital part of mind. (Aurobindo 1949: 91-4) According to Aurobindo materialism can never be the final gospel for man. Materialism lacks spiritual dynamism. It leads to vanity, helplessness and despair. Thus physical science unaided by higher sources of knowledge can never lead to the integral growth of the whole being of man. He stated, "Sickness and dissatisfaction and disillusionment...inevitably follow along outburst of materialism". (Aurobindo 1950: 46.)

Superman of Friedrich Nietzsche

Energy, intellect and pride must be harmonized to make superman. Passions must be moulded and converted into power for some great purpose and then countless desires become power of the personality. The highest thing must be to discipline oneself to become super human being or superman. Nietzsche claimed, " The man who does not wish to be merely one of the mass only needs to cease to be easy on himself ". (Durant 1933: 427) The goal of human effort should be the development of finer and stronger individuals. He often described the concept in metaphysical and even cosmological terms, " Life itself is will to power," he also claimed, " all organic functions" can "be traced back to the will to power". (Abbey and Appel, Fredrick 1998:83-114) Nietzsche aspired for superior individual rising out of the mire of mass mediocrity to become superman. He owed superman's existence more to deliberate breeding and careful nurture than to the hazards of natural selection. Nietzsche recommended marriages among the bests. Best should marry the best and love should be left to the rabble.

The ultimate purpose of marriage should be development, " Thou art young, and wishest for child and marriage. But I ask thee, art thou a man who darest for a child? Art thou the victorious one, the self subdue, the commander of thy senses, the master of thy virtues? - Or in thy wish doth there speak the animal, or necessity? Or solitude? Or discord with thyself? I would that thy victory and

freedom were longing for a child. Thou shalt build beyond thyself. But first thou must build thyself square in body and soul. Thou shalt not only propagate thyself, but propagate thyself upward. Marriage: thus I call the will of two to create that one which is more than they who created it. I call marriage reverence unto each other as unto those who will such a will ". (Durant, 1933: 426) For Nietzsche, without good birth, nobility is impossible, with similar view, schooling of the superman should be severe with few comforts and many responsibilities. Where the body will be taught to suffer in silence and the will may learn to obey and to command. As a result, a man so born and bred would be fearless rather than good. Nietzsche believed that to be brave is good. Likewise, society is an instrument for the enhancement of the power and personality of the individual. Nietzsche claimed, " To what purpose then are the machines, if all individuals are only of use in maintaining them? Machines" or social organisations-" that are ends themselves is that the *umanacommedia*?". (425) He aspired that man should be part or instruments to the great. For instance, millions of Europeans offered themselves and died gladly for Napoleon Bonaparte. Nietzsche said, " We must have an aim for whose sake we are all dear to one another". (Salters 1917: 23)

Nietzsche was considered uninterested in or scornful of politics. However this could be narrow interpretation of his aestheticism. Like Kaufmann claimed Nietzsche, "was concerned with the artist, the philosopher, and those who achieve self perfection... [Those who] affirm their own being and all eternity, backward and forward, have no thought of tomorrow". (Abbey and Appel 1998: 92) Nehamas infers that Nietzsche's " aesthetic attitude towards life" requires a strictly individual project of self realization, a turning to oneself in order to make one's life valuable". (Nehamas 1985: 136-137) However he claimed that such rivalry between the aesthetic and the ethical or the political does not always exist. As the capacity to create and transform includes the ability to work on, shape, order and organise human beings. Thus Nietzsche construed politics as aesthetic activity. It takes humans as its raw material and shapes, moulds, transforms and beautifies them. Nietzsche imagined the goal of redeeming the human species from its current decline as the ultimate artistic project. (Abbey and Appel: 183-114)

According to him, the capacity to rule others required self rule and self regulation. Nietzsche described the " future masters of the earth" as " a new, tremendous aristocracy...in which the will of philosophical men of power and artist tyrants will be made to endure for millennia". (102) He considered these great individuals are to be " tyrants- in every sense of the world", they must be, among other things, political rulers who recognize " the pleasure in and exercise

of grand justice" (102). The answers become clearer when the parallel between Nietzsche and Plato on this question is considered. Plato famously declared in the Republic that if the finest human beings refused to rule their inferiors they would be ruled by them, a sentiment Nietzsche evinces when he observes " with anguish and contempt the politics of present day Europe, which is, under all circumstances, also working at the web of the future of all men " (103). Since the politics of herd society has a corrosive effect on human excellence, oppressing those of potentially great talent and stature, the latter must create a politics more in keeping with their needs.

Superman of Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution was based on spiritual revolution. This was grounded upon three basic concepts of his philosophy, *Sachchidananda* or supreme reality, super mind or the Truth Consciousness and Evolution. He believed that entire world is one *Brahma*, Divine being or *Sachchidananda* and also idea behind humanity or source of evolution. He says, " First, we affirm an Absolute as the origin and support and secret Reality of all things". (Aurobindo, Vol.XIX., 1970: 658) It means that each member of humanity equally shares its freedom and that each human is organically related to all the other humans. As Aurobindo further added, "This Divine being, Sachchidananda, is at once impersonal and personal: it is an Existence and the origin and foundation of all truths, forces, powers, existences, but it is also the one transcendent Conscious Being and the All Person of whom all conscious beings are the selves and personalities; for He is their highest Self and the universal indwelling Presence". (662) Aurobindo regarded Existence, Consciousness Force and Bliss as principles of higher hemisphere. Whereas Mind, Life and Matter are principles belonging to the lower hemisphere. As he stated, " In fact we must accept the ancient idea that man has within him not only the physical soul or Purusha with its appropriate nature, but a vital, a mental, a psychic, a supra mental, a supreme spiritual being: and either the whole or the greater presence or force of them is concealed in his subliminal or latent and unformulated in his superconscient parts". (803) Aurobindo claimed that super mind is the intermediary principle. The super mind is the fullest spiritual consciousness. It means to be in the realm of the super mind, which possess the divine all knowing and all powerful qualities. According to Aurobindo, to enter supra mental awareness is to live consciously in the *Sachchidananda*. (The Absolute, Bliss, and Brahman) He differentiated between human mind and super mind. The human mind merely interprets the truth of universal existence for practical purpose. He believed it a fall from the super mind and its salvation lies in climbing back to or evolving towards the super mind. (Deutsch, 1986:195) The concept of a spiritual omnipotent absolute is

central in Aurobindo's metaphysics. He affirmed that the notion of a spiritual infinite is the unimpeachable demand of the human mind and the spiritual soul. *Sachchidananda* is the absolute reality for intellectual formulation. In its operation and being, this highest reality is not bound by the law of contradiction which after all is a construction of human mind for limited and effective action in the world of multiplicity. (Aurobindo 1943:104) The supreme spirit has the supra cosmic transcendence, the cosmic universality or the aspect of *Isvara* and the unique separate individuality. They are equally important, essential, fundamental and the supreme reality. The absolute has an aspect of active consciousness as well as an aspect of a passive or silent consciousness but they are not different and opposite entities. The silent and static aspect of the infinite represents illimitable eternal immobility. This point of view has been emphasized in the philosophy of the monistic Vedanta. (Varma 1960: 6)

Sri Aurobindo considered man as a complex being. (Aurobindo 1977:206) According to Aurobindo, man comprised of three elements-infra rational, rational and supra rational. As he stated, " For what is supermanhood but a certain divine and harmonious absolute of all that is essential in man? He is made in God's image, but there is this difference between the divine Reality and its human representation that everything which in the one is unlimited, spontaneous, absolute, harmonious, self possessed becomes in the other limited, relative, laboured, discordant, deformed, possessed by struggle, kept by subservience to one's possessions, lost by the transience and insecurity which come from wrong holding. But in this constant imperfection there is always a craving and an aspiration towards perfection". (Aurobindo 1920:9) He argued that infra rational element is concerned with satisfaction of physical and vital life. It is, "a human enlargement of the little animal sector". (Aurobindo 1977:75) Rational element according to Aurobindo is concerned with the development of mental faculties. While supra rational element is turned towards the Absolute, " its special power is to realise the infinite in the finite, the eternal unity in all divisions and differences". (118) He contends that these three elements vary individual to individual. As he stated, " these three powers of being, the supra rational, rational and infra rational are present, but with an infinite varying prominence in all our activities". (119) Aurobindo believed that the real truth of man is found in his soul. So he has the potentiality to go beyond his mental and rational capabilities.

Sri Aurobindo did not believe that there would be a sudden miraculous transformation of the human *race en masse* into a race of Superman. He visualised to have the advent of a new super human race in this earth instead of looking for it in heaven. As he asserted, " the step from man to superman is the

next approaching achievement in the earth's evolution". (Aurobindo 1971: 7) He held that it was a slow and painful process. He claimed that at first only a few of the more developed souls would emerge as pathfinders to point the way for the rest of humanity. Often they would be overwhelmed by hostile forces and fall by the wayside. But sooner or later the path would be found, the trail blazed, and humanity will begin the next stage of its long, adventurous spiritual journey. (Singh 1970: 72) He believed that superman is the transformation of the present man. As he stated, "Man's greatness is not in what he is, but in what he makes possible. His glory is that he is the closed and secret workshop of a living labour in which super manhood is being made ready by a divine Craftsman".(Aurobindo Vol.XVII, 1971: 9) Aurobindo believed in the evolution of the nature. According to him, "the animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said worked out man. Man himself may well be thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious cooperation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God?". (Aurobindo 1970: 4) Aurobindo recommended that psychic, spiritual and supra mental transformation is required for the process of evolution. The psychic evolution involves, "At the beginning the soul in Nature, the psychic entity, whose unfolding is the first step towards a spiritual change, is an entirely veiled part of us, although it is that by which we exist and persist as individual being in Nature". (Aurobindo 1970 : 394) He recommended that there will be gradual psychic transformation into soul realization. As he further stated, "it is only when man awakes to the knowledge of the soul and feels a need to bring it to the front and make it the master of his life and action that a quicker conscious method of evolution intervenes and a psychic transformation becomes possible". (Aurobindo 1970: 891) However Aurobindo stressed more on spiritual transformation of the individual. He believed that there should be direct contact of the soul with reality. He said, "As the psychic change has to call in the spiritual to complete it, so the first spiritual change has to call in the supra mental transformation to complete it". (218) Similarly about the infra rational stage Aurobindo stated, "Unity is the secret, a complex, understanding and embracing unity. When the full heart of Love is tranquillised by knowledge into a calm ecstasy and vibrates with strength, when the strong hands of Power labour for the world in a radiant fullness of joy and light, when the luminous brain of knowledge accepts and transforms the heart's obscure inspirations and lends itself to the workings of the high seated Will, when all these gods are founded together on a soul of sacrifice that lives in unity with all the world and accepts all things to transmute them, then is the condition of man's integral self transcendence. This and not haughty, strong and brilliant egoistic self cultured enthroning itself upon an enslaved humanity is the divine way of super

manhood". (Aurobindo 1973: 13) He further added, "This then must be the nature of the third and final transformation which finishes the passage of the soul through the Ignorance and bases its consciousness, its life, its power and form of manifestation on a complete and completely effective self knowledge. The Truth Consciousness, finding evolutionary Nature ready, has to descend into her and enable her to liberate the supra mental principle within her; so must be created the supra mental and spiritual being as the first unveiled manifestation of the truth of the self and spirit in the material universe". (Aurobindo 1970: 918)

Comparing Nietzsche and Aurobindo on Superman

Aurobindo mentioned in his book Superman, "Nietzsche first cast it, the mystic of Will worship, the troubled, profound, half luminous Hellenising Slav with his strange clarities, his violent half-ideas, his rare gleaming intuitions that came marked with the stamp of an absolute truth and sovereignty of light. But Nietzsche was an apostle who never entirely understood his own message. His prophetic style was like that of the Delphic oracles which spoke constantly the word of the Truth but turned it into untruth in the mind of the hearer. Not always indeed; for sometimes he rose beyond his personal temperament and individual mind, his European inheritance and environment, his revolt against the Christ idea, his war against current moral values and spoke out the word as he had heard it, the Truth as he had seen it, bare, luminous, impersonal and therefore flawless and imperishable". (Aurobindo 1973: 2) Though Aurobindo had taken the basic idea of superman from Nietzsche yet he differed from Nietzsche in explaining the details of superman. He called it as *Asura* super manhood. As Aurobindo stated about Nietzsche, "In his concept of the Superman he never cleared his mind of a preliminary confusion. For if a sort of human godhead is the goal to which the race must advance, the first difficulty is that we have to decide to which of two very different types of divinity the idea in us should owe allegiance. For the deity within may confront us either with the clear, joyous and radiant countenance of the God or the stern convulsed visage of the Titan. Nietzsche hymned the Olympian, but presented him with the aspect of the Asura. His hostile preoccupation with the Christ idea of the crucified God and its consequences was perhaps responsible for this distortion as much as his subjection to the imperfect ideas of the Greeks. He presented to us a superman who fiercely and arrogantly repels the burden of sorrow and service, not one who arises victorious over mortality and suffering, his ascension vibrant with the triumph song of a liberated humanity". (4) According to Aurobindo, to lose the link of Nature's moral evolution is a capital fault in the apostle of superman hood. He regarded it as a demoniac and egoistic superman hood. Contrary to

Nietzsche, Aurobindo's superman is not the strong and enlightened vital will. He is a spiritual self and spiritual nature. Aurobindo also criticised the domination of Nietzsche's superman on humanity. As he regarded superman hood to be, "To take all that is essential in the human being and uplift it to its most absolute term so that it may become an element of light, joy, power for oneself and others, this is divinity. This, too, should be the drift of superman hood".(6) Aurobindo has taken the idea of superman from Nietzsche, yet he reinterpreted it in spiritual sense. Thus his superman differed from Nietzsche's superman.

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South China Sea: The Big Game and the Global Implications

- Brigadier Ram Pratap Singh

Introduction

The South China Sea is the most important maritime region in the world, with nearly one-third of global shipping passing through its waters each year carrying over \$3 trillion in trade. (China Power) It also has the distinction of being the second busiest, with merchant shipping transiting through the Malacca, Sunda and Lombok Straits towards either East Asia or the Indian Ocean. Rich in natural resources, it contains lucrative fisheries crucial to the food security of the region and massive oil and gas reserves in its sea bed.

It is also the most contested maritime space in the world. Several countries China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei all have competing territorial claims over the South China Sea. Points of contention between the various sides are many, with the waters around the Natuna Islands, Scarborough Shoal, the Paracel Islands and the Spratlys all serving as potential flash points. (Crisis Group) China claims the entire body of water as its own, demarcating their claims within what is known as the Nine-Dash Line. Collectively these disputes have been regarded as one of the Indo-Pacific's most dangerous points for great power conflict. The region is no stranger to conflict too, with localised clashes between naval vessels from competing countries resulting in a brief conflict between China and Vietnam in 1974 near the Paracels. In January 2013, the Philippines formally initiated arbitration proceedings against China's claim to the territories within the Nine-Dash Line. In 2016 the Permanent Court of Arbitration decided in favour of the Philippines though notably this has been discarded by the Chinese. Over the past few years, the South China Sea has

emerged as an arena of U.S.-China strategic competition. China's actions in the South China Sea including extensive island-building and base construction activities at sites that it occupies in the Spratly Islands, as well as actions by its maritime forces to assert China's claims against competing claims by regional neighbours such as the Philippines and Vietnam have heightened concerns among U.S. observers that China is gaining effective control of the South China Sea, an area of strategic, political, and economic importance to the United States and its allies.

Historical Context of the Dispute

The crisis in the South China Sea has to be seen from a historic perspective if we are to understand its present. (China Focus) In 1945 the United States emerged as the resident great power in the region, forging close economic and security ties with Japan, South Korea and the Philippines and assuming the critical role of security guarantor for these countries. This was followed by securing a strategic position in Southeast Asia against the Soviet Union and Mao's China by forging close defence ties with Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The security assurances provided by the US military, coupled with the advent of key regional institutions like ASEAN and Asian Development Bank (ADB), nurtured economic development in the region as countries prioritized economic growth and embraced globalisation. Overall the strategic landscape of the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia following the collapse of Soviet Communism was stable. In this context China projected a relatively responsible image, displaying intent to transition towards a more open society and globalised economy.

By 1995 however, China was already beginning to display the colours of nationalism, announcing its intent to assert dominance across the South China Sea through a more forceful interpretation of the Nine-Dash Line. China's claims remained shrouded in ambiguity however until 2010, following the global financial crisis and perhaps sensing an opportunity. In an official statement by their Foreign Ministry following an ASEAN Regional Forum Beijing claimed indisputable sovereignty over the entire South China Sea (Idsa). The US response was muted, coming at a time when Washington was heavily engaged with military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

US Interests in the Region

Key US interests can be broken down into three aspects, economic interests tied to sea lanes, defence relationships with allies and overall power of influence. In each of these dimensions Chinese efforts to seize control over the South China

Sea only serves to damage American prestige in the region. The transformation of the South China Sea into a Chinese sphere of influence would signal the era of American leadership in Asia is over, and that a new preeminent power has taken its place.

The US is thus critical to maintaining the regional status quo through its formal defence ties with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore in addition to Australia and New Zealand in Oceania. Potential general US aims for a competition with China are the following (CRS Report):

- (a) Fulfilling U.S. security commitments in the Western Pacific, including treaty commitments to Japan and the Philippines; and also maintaining and enhancing the US-led security architecture
- (b) Maintaining a regional balance of power favourable to the United States and its allies.
- (c) Defending the principle of peaceful resolution of disputes, under which disputes between countries should be resolved peacefully, without coercion, intimidation, threats, or the use of force and in a manner consistent with international law, and resisting the emergence of an alternative “might-makes-right” approach to international affairs.
- (d) Defending the principle of freedom of the seas as per international law, including the interpretation held by the United States and many other countries concerning operational freedoms for military forces in EEZs.
- (e) Preventing China from becoming a regional hegemon in East Asia and potentially as part of that, preventing China from controlling the South China Sea.
- (f) Pursing these goals as part of a larger U.S. strategy for competing strategically and managing relations with China.

Relevance for China

Following the Communist Revolution in 1949, China has pursued the objective of maximizing its national power in order to recover the geopolitical primacy it enjoyed in East Asia prior to the Columbian era. The arrival of modernity proved unkind to China's regional predominance and, in an economic sense, its global standing embittering its Maoist founders. Who were determined, through their communist uprising, to retrieve the greatness last witnessed during the mid-Qing Dynasty, which had been lost, due to technological atrophy, domestic conflict, and external intervention.

Given this painful history, it is not surprising that China's primary strategic goal

in contemporary times has been the accumulation of “Comprehensive National Power.” This pursuit of power in all its dimensions economic, military, technological and diplomatic is driven by the conviction that China, a great civilization undone by the hostility of others, could never attain its destiny unless it amassed the power necessary to ward off the hostility of those opposed to this quest. This conception, shared by all Chinese leaders since 1949, reflects a vision of politics that views conflict as intrinsic to the human condition.

In this “parabellum paradigm (Ew.com),” superior power alone creates order. China's success as a state requires its leaders to possess greater capabilities than any other entity inside or outside its borders. The failure to create such a hierarchy centred on the conjoint supremacy of the Chinese Communist Party within the country and China's primacy within the international system would open the door to persistent and dangerous threats of the kind witnessed during China's “century of national humiliation.” Defeating these dangers requires that the party protect its monopoly over power within the country while steadily acquiring more power than its international competitors. If China does not become a world power, the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will be incomplete. This vision of strengthening the Chinese state while recovering China's centrality in international politics both objectives requiring the accumulation of “comprehensive national power” suggests that the aims of Beijing's grand strategy both implicate and transcend the United States and China's other Asian rivals. Consistent with this principle, Henry Kissinger, describing the traditional sinocentric system, has correctly noted that China “considered itself, in a sense, the sole sovereign government of the world,” wherein the emperor's purview was not “a sovereign state of 'China'...but 'All Under Heaven,' of which China formed the central, civilized part”. (Blackwill and Tellis) Therefore, to acquire the comprehensive national power, to both increase the Chinese state's control over its society and maximize the country's overall capabilities relative to its foreign competitors, Beijing has consistently pursued four specific operational aims (Maintain Internal Order, Sustain High Economic Growth, Pacify the Periphery and Cement International Status) since the revolution though the instruments used to achieve these ends have varied over time.

President Xi signaled China's aims to undermine the Asian balance of power at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in early 2014 when he argued that “Asia's problems ultimately must be resolved by Asians and Asia's security ultimately must be protected by Asians.” Beijing seeks to achieve the same by fulfilling following goals (CRS):

- (a) Replace the United States as the primary power in Asia.
- (b) Weaken the U.S. alliance system in Asia.

- (c) Undermine the confidence of Asian nations in U.S. credibility, reliability, and staying power.
- (d) Use China's economic power to pull Asian nations closer to China's geopolitical policy preferences.
- (e) Increase China's military capability to strengthen deterrence against US military intervention in the region.
- (f) Cast doubt on the U.S. economic and political model.

Has the Big Game Begun??

The recent events in Afghanistan, post withdrawal of USA troops will have a big effect in the strategic tug of war between USA and China. The withdrawal from Afghanistan can be analysed differently for both China and USA. Though China had denounced US military deployment in Afghanistan, it will not be thrilled with the US eventual departure, as the US military presence in Afghanistan, which was a necessary check on the Taliban, worked in Beijing's favour. It has also termed the US troop withdrawal as a “hasty move”, and that “it might complicate the evolution of the situation in Afghanistan.” Such reaction stems from Beijing's security concern about the Taliban's inability to control the various extreme groups operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the possibility of the Taliban going back on its promise and allowing the Uyghur groups to operate from its territories. However, the situation in Afghanistan also provides an opportunity for China. The principal means through which China may seek to profit from America's withdrawal might be its efforts to advance a narrative of 'American decline'. Chinese propaganda machine is likely to exploit tragic images of America's abandonment of Afghan partners as proof of American unreliability and incompetence. These efforts will be aimed at two audiences: a domestic one and an international (non-American) one. For the domestic audience, Beijing's message will be that the United States is not an object of worship and unlike Washington, Beijing will not intervene in other country's civil war, spill blood and leave mess behind. For an international audience, the message is likely to be that America's best days are behind it and Afghanistan is but another way point on America's path of decline. China's rise is the story of the future. The drastic change in Afghanistan's situation has brought out another harsh reality for the world: The US may be able to wage a war against small and medium-sized countries, but it cannot win a war anymore, as it failed to reach any of its political goals in either Iraq or Afghanistan even after decades of fighting. The point is, if the US cannot even secure a victory in a rivalry with small countries, how much better could it do in a major power game with China? Moreover, if Beijing is able to stabilise

Afghanistan after a US withdrawal, it will give other countries facing unrest the message that the China model of 'political settlement' is more conducive than 'Western intervention', ultimately extending China's influence in similar crises around the world. Over time, China would also welcome opportunities to benefit from Afghanistan's rich mineral deposits and incorporate Afghanistan into its Belt and Road Initiative.

However, the USA perspective can be a little different after witnessing that the US had gained nothing from \$2 trillion and over 2,000 military casualties in Afghanistan and Washington mulling to walk away for years. (Wikipedia) On the face of it, Joe Biden showed a gesture to right the wrong in the Middle East, but his bigger intention is to focus on China, pooling as many US military forces as possible into the Indo-Pacific region. The USA has put countering China at the heart of its national security policy for years and recently President Joe Biden's administration has called rivalry with Beijing "the biggest geopolitical test" of this century. In practical terms, withdrawal from Afghanistan would strengthen Washington in its intensifying rivalry with Beijing in three major ways. It could liberate military resources currently tied down in Afghanistan, allowing them to be redeployed to the Indo-Pacific region. It could free up the diplomatic and bureaucratic bandwidth of U.S. senior officials, permitting them to devote to China the time and attention otherwise consumed by the Afghan quagmire. And finally, it could save the U.S. government money, unlocking billions of dollars better devoted to fund initiatives that boost America's standing in its competition with China. USA also perceives Southeast Asia and South China Sea as the underbelly of China and domination of this is a must in countering China. USA is also aware of its limitations in handling China on its own. To overcome its limitations it is forging stronger ties with existing allies like Australia, Japan and India, side by side looking for new allies in the Southeast Asia. USA also hopes the vacuum created in Afghanistan and its instability in future, will pull China both economically and diplomatically. Possibility also exists of putting a drain militarily on China, as securing its economic interests will be vital. With the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing is escalating its investments in Central Asian connectivity projects, such as the Afghanistan National Railway Plan (ANRP), the Sino-Afghan Special Railway Transportation Project (SARTP), Five Nations Railway Corridor, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). (Bahera) Instability in Afghanistan will prove a major hurdle to possible investments in construction and mining of natural resources. Thus, it is of China's own interest to engage more in Afghanistan in future. USA is also looking at creating a negative narrative, in case China does not work towards furthering democracy in Afghanistan. Considering the Taliban's rise in power and its commitment to restrict the Uighur

nationalists, China could focus on being on the side of the Taliban, which will not weigh in favour of democracy in the view of the other nations.

Keeping in view, the criticism faced by the USA due its exit policy in Afghanistan; it has played a different game in Ukraine Russia war, wherein it totally avoided a direct confrontation with Russia. By doing so, USA has achieved two aims; firstly it has put a check on the economic might of Russia by putting crippling sanctions and secondly, the conflict would drastically reduce the war waging potential of Russia, while conserving its own and NATO to the fullest. The longer the conflicts continue the better it is for USA both economically and militarily. The same can be better assessed by the understanding the historical context of USA Ukraine relations.

President George W Bush strongly lobbied to bring Ukraine (as well as Georgia) into NATO in 2008, despite Russia's strenuous objections. However, two key allies, France and Germany, balked at that proposal. They were uneasy about the continuing corruption and authoritarian tendencies in Kiev, despite the professed democratic ideals of Ukraine's "Orange Revolution." French and German officials also worried (with good reason) that making Ukraine a NATO member would provoke Russia beyond endurance and risk a dire East-West military confrontation.

However, USA had different plans for the Ukraine as a country and developed a close military relationship over the years. The trend toward making Ukraine a de facto U.S security dependent spiked after the country's political upheaval in 2014. Obama's administration shamelessly meddled in that country's internal political affairs to help demonstrators oust the elected, pro-Russian president and install a new, pro-Western government. Russia responded by annexing Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula.

Ukraine has become an important U.S. military ally as though the development was an irresistible force of nature. Yet, the strategic rationale for giving Ukraine that status is murky, to say the least. Until the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, Ukraine was nothing more than a constituent part of that totalitarian state. No one ever argued at the time that Ukraine was a vital (or even a pertinent) security interest of the United States. However, American officials now insist that supporting Ukraine against a weakened, non-communist Russia does constitute such an interest. William Taylor, who served as interim U.S. ambassador to Ukraine in 2019, elevated the country's importance to stratospheric levels. "Ukraine is defending itself and the West against Russian attack. If Ukraine succeeds, we succeed. The relationship between the United States and Ukraine is key to our national

security....” Indeed, he insisted, in “the contest between democracies and autocracies, the contest between freedom and unfreedom, Ukraine is the front line”. (Head Topics)

Moreover, Washington has made Kiev a US military ally without debate, much less a vote, on a formal agreement to do so. In essence, US leaders have bypassed NATO's admissions process and now treat Kiev as though Ukraine is an Alliance member entitled to a full-fledged US security commitment. Arming Ukrainian forces and conducting joint military exercises is incredibly provocative toward Russia. Any Russian leader is likely to regard Ukraine as being rightfully within not only Moscow's economic and political sphere of influence but within Russia's core security zone. The United States did all this with the nefarious design of undermining Russia both economically and militarily. Thereby, ruling out the possibility of facing Russia China as allied competitors in the times to come.

Is Disaster Lurking in Future??

Washington's over militarised approach not only increases the risks of war and arms racing but also reduces the prospects for stability and prosperity in Asia. The game that matters most in the region does not involve armies and navies but rather development, trade, and investment. Yet the United States has largely neglected South East Asia's economic needs, allowing China to make enormous gains at its expense.

While Washington has busied itself with new arms sales and expanding its force posture, China has become the region's economic hegemon. Chinese trade with the rest of Asia dwarfs U.S trade with the region and China's infrastructure loans and investments have outpaced those of the United States for years. Beijing has also helped forge a complex web of multilateral institutions and agreements that privilege China and marginalise the United States. These advantages validate a narrative, already accepted by many Asian political elites, of China's ascendancy and the United States' relative decline.

There are better, more stabilizing alternatives to the crude militaristic approach that the Biden administration is currently pursuing. Instead of fuelling an arms race to nowhere, the Biden administration could limit its military investments to capabilities that erode its adversaries' ability to project power while refraining from threatening their territory or nuclear forces. But even an optimal defence policy can only establish the geopolitical conditions in which it is possible to build a more secure region by non-military means. By reducing foreign policy to defence initiatives, the United States is forsaking any meaningful attempt to arrest the underlying causes of future regional insecurity,

including extreme inequality, environmental degradation, and kleptocracy. The United States should be working tirelessly to shrink the widening gap between South East Asia's haves and have-nots, to subsidize climate adaptation policies in countries with at-risk populations, and to penalize corruption and strongman politics. It is through these measures that the United States can help prevent tragedies such as the ongoing civil war in Myanmar and the human rights crisis in the Philippines.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration has largely ignored the conflict in Myanmar, and also continues to proudly provide security assistance to the Philippines, even as that country's authoritarian leader has silenced journalists, allegedly taken payoffs from China and ordered extrajudicial killings now being investigated by the International Criminal Court.

In short, the United States is sabotaging South East Asia's future and by extension, its own. By treating security as something that only missiles and submarines can ensure, allowing its economic position to weaken and forfeiting opportunities to address underlying sources of violence, the United States is helping create a perilous situation in the South China Sea. If the Biden administration doesn't shift gears, it will be culpable in South East Asia's next tragedy.

Conclusion

Relations of littoral states of South China Sea (ASEAN countries) are deeply intertwined with both USA and China, which directly affects the influence of China or USA in South China Sea and Southeast Asia as a whole. The superpower status of USA is being challenged both by China and Russia, whereas, USA wants to maintain the status at all cost. Notwithstanding, the individual interest of USA or China one point is very clear that the big game of the century will be played out in South China Sea. (the backyard of ASEAN) The capacity of the United States to deal successfully with this systematic geo-economics, military and diplomatic challenge by China to U.S primacy in Asia will determine the shape of the international order for decades to come. Therefore, in my mind the 'Big Game' has already started and it would indeed be the litmus test for present and future Indian policy-makers to understand the scenarios and create opportunities for India in coherence to the rising stature of India in regional Asian as well as on the world stage during the unfolding of this big game in the times to come.

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COVID-19 in India: Impact on Macroeconomic Variables

- Nikhat Khalid

Abstract

Outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 and its intercontinental escalation has virtually deterministically changed the course of human activity. It has adversely touched every walk of life and in all the countries. Its impact on global economies has devastated each sector on unprecedented scale and needs to be examined by perceptive scholars in the field. Indian economy has not remained insulated from its ravaging knock. It therefore become incumbent to study the footprints of COVID-19 pandemic on Indian economy. The pandemic has caused regression in country's GDP, triggered unemployment to a large scale, has negatively touched the manufacturing and service sectors, has caused the down trending of trade and commerce within and outside the country, has caused disruption of transportation sector etc. In this essay, four representative macroeconomic variables of Indian economy, that deserve a closer scanning viz., the balance of payments, inflation, economic growth and unemployment have been taken up to scan, analyse and draw inferences about the impact of COVID-19. Since March 2020, the entire country is experiencing full and partial lockdowns which have almost broken down the back-bone of all economic activity in the country. The study is aimed at bringing out the empirical data and factual position of economy so as to help the policy makers and researchers to make further in-depth analyses of various sectors of economic activity affected by this all-pervasive virus.

Introduction

The economic shock caused by COVID-19 in India and the world has an unprecedented scale, scope and extent. It has upset almost every sector of economy severely impairing or causing shut downs, crashing the economic systems and jolting the macroeconomic parameters. The pandemic surge has uniquely triggered the downfall of GDP growth, seriously weakened the

banking system, caused rise in NPAs, strongly hit businesses and pushed the small and medium-scale industries to the cusp of collapse. Barbate and Gade. (2021:1) It is projected that the economic impact of COVID-19 could potentially be worse than the Great Depression of 1930. (Swada and Suwulong 2021) Though there are a large number of variables which deserve scrutiny for the adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic on economies, however we here take up 4 representative macroeconomic variables that deserve a closer scanning including the balance of payments, inflation, economic growth and unemployment.

The Balance of Payments (BOP) reflects upon difference between the aggregate amount of goods exported (X) and imported (M) by a country. When $X > M$, it indicates a surplus balance of payments, while $X < M$ is indicative of deficit in the BOP. Inflation is determined by the increased cost of goods and services within an economy over a given time period (usually measured over a financial year) measured using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Inflation tends to damage an economy affecting the purchasing power thus reducing production, harming supply lines and reducing the flow in liquidity. Economic growth indicates about the increased level of output within an economy over a given financial year showing the financial health of the people. Unemployment determines the proportion of people within an economy who are willing and able to work, but do not have a job. Unemployment is not a good omen for an economy as it wastes resources, generates redistributive pressures and distortions, increases poverty, limits labour mobility, and promotes social unrest sometimes leading to conflict.

The stinging impact of COVID-19 and its propelled unprecedented lockdowns has thrown Indian economy out of gear and harshly derailed its macroeconomic variables. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the above macroeconomic variables. The study is descriptive and explorative in nature, and uses secondary data collated from credible sources.

The Economic Situation: Pre-Covid-19

After a long period of sluggish growth, India became the world's fastest growing economy with economic growth forecasts of 7% to 7.5% for 2018-2019. The government claimed that its upward growth trajectory was driven by several structural reforms, such as the privatisation of parts of the economy, the introduction of a new 'goods and services tax' (GST) and the easing of restrictions of foreign investment. India's economic growth stepped up to be second only to China despite the fact that the Indian economy faced many glitches. Some economists pointed out to potential strengths of the Indian

economy which could enable it to continue to benefit from high levels of economic growth in the future. A recent study from Goldman Sachs, foresaw that Indian economy could grow at a sustainable rate of 8% until 2020. India's core sectors were on the upswing, auto industry was in full bloom, the country had set off to become a hub for IT start-ups, nesting the third highest level of business start-ups in 2014¹⁵. It attracted more FDI which could play a positive role for financing country's current account deficit. India's workforce employed overseas sent remittances worth US\$68.91 billion in 2015 i.e., 3.5% of India's GDP while in the same year, foreign trade accounted for 48.8% of India's GDP.

This rosy picture began to take U-turn and Indian economy entered in its worst phase even before the Coronavirus outbreak, with growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) falling to a 11-year low of 4.2% in 2019-2020. The economy grew by 3.1% in the January-March quarter of 2019-2020, against 5.7 per cent at the same time a year ago, the slowest growth in at least eight years. The manufacturing sector registered a growth of merely 0.03% in FY 2019-20 compared to 5.7 per cent in the previous year. The growth of the construction sector, which has a spill over effect on several other industries, too declined to 1.3%. Capital formation in FY 2019-20 slowed as the growth of deposits in banks declined to 7.9%, compared to 10% in the previous fiscal. Bank credit growth declined to more than half to 6.1%, compared to the previous fiscal's 13.3% indicating people's declining consumption power.

In these financial uncertainties, the Union Budget was presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman centralising it and phrasing around the "Aspirational India, Economic development, A Caring Society". These three themes connected by a corruption free governance and a clean and sound financial sector aimed at "improving digital governance, physical quality of life, disaster resilience and social security reach". Nobody in the country or in the policy making knew that India's disaster resilience capacity will soon face grave challenges and the country will face an unprecedented economic meltdown, decelerating the economy to unprecedented scales.

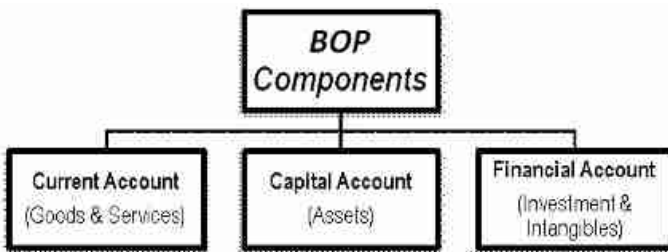
COVID-19 and Nosediving of Indian Economy

The coronavirus disease was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and it began to spread worldwide sending alarm bells to every nook and corner of the earth. Caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30th January 2020. On

11th February, this new virus was named COVID-19 and was declared as a pandemic on 11th March 2020. As danger of its spread in India increased, the Government of India initiated a 14-hour voluntary public curfew on 22nd March 2020 and in the evening of 24th March 2020, the Government of India ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, limiting movement of the state's entire 138 crore population in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. The National Disaster Management Act, 2005 was invoked on the same day, following which a series of preventive regulations were enforced in the country. The lockdown was further extended several times followed by partial opening and partial lockdowns in many provinces. These lockdowns completely shut down the economic activity across the country and is still reeling under COVID related restrictions severely affecting every walk of life including the economy. The Investment bank Goldman Sachs predicted a significant 45% economic decline between April and June 2020. Ratings agency Moody's reduced India's credit rating to the lowest investment grade level. Country faced a sharp contraction in industrial output as most of the industrial sector remained shut due to lockdown. The services sector recorded its largest contraction ever in the business activity. Consumer confidence collapsed as people became pessimistic about future expectations. These downward economic trends became alarming and prompt the need to be studies and analysed to assess and suggest prospective way outs from this extraordinary situation.

Balance of Payment (BOP)

Balance of Payment (BOP) is a record of all monetary transactions by a country and its residents with the rest of the world. A BOP account is maintained on a debit and credit basis, and ideally, on the principle of a double entry system, the balance should be zero. However, it rarely happens. When the outflow/exports have been more than the inflow/imports, the country's BOP is said to be in surplus, while a BOP deficit is indicative of a country's imports/inflow being more than the outflow/exports. Components of a BOP account are as shown below:



The BOP situation of India for the current and previous year has been assessed on the basis of Table 1 below. It is observed that July-September 2020 quarter; India's current account shows a surplus of US\$ 15.5 billion. The impact of covid pandemic on trade of goods is also evident. The import of goods by India, which was US\$ 119.6 billion in July-September 2019 quarter declined to US\$ 90.4 billion in the same quarter in 2020, which is an approximate US\$ 20 billion decline in India's imports, while export of goods by India to the outside world declined from US\$ 80 billion in July-September 2019 to US\$ 75.6 billion in July-September 2020. Thus, India's export did not decline as much as India's import did. This also reflects upon the decline in purchasing power and subsequently, import requirement by India.

A similar trend is depicted, when the 6-month April-September 2020-21 is compared with April-September 2019-20. The imports went down from US\$ 249.1 billion in 2019-20 to US\$ 153.5 billion, which is an almost US\$ 100 billion decline in India's imports that could be attributed solely to the pandemic. India's export too declined from US\$ 162.7 billion to US\$ 153.5 billion. On a similar note, there was a decline in the export and import of services as well. But the impact on service sector exports by India was not significant primarily due to higher net earnings from computer services.

Private transfer receipts, which reflect upon the remittances by Indians employed overseas also witnessed a fall. It is represented by the secondary income head under the BOP. It is observed through table 1 that these remittances declined on a year to year basis. The net surplus in this component declined from US\$ 38 billion in April-September 2019-20 to US\$ 35.4 billion in April-September 2020-21. In the Capital Account section, a major deficit is observed from a surplus of US\$ 23 billion to a deficit of US\$ 35 billion. This reflects upon the rise in capital payments in the one-year time period post covid. According to the RBI, repayments exceeded fresh disbursements and external commercial borrowings to India recorded net outflow of US\$ 4.1 billion in Q2 of 2020-21 as against an inflow of US\$ 3.1 billion a year ago. The FDI inflows witnessed a surge to reach at US\$ 23.8 billion in H1 of 2020-21, which was higher than US\$ 21.3 billion in H1 of 2019-20. Portfolio investment recorded a net inflow of US\$ 7.6 billion in H1 of 2020-21, which was similar to the level a year ago.

From the analysis of the BOP account of India, it is evident that every single component of the BOP has been impacted post covid-19. This makes major restructuring and reformulation of policies an absolute necessity to bring the things back to track.

Table 1: BOP Items for the Current and Previous year compared

Table 1: Major Items of India's Balance of Payments												
(US\$ billion)												
	July-September 2020 P			July-September 2019			April-September 2020-21 P			April-September 2019-20		
	Credit	Debit	Net	Credit	Debit	Net	Credit	Debit	Net	Credit	Debit	Net
A. Current Account	151.0	135.4	15.5	161.6	169.1	-7.6	273.4	238.7	34.8	322.2	344.8	-22.5
1. Goods	75.6	90.4	-14.8	80.0	119.6	-39.6	127.9	153.5	-25.6	162.7	249.1	-86.4
<i>Of which:</i>												
POL	7.3	18.8	-11.5	10.1	29.8	-19.7	12.1	32.0	-19.9	21.2	65.2	-44.0
2. Services	49.9	28.7	21.2	52.8	31.8	20.9	96.7	55.0	41.7	105.0	64.0	41.0
3. Primary Income	5.0	14.3	-9.3	6.8	15.7	-8.8	10.1	26.9	-16.8	12.7	27.7	-15.1
4. Secondary Income	20.4	2.0	18.4	22.0	2.0	20.0	38.6	3.2	35.4	41.9	4.0	38.0
B. Capital Account and Financial Account	152.7	168.8	-16.2	142.2	133.8	8.4	280.5	315.5	-35.0	280.5	257.5	23.0
<i>Of which:</i>												
Change in Reserves (Increase (-)/Decrease (+))	0.0	31.6	-31.6	0.0	5.1	-5.1	0.0	51.4	-51.4	0.0	19.1	-19.1
C. Errors & Omissions (-) (A+B)	0.6		0.6		0.9	-0.9	0.2		0.2		0.5	-0.5
P: Preliminary												
Note: Total of subcomponents may not tally with aggregate due to rounding off.												

Source: <https://www.rbi.org.in/>

Inflation

Inflation, in simple and broad terms means price rise. In India, inflation is primarily measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), wherein a weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services is examined. This product basket contains products and services, on which the average consumer spends money throughout the year. It includes expenses for groceries, clothes, rent, power, telecommunications, recreational activities and raw materials (e.g. gas, oil), as well as children's education and taxes. Change in price for each of the item in the predetermined basket is calculated and the same is averaged. Changes in the rate of inflation often reflect upon rise or fall in the cost of living, and also the change in purchasing power of people. The CPI is one of the most popular measures for identifying periods of inflation or deflation in the economy.

The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown are the rude shocks witnessed by the Indian economy and economies globally. Its impact has been measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI), wherein 2020 data has been juxtaposed with 2019 data for the same period. Government of India did not release headline CPI data for April and May 2020, but released June data along with imputed index data for the previous two months. This data has suggested supply disruption led price pressures during lockdown. Through table 1, it is observed that CPI is

significantly high for each of month March 2020 onwards, compared to the same month in 2019. This signifies the rise in price level. In 2020, for the month to month basis, CPI value has increased for each of the successive month. In March 2020, the value was 148.6 while in November 2020, it was 158.9, which is an almost 10-point rise overall, from March to November 2020. Furthermore, Inflation in rural areas was higher through the first quarter, led by higher food prices. Rural inflation in June was at 6.2% compared to 5.9% in urban areas.

This resulted in a two-pronged blow to people. On one side, there was a decline in incomes, and on the other, there was rise in prices. With the freezing of the economic activity, significant dip has been witnessed into the household savings, as running incomes saw a massive decline. (Janata Weekly 2021) This, in turn dented consumption and therefore, economic recovery.

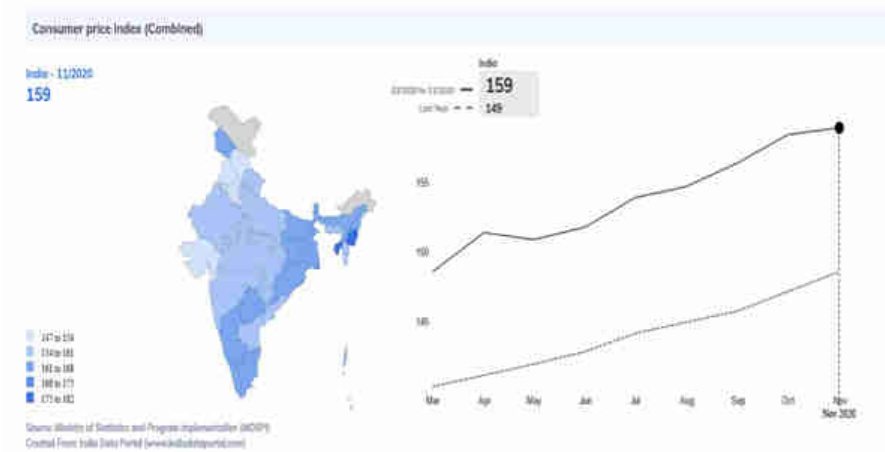
Table 2: Consumer Price Index, March to November 2020 and 2019 compared.

Month	CPI India (2020)	CPI India (2019)
03 (March)	148.60001	140.39999
04 (April)	151.39999	141.2
05 (May)	150.89999	142
06 (June)	151.8	142.89999
07 (July)	153.89999	144.2
08 (Aug)	154.7	145
09 (Sep)	156.39999	145.8
10 (Oct)	158.39999	147.2
11 (Nov)	158.89999	148.60001

Source: Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MOSPI) database

As observed in Image 1 below, the visualisation describes Combined Consumer Price Index (CPI) for March to November 2020 and for the same period in 2019. It becomes evident that CPI has witnessed a significant rise in 2020. There has been an average 10-point increase in 2020 for this time period compared to 2019. It is also observed that Eastern, North-Eastern and Southern states have witnessed the maximum rise in CPI.

Image 1: CPI Combined (Rural and Urban)- Comparative Analysis of March-November 2020 and March-November 2019

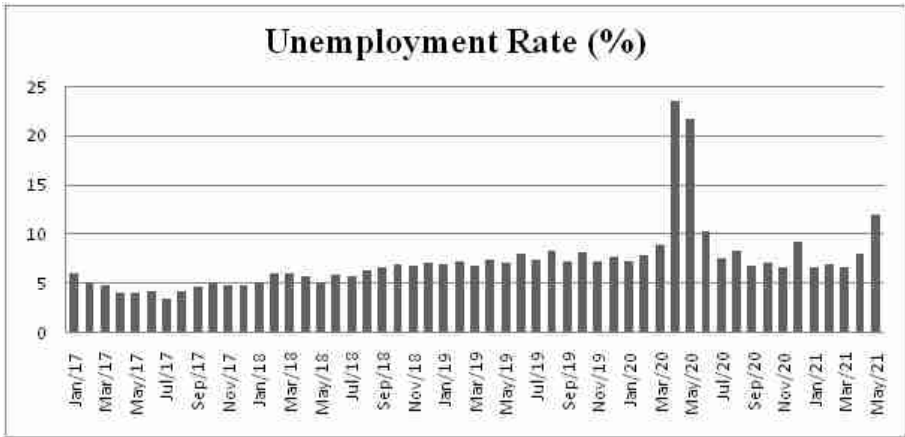


Unemployment

Unemployment rate in India during the year 2016 was 5.51% which declined by 0.09% to 5.42% in 2017. Again, it declined by 0.09% to reach 5.33% in 2018. In 2019 the employment rate increased by 0.03% to 5.36%. As India was placed under the lockdown in March 2020 forcing all economic activity to come to standstill, multiple sectors laid their skilled and unskilled workers. Sectors like retail, catering, manufacturing, home service, transport and logistics were adversely affected. The disruption of production and supply worsened the job situation rendering millions of Indians in the country jobless. Lakhs of people who lost their jobs still remain jobless after one and a half years. There is little hope to get it in the near future, with the number of jobs diminishing fast. Salaried employees have been the worst hit during the pandemic. The situation is deteriorating further in the absence of any comprehensive job retention programme, and the latest round of restrictions on people and businesses being imposed across the country in response to the 2nd wave of deadly nationwide coronavirus wave.

Graph 1 below depicts the monthly unemployment rate in India from January 2017 to May 2021. During the entire three-and-a-half-year time period, April and May 2020 are evidently the outlier months, wherein the unemployment rate is abnormally high. In March 2020, the unemployment rate was 8.8%, which jumped to 23.5% in April, increasing three times. The graph also describes that the unemployment rate after the outbreak of covid has become substantially high compared to the pre-covid time.

Graph 1: Unemployment Rate in India: January 2017 to May 2021



Source: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)

Among the rural and urban areas, it is the urban areas which are home to most of the salaried jobs, that have been worst affected. The present 2nd wave restrictions are more in the urban India, where most of the salaried jobs lie. According to various surveys and reports, as of 2019-20, urban India comprised of almost 58 % of all salaried jobs in the country. In 2020-21, the urban areas accounted for 38 % of the total job loss counting to 9.8 million, and further salaried job losses are expected in the immediate future. In rural India, salaried jobs account for 42 % of all such jobs in the country, in 2020-21 it lost 62% of the total jobs. During the current round of restrictions, further job losses loom large. The second wave has evidently hit the smaller cities and rural areas harder than the first wave in 2020, this will potentially disturb the overall employment scenario in the rural India.

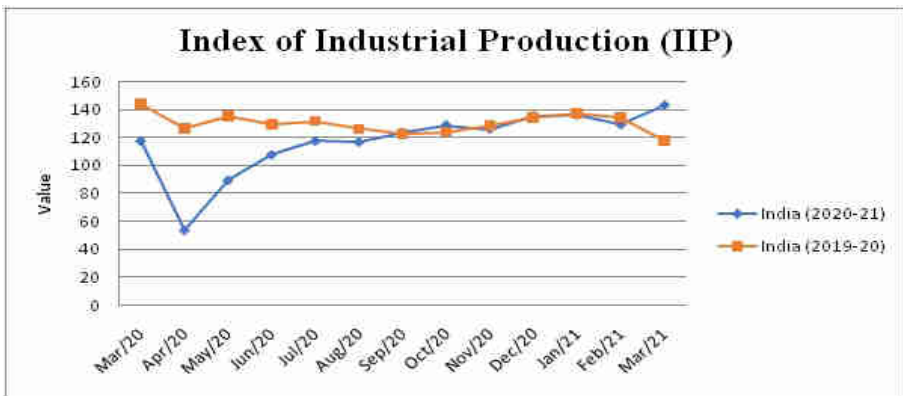
The CMIE report also indicates that most of the urban employees who have lost jobs in the first COVID-19 wave might have migrated to farming or joined nearly three million business people in rural India increasing nine million jobs in the agriculture sector. This significant shift of those recently rendered unemployed from their jobs to farming also exerts pressure on agriculture, as the sector is already over employed in India, with marginal productivity of farm labour being very low. It will be difficult for the agriculture sector to sustain this recently shifted population from non-farm jobs in rural India to farming jobs without a substantial increase in agricultural productivity. In this 2nd wave majority of the migration is taking place from the urban areas of states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Delhi to mainly Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other eastern states.

This trend could be alarming could cause a sharp rise in the number of unemployed people in those states when they would return, as well as adversely impact the economy of the states from where migrant workers are deserting.

The massive surge in unemployment during the second COVID wave in 2021 has made the country's path to economic recovery all the more fractured. As the second wave of the pandemic began, by May 16th, a massive downward spiral began. During this week, the labour participation rate was at 40.5 % and the unemployment rate suddenly shot up to 14.5 %, which was a significant acceleration from about 8% for the past weeks of April and May. This signifies that a large number of people suddenly lost employment during this week. The CMIE report estimates that the second wave could add up to well over 120 million in job losses, which amounts to 30% of the total population employed across all sectors. Further, the CMIE data also shows that labour participation percent in March 2021 was 40.2%, while in 2019-20 it was 42.7%. Employment rate is also down to 37.6% as against 39.4% last year. This scenario puts India at a risk of an unemployment crisis.

Graph 1 above amply depicts the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21. The IIP is also used as a measure of the employment scenario of the country, since industrial production is positively correlated with employment. It can be observed that IIP in March 2020 was 117.7, which dropped to 53.6 in April 2020, with the advent of the Covid induced lockdown. This caused an unprecedented shock to employment scenario in the country. The IIP reached the Pre-Covid 2019 IIP level in October 2020, after which it again declined and started to rise in February 2021.

Graph 2: Index of Industrial Production (IIP)- Comparative Analysis of March 2020-March 2021 and March 2019 to March 2020



Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) database

Economic Growth

India's GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for 2018-19 was 6.5% standing at Rs 140.03 trillion. Country's economic growth for the fiscal 2019-20 was initially projected at 4.2% but due to contraction in secondary sectors like manufacturing and construction, it was downward revised to 4% at Rs. 145.69 trillion as per revised national account data provided by National Statistical Office. (Zoom News 2021) During 2019-20, the growth rates of the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying), secondary sector (manufacturing, electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services, and construction) and tertiary sector (services) were estimated as 3.3 per cent, (-)1.1 per cent and 7.2 per cent respectively. Nominal net national income at current prices for 2019-20 stood at Rs 179.94 trillion.

As the national lock down was imposed in March 2020 the economic growth decelerated further contracting to unprecedented levels. The GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q1 of 2020-21 was estimated at Rs. 26.90 lakh crore, as against 35.35 lakh crore in Q1 of 2019-20, showing a contraction of 23.9% as compared to 5.2% growth in Q1 of 2019-20. Quarterly Gross Value Added (GVA) at Basic Price at Constant (2011-12) prices for Q1 of 2020-21 is estimated at Rs. 25.53 lakh crore, as against 33.08 lakh crore in Q1 of 2019-20, showing a contraction of 22.8%. The GDP at Current Prices in the year Q1 2020-21 was estimated at Rs. 38.08 lakh crore, as against Rs. 49.18 lakh crore in Q1 2019-20, showing a contraction of 22.6 percent as compared to 8.1 percent growth in Q1 2019-20. GVA at Basic Price at Current Prices in Q1 2020-21, was estimated at Rs. 35.66 lakh crore, as against Rs. 44.89 lakh crore in Q1 2019-20, showing a contraction of 20.6 percent. The first quarter estimates were based on agricultural production during Rabi season of 2019-20 (which ended in June 2020) obtained from the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers' Welfare. Estimates of production, mainly in the form of production targets for milk, egg, meat and wool for Livestock Sector were taken from the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Fish production data from the Department of Fisheries.

In the Q2 of 2020-21, at Constant (2011-12) Prices, GDP was estimated at Rs. 33.14 lakh crore, as against Rs. 35.84 lakh crore in Q2 of 2019-20, showing a contraction of 7.5 percent as compared to 4.4 percent growth in Q2 2019-20. Quarterly GVA at Basic Prices at Constant (2011-12) Prices for Q2 of 2020-21 was estimated at Rs.30.49 lakh crore, as against Rs. 32.78 lakh crore in Q2 of 2019-20, showing a contraction of 7.0 percent. Similarly, GDP at Current Prices for Q2 2020-21 is estimated to be at Rs. 47.22 lakh crore, as against 49.21 lakh crore in Q2 2019-20, showing a contraction of 4.0% as compared to 5.9%

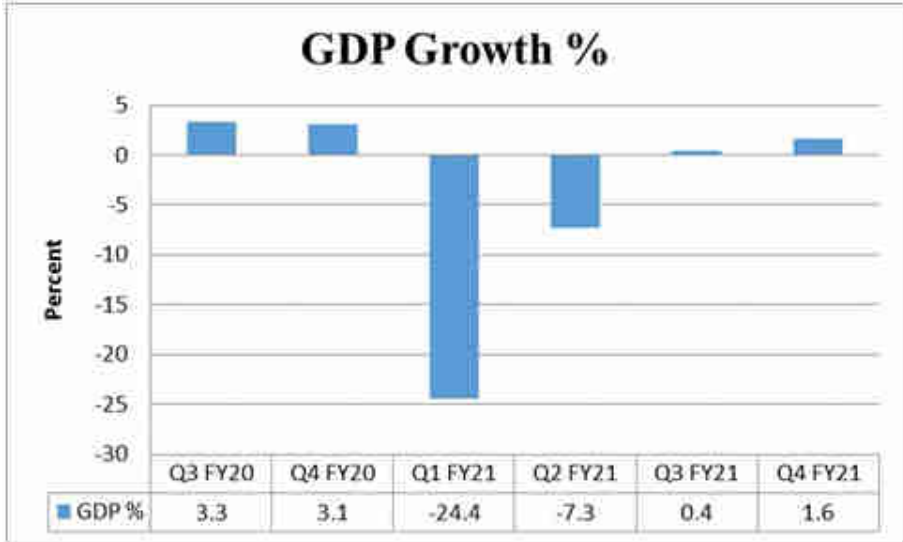
growth in Q2 2019-20. GVA at Basic Prices at Current Prices in Q2 2020-21 is estimated at Rs 42.80 lakh crore, as against Rs. 44.66 lakh crore in Q2 2019-20, showing a contraction of 4.2 percent. The GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices for H1 (April-September) 2020-21 was estimated at Rs 60.04 lakh crore as against 71.20 lakh crores during the corresponding period of previous year, showing a contraction of 15.7% in H1 2020-21 as against growth of 4.8 percent during the same period last year. GDP at Current Prices for H1 2020-21 is estimated at Rs. 85.30 lakh crore as against Rs. 98.39 lakh crores during the corresponding period of previous year, showing a contraction of 13.3% in H1 2020-21 as against growth of 7.0% during the same period last year.

In Q3 of 2020-21, GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices was estimated at Rs. 36.22 lakh crore, as against 36.08 lakh crore in Q3 of 2019-20, showing a growth of 0.4 percent. The economy had grown 3.3% in the corresponding period of 2019-20. In Q3, the manufacturing sector, which had a contraction of 1.5 per cent in Q2, rose by 1.6 per cent. Apart from this, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector grew by 3.9 per cent in this quarter. Agriculture has been the only sector to register a growth in all the three quarters. Other sectors witnessing positive Gross Value Added (GVA) growths during Q3 2020-21 include manufacturing (1.6%); Electricity, Gas, Water Supply & Other Utility Services. Construction (6.2%); and, Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services (6.6%), as per Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The Indian economy grew 1.6% in the January-March quarter of 2020-21, signalling a recovery that started after two consecutive quarters of contraction due to the impact of the strict lockdown. For the full year, however, it contracted 7.3%, lower than the estimated 8% earlier. “In Q4, private final consumption expenditure increased by 2.7% year-on-year, government consumption final expenditure by 28.4%, gross fixed capital formation by 10.8%. Exports increased by 8.7% and Imports by 12.3%. The GDP growth in 2019-20, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was 4%. The Gross Value Added recorded 3.7% growth in Q4, compared to 1% in Q3. GVA had contracted 22.4% and 7.3% in the Q1 and Q2 of 2020-21. The GVA in India's economy shrank 6.2% in 2020-21, compared to a 4.1% rise in the previous year. Only two sectors bucked the trend of negative GVA growth - Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (which rose 3.6%) and Electricity, Gas, Water Supply and other Utility Services (up 1.9%). GVA from Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication and Broadcasting-related services recorded the sharpest decline of 18.2%, followed by Construction (-8.6%), Mining and quarrying (-8.5%) and Manufacturing (-7.2%).

Graph 3:

Percentage Growth of GDP



Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) database

The National Statistical Office attributed the improvement over its earlier growth estimates, to the improved performance of indicators, used in compilation of GVA, in the fourth quarter of 2020-21, owing to calibrated and steady opening of the economy. India's growth performance in 2020-21 fell below expectations and actual fiscal stimulus fell short of initial announcements that suggested a large increase of public spending for pandemic relief. Government of India's relief measures were smaller in scale and centred on easing supply-side constraints and providing liquidity support rather than aggregate demand support. Above that restrictions to people's movement severely affected incomes and consumption and proved largely unsuccessful in containing the spread of the virus. As a result, the economic activity fell to unprecedented scales.

GDP per capita

The GDP per capita is GDP divided by the total population to determine how well-placed an average person is in the country. Fall in per capita income reduces the tax revenues for the Government. This reduces the amount spent on public services including investment in infrastructure. To cover the shortfall, the government has to look for alternative sources. Like increasing the taxes on petrol and diesel or borrowing more money. The per-capita net national income during 2019-20 was estimated at Rs 1,35,050. India's per capita GDP in 2020-21 dropped by 8.7 per cent to Rs 99,155 detracting its GDP per capita to the level of 2016-17, the year when sliding of India's economy began. The per

capita private consumption expenditure, that represents consumer spending, dropped by 10.4 per cent to 55,609 in 2020-21, from 62,087 in 2019-20. Many people had lost their jobs due to economic slowdown even before the pandemic struck the country and during the pandemic much more people lost their employment. They had not been able to find new or alternative employment many of them are found working at significantly lower wages while the incomes of most self-employed people have significantly retracted than their previous levels. An estimated 97% of Indians have been left poorer by the pandemic lockdown periods and nearly 230 million additional individuals have fallen below the national minimum wage poverty line. To survive during the pandemic, the poorest households took the largest loans relative to their earnings. An estimate suggests that the poorest 25% of households borrowed 3.8 times their median income, as against 1.4 times for the top 25%. This, the study cautioned, could lead to a possible debt trap for them. Indicating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on salaried individuals, since April 1, 2020, more than 35 million workers in the formal sector have withdrawn from their retirement savings, or provident fund (PF) accounts to the tune of combined Rs 1.25 lakh crore. (The Indo-Italian Chamber of Commerce 2021) Country witnessed unexpected second wave of coronavirus spread, for which there was no adequate medical infrastructure and played havoc with economy on various fronts. Latest RBI estimates suggest that 2nd wave may leave Rs. 2 lakh crore dent on country's economic output. (The Time os India 2021) Deposits and cash holdings of the people have sharply fallen due to rising health bills. Its cascading effect on per capita income will be known in the coming days.

Conclusion

Indian economy was on a downward trend already when the country had to be put in a lockdown due to spreading Coronavirus in March 2020. The economy had to be shut down for months together thereafter. Even after opening it gradually, the economic activity did not reach its pre-COVID levels due to fluctuating COVID cases and partial lockdown in different parts of the country. As it was being thought that India has overcome the pandemic, a second wave hit the country more ferociously. The second wave has brought more death and misery for which the health system and policy makers were not ready. It has further dented the economy and has made difficult its smooth recovery. The country is not yet out of the danger of the pandemic and is still battling the economic impact of the pandemic. India is facing the problem of falling investment and savings and Covid-induced restrictions and lockdown has almost shut down many crucial sectors of economy. During this period gross capital formation has steeply fallen severely affecting the saving rate and sharply contracted tax revenues. Weakening fiscal capacity has enfeebled our combat against the rising fiscal challenges. Economic growth outcome will largely depend on the balance between the positive contribution of various sectors of economy and the fluctuating pandemic related trends. A fiscal stimulus is the need of the hour to inject purchasing power into the economy.

Indian policy makers and political leadership will have to work overtime to recover the country from inequality, indebtedness and insufficient investment unbalanced recovery. The Covid will have lasting economic, social as well as health consequences, which will require continued government vigilance and support. It may have to rewrite of the rules of the economic game to ensure an inclusive, sustainable economic growth to maintain its name and place in the global economy.

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Reclaiming the Forgotten History of Punjab

- Ravinder Singh

The History of Punjab is intertwined with the history of the broader Indian subcontinent and the surrounding regions of South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. Historically known as Sapta Sindhu, i.e., the Land of Seven Rivers, the name Punjab was given by later Muslim conquerors who invaded Indian subcontinent. The first question that arises when talking about the history of Punjab is what is Punjab? Which Punjab's history do we want to talk about? What kind of history do we have so far? How much does this history succeed in telling the story of Punjab? There are many such questions which need to be addressed. To find answers to such questions, we must also consider the method of historiography and its tools. The process of writing history is centuries old but with the passage of time the approach towards writing history and deciding on the reliability of historical sources have also changed a lot. A very detailed discussion is required to understand all these issues, but this paper is limited in its scope and topic.

The first question is which Punjab and its history we are talking about. We can relate this question through the geographical location of Punjab and the appearance of the word 'Punjab' as the name of this region in the travelogue of Muslim traveler Ibne-Batuta in the 14th century for the first time. It is literally *Panfnad* rephrased. This word gives us the actual geographical description of the region. Any other description whether it is ethnic, religious or socio-political will be inadequate in the sense that it is bound to be one-dimensional in view of the historical fact that the ancient society of the region has been the product of ethnic, religious, cultural and social diversity and plurality. (Dawn 2015)

From the time when Punjab is known as Punjab, its period is limited to the middle ages only. The reason for this is that the land with five rivers at that time was marked as *Panj-Aab* or Punjab from the non-Punjabi point of view. Before Punjab, this region was known as *Panchnad* and Sapta Sindhu as well. Sapta Sindhu means land with seven rivers. Sindhu means the ancient streams that flow out of the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. It was on the banks of these streams that the development of Indian human civilization took place. The name of Sapta Sindhu comes up at several places in the *Rig-Veda*. In its chapter 8 it's written "who will save us from our mortal enemies in the Sapta Sindhu?". The holy book, *Zend Avesta* of Zoroastrians, also gives us the geographic description of this land. It says, 'I, Ahur Mazda, had created the fifteenth country. It is HaftaHindva which is spread over seven rivers. Linguistically the sound of 's' is pronounced as 'h' in the early Persian region so the Hafta stands for Sapta (as in Hafta/Sapta for seven days of a week). The Sapta-Sindhava region was bounded by Saraswati in the East, by the Sindhu in the West and the five in between were Satudru, Vipasa, Asikni, Parusni and Vitasta. Identification of Rigvedic rivers is the single most important way of establishing the geography of the early Vedic era. Rivers with certain identifications stretch from eastern Afghanistan to the western Gangetic plain, clustering in the undivided ancient Punjab.

A number of names can be shown to have been re-applied to other rivers as the center of Vedic culture moved eastward from the central Vedic heartland in undivided Punjab. It is possible to establish a clear picture for the latest phase of the *Rigveda*, thanks to the Nadistutisukta (10.75), which contains a geographically ordered list of rivers. The most prominent river of the *Rigveda* is the 4925 kms (3061 miles) long Sarasvati, next to the 3249 kms (2019 miles) long Indus. The Rig Veda mentions Sarasvati river as between Yamuna to the East and river Sutlej to the west. The *Mahabharata* clearly talks about this massive Sarasvati drying up. The mighty and perennial Sarasvati flowed from the Himalayan Glaciers to the Rann of Kutch where it emptied into the Arabian sea. Dwaraka of Lord Krishna was part of this civilization. (Prasad May 25, 2017) 2704 kms (1690 miles) long Ganges River was also flowing at that time into the Bay of Bengal. Sarasvati started drying up in 4000 BC due to tectonic plate shifts which blocked the glacier source and changed the course of the Yamuna & Sutlej Rivers. This made River Sarasvati dependent on rains, not glacial ice. Gradually the whole river was buried under the Thar desert sand dunes, leaving only disconnected pools and lakes here and there. The Yamuna river soon started pouring into the Ganges River instead of Sarasvati and The Sutlej River started pouring into the Indus River. When the Sarasvati River started drying up, the whole civilization may have migrated to fertile lands-

some to Ganges, some to south west of India from Goa to Kerala. (Wikipedia)

In the great epic the *Mahabharata* we find at several places the description of Punjab in terms of its geographical position and socio-religious structures. Punjab was called Aratta and its people Balhika. *Mahabharata* also suggested Punjab to be inhabited by demons. “Two demons, Vahi and Hik, lived in the river Vipasha. Their descendants are called Vahik, they were not created by Prajapati (In Punjabi Vahi stands for cultivation and likewise Vahik means cultivators). Panini also used the word Vahik for Punjab, his homeland, in his universally celebrated book of Sanskrit grammar '*Ashthadhyayi*'. The meaning of the word, Panini explains, is 'a region free of religious orthodoxy'. Another name of Punjab was Madra or MadraDesa. Panini writes about the MadraJanapada as a part of Punjab with its capital at Sakala or Sangla, modern Sialkot. Greek armies led by Alexander invaded Punjab in the 4th century BC called it Penta Potamia. Buddhist literature describes Punjab as Uttra Path.

The purpose of this discussion is to argue that locating the history of Punjab in the period of the origin of its name Punjab only, will deprive it of its history in entirety. The name Punjab determines the political boundaries of the place and hence it becomes difficult to explore or talk about the ancient history of Punjab within these defined political boundaries. Punjab belonged to the same territory even before its present naming, but its scope was much wider. Known for its seven or more rivers, this region was known as Saptasindhava in the vocabulary or dialect of its inhabitants and is also mentioned in Vedic texts. In this sense, the history of the Punjab goes back thousands of years. But those ancient sources of history have been excluded from the category of authentic sources of modern historiography. It is unfair to record and examine the unwritten events of thousands of years ago through the tools of modern historiography. The knowledge of these ancient events comes from other sources. To disregard those sources as evidence and, on this basis, to dismiss the history of the time as fiction would be tantamount to turning a blind eye to the historical heritage of the Punjab. We are currently experiencing the consequences of such practices.

These two major issues come to the fore in describing the relevant history of the Punjab. Due to the lack of archeological facts and evidence required under modern historiography, the history of the Punjab is deprived of its antiquity. In this context, it seems necessary to distinguish between the modern practice of historiography and the ancient Indian process of historiography. The basic process of writing history is connected with narration. It is not historic to record any kind of archeological material or events as mere records. It is necessary to create a narrative to present those events, objects and facts, only then can it

become a part of written history. It also means that the process of writing history can be influenced by a particular point of view at a particular time and place. In such a situation it becomes much easier to reject unwritten historical sources. This becomes even clearer in the context of the history of the Punjab. Since we know Punjab only a few hundred years ago, we are reluctant to make any claim on the history of Punjab older than this.

Another important question arises as to how far it was natural to consider the historicity of the Punjab as authentic till the Middle Ages, or were there some other political reasons. It would be an injustice to the antiquity of Punjab and its historical legacy if the ancient sources and methods of historiography are ignored in the history of Punjab. Punjab has its own distinct tradition of writing history on land which has been going on uninterruptedly. Our history is a living history because we have kept centuries old events and practices alive through our memories and cultural traditions. Therefore, living conditions and events may not require any proof, they are all present in our daily life as obvious evidence. Our age-old historiographical tradition is also different and more authentic from that of prevalent practices with regard to its mass acceptability. The ancient history of Punjab is readily available through its knowledge texts (*gyanagranth*), which should not be contested for their authenticity. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to use the word *Itihasa* than history in the context of Indian historiography as the practice is centuries old.

Every civilization has evolved its own ways to record history and effectively transfer it to the next generations. Writing it on papers is a very recent practice and comparatively smaller part of composing history with regard to the other alternative oral traditions. The largely practiced western model of historiography relies on some set parameters for writing history based on physically available evidence and proofs of archeological findings. Anything available other than these set parameters are not considered as facts, authentic sources or reliable information for history writing. This type of approach for writing history lacks a holistic perspective to see our past. Moreover, the same history tells us about the destruction of ancient structures, burning of valuable texts and rich folk art and crafts during the change in political systems. Those were actually the acts of destroying once history present in physical form. But an equally powerful argument can be placed in support of the fact that history still exists even if the physical evidence is destroyed. That's why *Itihasa* is a living history since we are still practicing past traditions and carrying the knowledge in and as *Smritis*. It is also a known fact that only victorious Kings and rulers get their political achievements documented and registered as historical memoirs. History on the other side gets completely ignored.

While discussing the history of Punjab there are certain important aspects related to historiography and conceptualizing identity of Punjab. History has different methodologies and concepts of writing events of the past whereas in Indian tradition there is a different approach of remembering the past and writing its story called Itihasa. Itihasa is a combination of three Sanskrit words Iti, ha and Aas, which means it happened like that. So *Itihasa* is not just a record or chronology of events that happened but it's a narrative of time and space comprising a larger number of events. Narrative of events in Itihasa is created like storytelling techniques and for that reason it is described as an Epic as well. Most important element of this story telling technique is its purpose or motive of narration. Itihasa is narrated in a way to give an understanding of events that lead to a certain situation. Further it creates deeper knowledge of the past while analyzing available facts and evidence. Narrator of Itihasa is generally an omnipresent entity in the narrative and sometimes also participates in the events. The viewpoint or focus of Itihasa largely remains unbiased as it tries to put all aspects of all sides involved to give a true picture. The testing stone for concluding Itihasa always remains *dharma* centric. The meaning of *dharma* here is not religion but the path of righteousness. So, *dharma* is of prime importance while narrating Itihasa of particular events, time or space. That's why the tradition of telling Itihasa is conceptually different from that of History writing. When we talk about Ancient Indian history, we may not get the archeological evidence or other historiographical material for certain reasons to narrate our past but we definitely have a profound living history and oldest living civilization without any major rupture till now. We are continuously living our present with our oldest socio-cultural traditional past. It requires no other methodological guarantee to prove that our History is not merely based on Epics, allegedly false stories. An evident living being does not require any evidence to prove that he is alive. Similarly, our living history does not require any archeological proof that it does not exist otherwise.

So why do we need Itihasa? Indian historiography or Itihasa is basically *dharma* centric in its overview. Itihasa narrates past events with a purpose of analyzing the righteous way of life or telling the lessons learnt from the past and making analysis and testing the judgement thereon lies with the upholding of *dharma*. Now the meaning of *dharma* is not religion in this context. *dharma* is simply a righteous path. Vedic sources, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* as Itihasa are the reliable sources of History. Presentation of Itihasa in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* is in the form of epic narrative. Understanding historiography as Itihasa from an Indian perspective eases its theoretical difficulties. The common thread between the two is that of the narrative, which is an essential part of writing history. Narrative writing falls into the realm of

literature and has its own distinct narrative techniques. Presenting the events of the past is an important part of the narrative process. Once written, it is read as a narrative fiction. If it contains historical details, it becomes a historical narrative. But in the scales of modern historiography, it is dismissed as mere fiction, while in our Indian tradition, Itihasa is recorded as such.

History does not speak without narration. It uses narrative to describe and analyze a sequence of past events, and interrogate the cause and effect that are related to them. Mere chronology of events cannot constitute history because selecting and arranging any chronology of events is not free from ideological viewpoints and power play. History is constituted from a certain perspective based on hegemonic political ideas that is why the available history of the last two centuries of Punjab fails to provide a clearer picture of its identity. That is why no objective version of history can be claimed. Reclaiming one's own part of history is also not free from any ideological positions and political consciousness. The society defines its identity with the help of historical narratives. If we understand the concept of Itihas (History) in its own tradition without inducing the norms of western categories of history, only then a clearer picture can be constructed from the readings of a region's folklore (myths, legends, epics) and other literary texts. This is so because with the idea of tracing history through linguistic constructions and artistic developments, only a few theoretical formulations can be attempted for establishing the historical migrations and movements of the human race. Moreover, this method is not considered very appropriate or viable to define diversified socio-cultural history of a region.

The historical heritage of the Punjab cannot be meaningful and complete unless we consider it from the point of view of its antiquity. The land of Punjab is considered to be the cradle of Indian civilization, so every geographical, social, cultural and political event or story associated with this land bears witness to the history of Punjab as well as India. Vedic literature mentions a battle fought near the Ravi river in Dasarajan or Dasharajnya Battle of ten Kings. (RV, Hymns 18, 33 & 83) The meaning of Mahabharata in ancient literature is also the history of India. The geographical area described in it is also related to Punjab. Reading this history in the form of a narrative, it can be talked about in many contexts but the most important is its historical aspect. There are references to various tribes and districts of the Punjab or MadraDesh during the Mahabharata period, which can still be identified by their names. The precise constellation calculations with which all these events have been recorded have also been confirmed by the present scientific techniques. One more question can be asked here: if a big event like Mahabharata happened in Punjab then why is it being forgotten in

Punjab itself? There may be several reasons for this, one of which may be that most of the kings and tribes of the Punjab were fighting on behalf of the Kauravas when war was raging between the two great powers. After the defeat of the Kauravas, a natural focal point of history became the victorious party, i.e., the Pandavas and the events associated with them were recorded in later history. The saga of the winner is sung and the loser is forgotten.

An important event of the Rigvedic era was the "Battle of Ten Kings" which was fought on the banks of the river Parusni (identified with the present-day Ravi river) between king Sudas of the Trtsu lineage of the Bharata clan on the one hand and a confederation of ten tribes on the other. The ten tribes pitted against Sudas comprising five major tribes: the Purus, the Druhyus, the Anus, the Turvasas and the Yadus; in addition to five minor ones: the Pakthas, the Alinas, the Bhalanas, the Visanins and the Sivas. Sudas was supported by the Vedic Rishi Vasishta, while his former Purohit, the Rishi Viswamitra, sided with the confederation of ten tribes. (Frawley 2000) Sudas had earlier defeated Samvaran and ousted him from Hastinapur. It was only after the death of Sudas that Samvaran could return to his kingdom. (Singh 1989: 14)

The next most important event in the Punjab was Alexander's invasion. Details of these events are available from a number of sources. Therefore, historical details of events after this period would be available even if the point of view of recording those events becomes biased. In the light of these important historical events the History of Punjab is incomplete if we disregard History beyond 1000 years. Generally, whenever we think about the history of Punjab, we hardly look beyond over a thousand years of political activities. Along with that the history written during this period was based on the oral and written records of waring, invading and attacking factions. Then why do we tend to disregard the history of this geographical area beyond a few hundred years or so? Is it only because of the lack of written records and the predominance of the so-called archaeological evidence? Unfortunately, this situation is the result of colonial conditioning of knowledge structures.

Here it is important to mention the influence of colonialism and post-colonialism in the presentation of history in modern times. The root cause of the problems in the presentation of Indian history in modern times lies in the period of colonialism. Intending to rule India for a longer time, the British imperial rulers decided to use history to influence the society and culture of India. In this connection it is pertinent to mention the resolution of Lord Macaulay dated 2 February 1835, when it introduced the English-based educational policy in India, which began to change the social and cultural consciousness of the Indian people. The aim of this policy was to make the Indian people feel inferior and to

establish the superiority of English culture. Under this policy, the Western principles of acquiring knowledge began to be imposed. The Indian people began to feel ashamed of some of their own traditions along with certain evil practices. It was with reference to these evil practices that a sense of inferiority was created among the Indian people, and as a result they began to lose their self-confidence. With this policy, Indian culture was attacked so severely that people began to break away from their traditional heritage of knowledge. It was at this time that the new Indian mind, educated in the field of English, began to embrace the Western principles of thinking, reasoning and contemplation without questioning. It was a state of mental slavery for which the colonial government introduced a new education policy. Books of English literature and other disciplines also changed the traditional literary forms here and also changed our attitude towards knowledge. In the same way, our consciousness of looking at history was also changed. Emphasis was placed on undermining Itihasa as history because it did not meet the new standards of historiography. Our ancient historical sources 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' were also confined to the category of Epic and fiction while the tradition of writing history in the genre of epic poetry is very old. The same thing happened after the independence of India when the consciousness of freedom from the mental slavery of colonialism came but the grip of English educational policy remained strong. Consciousness about history is very important in the formation of any nation. More ancient and extensive is the history, deeper and stronger are the foundations of the nation. This is even more important for a diverse country like India because it is not only the land of the world's oldest civilization but also the oldest and living civilization.

Another ill effect of western influence over historiography in the post-colonial period is, the representation of history of the sub-continent on communal lines which is a wilful misconstruction. It can also be easily traced in the divisive policies and designs of imperial power. This is very much true in case of Punjab, where centuries old amalgamated society has been cleverly sliced on several occasions. Every social group has been trying to trace its roots up to the point from where it can establish and differentiate its unique identity. However, in this endeavor, they disregard the age-old process of acculturation taking place in this land. This kind of approach has contributed only to create a disintegrated and disfigured identity of Punjab and Punjabi people. Keeping such sentiments in mind, the contemporary Punjabi writers have been often consciously adopting the literary practices of re-interpreting historical events to trace native discourses of Punjabi Identities.

In Punjabi, the focus of interrogating the past for creating better understanding

of history is more on realizing Punjabi cultural and social history. The process of re-interpreting folklore and other written narratives for representing various aspects of society differently has gained impetus since the emergence of New Critical thoughts. In the post-colonial period and conceptualization of Post-colonialism, every intellectual arena of knowledge has acquired a different perception of looking at the past. In the present time, the most important and relevant thematic paradigm of 'fictional narrative' is of re-telling history from a renewed perspective. For this purpose, Punjabi writers are consciously deconstructing myths and past narratives of history. As a matter of fact, formerly colonized nations are passing through the process of decolonization. They are also de-conditioning their misinterpreted respective histories for creating nationhood. Similarly, every socio-cultural group is trying to establish its unique identity by re-creating and re-telling historical narratives with their own ideological convictions. It is very interesting to observe that even in this ongoing process, paradoxically, the very deep imbibed characteristics of Punjab and Punjabi community are re-emerging profoundly, without any prejudices of race, caste, religion and other sectarian divides.

At the end I wish to make a submission that in order to view the historical heritage and legacy of the Punjab from a non-partisan point of view, one has to acknowledge its antiquity and follow the Indian traditions of historiography i.e., *Itihasa*. The *dharma* centric narrative of *Itihasa* makes it more credible and acceptable. The *dharma*-centric nature of history means that when a narrative of a period is created, a message or lesson is conveyed through it. Therefore, when a narrative is constructed for the narration of history, historical persons are presented as characters. The events and situations related with their lives are recorded impartially. Then the tension between them is taken to a conclusion or to solution through actions. The end of all this narrative is determined by *dharma*. Testifying the historical events on the parameters of *dharma* makes it *dharma*-centric *Itihasa*. In *Ramayana*, for example, Rama and Ravana are two opposite and different characters and both have their own strengths and weaknesses. In *Ramayana* the conclusive victory is not only of Rama but righteousness over the wrongful. Similarly, the narrative in the *Mahabharata* also focuses on *dharma*. The two parties involved, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, become equal due to their merits and demerits. The Kauravas also had all of Krishna's army but Krishna himself was with the Pandavas. Krishna acted as the upholder of *dharma* at that time when he delivered the famous discourse of *Bhagavad Gita* in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. This discourse was the pronouncement of the righteous path. It becomes the core conclusive guiding-line for composing the narrative of *Itihasa*. In this war, victory or defeat is not for the two sides, but for the establishment of *dharma*.

Similarly, when we talk about the Sikh history of the Middle Ages, Guru Gobind Singh's following verses from Bachitar Natak (*Dasam Granth*), relating to martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur are most relevant:

ਤਲਿਕਜੰਦੂਰਾਖਾਪ੍ਰਭਤਾਕਾ॥ਕੀਨੇਬਡੇਕਲੁਮਹਸਿਕਾ॥

ਸਾਧਨਹੇਤਇਤੀਜਨਿਕਿਰੀ॥ਸੀਸੁਦੀਆਪਰਸੀਨਉਚਰੀ॥੧੩॥

ਧਰਮਹੇਤਸਿਕਾਜਨਿਕੀਆ॥ਸੀਸੁਦੀਆਪਰਸਰਿਰੁਨਦੀਆ॥

(He protected the forehead mark and sacred thread (of the Hindus) which marked a great event in the kali age.

For the sake of saints, he laid down his head without even a sigh. 13.

For the sake of dharma, he sacrificed himself.

He laid down his head but not his creed.)

Here Guru Gobind Singh has described the outcome of historical events of that time as a trial on the criterion of *dharma*. Here martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur symbolizes a moral victory over *adharm*. This example supports the Indian tradition of historiography. Here history is not written in the form of victory or defeat of any particular person but the establishment of *dharma* is at its paramount core.

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Gravity Model Analysis of India's Trade Linkages with ASEAN Countries during Pre and Post AIFTA Regime

Raj Kumar Singh, Jyoti Kumari & Ajay Kumar

Abstract

India has long and intimate history of socio-cultural and economic association with Southeast Asian nations. The present study revisits India's economic engagement with ASEAN nations during pre and post ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement using Gravity Model Theory (Tinbergen 1962). The study is distinct in the sense that it specifically examines the application of Eli Filip Heckscher Bertil Ohlin (1933) and Staffan Linder (1961) theories by employing GDP per capita differential. The study reports that India and ASEAN are emerging economies with impressive share in global DGP, reflecting vast potential for economic co-operation. India's growth of trade, exports, and import is higher in Pre-AIFTA period; however, the overall growth rate of trade, exports, and imports with ASEAN countries is also impressive vis a vis India's global growth rate of trade. The empirical estimates appear consistent with the fundamentals of gravity model as the study reports positive coefficients for economy size and negative coefficient for distance. Trade liberalisation policies and foreign direct investment are unsupportive for boosting India's external sector growth, thus, suggesting rethinking of trade policy and FDI policy. The positive coefficient of per capita GDP differential indicates that trade between India and ASEAN countries happens due to difference in level of economic development based on comparative advantages, proving that trade relations between India and ASEAN are determined by Heckscher-Ohlin hypothesis.

Key Words: Trade, AIFTA Regime, Gravity Model Theory, H-O Theory, Linder's theory.

JEL Codes: F10, F13, F14, F15, F17.

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1. Introduction: India's economic, cultural and civilizational linkages with Southeast Asian region goes back to the pre-Christian era, the footprints of which is still evident in their language, customs, rituals, archaeological remains, architecture and Sanskrit inscriptions (Ngaibiakching and Pande, 2020). The relations between India and Southeast Asian nations mostly determined by Cold War regime as India's tilt towards erstwhile USSR and ASEAN nation's pro- US position dictated Indo-ASEAN relations (Yong and Mun, 2009). ASEAN as regional organisation was established on 8th August 1967 and presently consists of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos Myanmar and Cambodia with the motto "one vision, one identity and one community" to promote peace, progress and prosperity. Collapse of USSR (1991), financial crisis of India (1991), economic reform programmes in India and beginning of spectacular economic development among ASEAN nations were driving forces for the beginning of India's economic engagement with Southeast Asian nations. Under the aegis of "Look East Policy" initiatives (1991), India's relations with ASEAN starts evolving consistently from India's sectoral dialogue status' (1992) to full 'dialogue partner' (1996); 'summit level partnership' (2002) and 'strategic partner' (2012). Trade is one of the important determinants of growth among the nations (Ambatkar, 2001). The turning point in Indo ASEAN economic relation is signing of "Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation" in October 2003 (Gaur, 2003). To stimulate economic engagement, ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement signed in 2009 in Bangkok and ASEAN-India Trade in Services and Investment Agreement signed in 2015 in New Delhi. An ASEAN-India Commemorative held in New Delhi(2017) with the theme "Shared Values, Common Destiny" which confer the clear and laud message of growing dimensions of Indo-ASEAN economic integration.

Size of the economy is one of the magnificent factors used to assess the strength of economic tie between the nations and regional groupings. Table-1, reports that the GDP of India and ASEAN was 1.20 percent and 2.94 percent respectively of global GDP in 1991, which increased to 3.29 percent and 6.91 percent respectively in 2019. The combined GDP of both was 10.20 percent of global GDP in 2019 which indicates that jointly ASEAN and India form one of the big markets of world. India is growing at higher rate than ASEAN and world, as India's CAGR (8.54) is higher than CAGR of ASEAN (7.96) and world (4.71), which indicates that both India and ASEAN countries are emerging as large economies and can get benefits from mutual economic engagement.

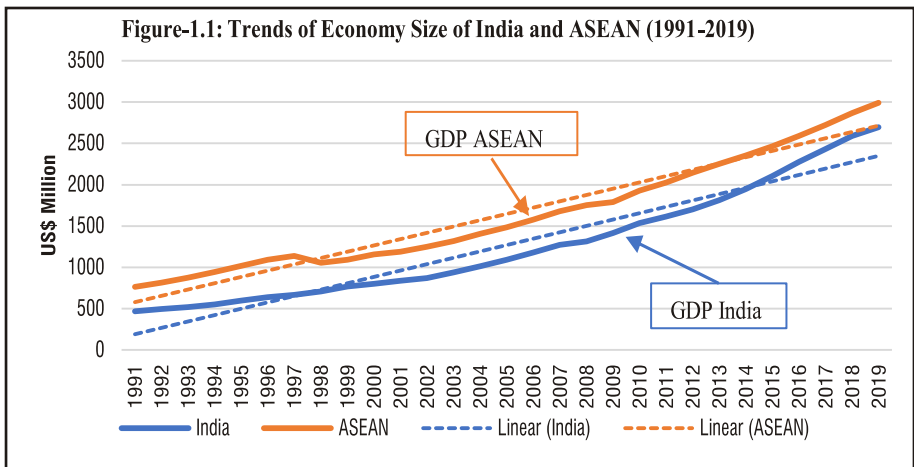
Table-1: Analysis of Economy Size of India and ASEAN Countries (Value in US\$ Billion)

Years	BRN	KHM	IDN	LAO	MYS	MMR	PHP	SNG	THD	VNM	ASEAN	India	World
1991	4.10	2.25	149.93	1.07	49.13	6.67	51.78	45.46	101.25	7.64	710.50	291.20	24166.73
% in Global GDP	0.02	0.01	0.62	0.00	0.20	0.03	0.21	0.19	0.42	0.03	2.94	1.20	100.00
2019	13.47	27.10	1119.09	18.74	364.68	74.28	376.82	374.40	544.26	261.92	6064.72	2889.95	87718.57
% in Global GDP	0.02	0.03	1.28	0.02	0.42	0.08	0.43	0.43	0.62	0.30	6.91	3.29	100.00
CAGR	4.34	9.30	7.44	10.76	7.42	8.99	7.35	7.82	6.19	13.45	7.96	8.54	4.71

Note: BRN- Brunei, KHM- Cambodia, IDN-Indonesia, LAO-Laos, MYS-Malaysia, MMR-Myanmar, PHP-Philippines, SNG-Singapore, THD-Thailand, VNM-Vietnam

Source: Authors’ Calculation, Data from UNCTAD Stat.

Figure-1.1, displays the trends of GDP of India and ASEAN from 1991 to 2019. Trend lines state that ASEAN’s countries combined GDP is higher than GDP of India and trends of GDP of both entities are reflecting the increasing tendency, which indicates that both are emerging economies.



Source: UNCOMTRADE

The current study is unique in the sense that it reviews the success of AIFTA in terms of India’s trade relations with ASEAN countries at the end of 30 years of economic engagement and identifies the factors that will facilitate to strengthen India’s relations with ASEAN countries by using the gravity model approach. Another argument to pursue this study is India’s increasing role in ASEAN region to maintain balance of power due to rising US-China conflict over South China Sea and East China Sea which is causing threat to the peace and unity of the ASEAN countries. India’s emergence as economic

power and rising Chinese threat inspired ASEAN countries to acknowledge India's presence in the region (Ngaibiakching and Pande, 2020).

The organisation of this study consists of six sections, namely introduction; literature review; research methodology and model specification; empirical analysis; conclusions and policy implications; and limitations and scope for future study.

2. Review of Literature: Gravity model pioneered by Tinbergen (1962) and Poyhonen (1963) has been used to empirically analysed India's bilateral trade flows with ASEAN countries. Many studies have been conducted to examine Indo-ASEAN trade relations but few studies have used gravity model to explain bilateral trade flows. Bhattacharya and Banerjee (2006) analysed India's bilateral trade with all its trading partners to evaluate the influence of three basic variables namely GDP of India, GDP of partner countries and Distance. The results suggested that trade responds less than proportionally to size and more than proportionally to distance. Further, colonial heritage is still an important factor in determining India's trade. Population has more influence on trade than per capita income of the trading partner. Kabir and Salim (2010) used gravity model to explain BIMSTEC's export and import pattern for 1996-2007 by using GDP, real factor endowment, similarity, distance and real exchange rate, common border, common language, bilateral trade agreement, governance and member of BIMSTEC. Gravity model results successfully explained the pattern of bloc, which supported the gravity estimates conducted on other economic blocs. Regression estimates showed that Linder hypothesis and Heckscher-Ohlin-Samuelson theorem explained the imports and exports pattern of BIMSTEC respectively. Binh et al., (2011) employed gravity model to analyse bilateral trade activities between Vietnam and 60 partner countries for the period 2000 to 2010. The estimated results indicate that economic size, market size, distance, and culture have expected and significant effect on bilateral trade flows. Hoa (2012) provided an analysis of ASEAN-India economic relations by applying endogenous growth trade-model for the period 1990-2008. Results found that India's real exchange rate fluctuations and terms of trade have significantly reduced ASEAN-India trade. India's growth and FDI have no significant impact on ASEAN-India trade. Tripathi and Leitao (2013) identified the determinants of India's bilateral trade flows to major 20 trading partners for the period 1998-2012. Results illustrates that there is a positive and significant effect of political globalization, cultural proximity, economic size, common border, and distance on India's bilateral trade. The positive effect of distance on India's bilateral trade has not support the previous findings and indicated that trade increased with geographical proximity only for the studied major trading partners. Yean and Yi (2014) compared the

impact of the AIFTA on ASEAN-5's manufactured goods exports to India and vice versa. The basic elements of model and common colony have positive significant effect on trade flows, while real effective exchange rate exhibited negative and insignificant impact in both models. FDI has positive but insignificant effect on India and ASEAN's exports of manufactured goods. Kumar and Ahmed (2015) pointed out the determinants of export and import flows of countries in the South Asia by employing a gravity model during the period 1985-2011. The results of augmented gravity model have suggested that the size of GDP and population among other factors have positive effect on export and import flows whereas distance and tariff have negative effect. Wani and Dhami (2016) applied gravity model for the cross-sectional data of 1995 and 2016 to reveal potential of India's trade against BRCS economies. The estimated results revealed that India's bilateral trade is positively and significantly affected by higher economic size in terms of GDP, per capita GDP and trade GDP ratio whereas RTA's positive effect was not significant. Distance has negatively affected India's trade. Relative factor endowment supported the Linder hypothesis i.e. similar countries trade more than dissimilar ones. Both models confirmed that considerable trade potential existed for India with BRCS countries. Renjini, et al. (2017) analysed potential of agricultural trade between India and ASEAN members for the period 1995-2014 by gravity model. The outcome of model suggested that GDP of India and ASEAN, common border, FTA, common language and common colony has positive effect on trade while distance and landlockedness of country has negative effect. Sarin (2018) employed a panel gravity model to understand the bilateral trade ties between India and ASEAN countries during 1991-2013. Besides primitive variables, absolute difference in GDP per capita, population of India and ASEAN nations, common border, language, trade openness and real exchange rate has been incorporated. All variables have expected signs and trade openness, population of both trading entities, product of GDPs and absolute per capita differentials are significant also. The coefficient of the absolute per capita GDP differential was positive and significant which support the H-O hypothesis. Singh et al, (2018) empirically analysed India's trade relations with SAARC countries using multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study validate that India's compound annual growth rate of trade was higher during the Pre-SAFTA period with All SAARC countries except Bangladesh. Ngaibiakching and Pande, (2020) pointed out that ASEAN states are in the dilemma due to the increasing threat of China in South China Seas and their heavy economic dependence on China. In such scenario ASEAN wishes the presence of India as greater counter power. Thus, India can fill this gap by build a regional order in Indo-Pacific region based on

formulating comprehensive policy consisting of economic co-operation, political engagement and strategic necessities.

On the basis of above-mentioned literature review it is observed that till now no comprehensive study using gravity model has been conducted on India's trade relations with ASEAN countries in pre and post AIFTA regime. Therefore, the current study "Gravity Model Analysis of India's Trade Linkages with ASEAN Countries during Pre and Post AIFTA Regime" is pursued to explain the various dimensions of Indo-ASEAN trade relations for policy evaluation and formulation.

3. Research Methodology and Model Specification: Research methodology and model specification is elaborated as below:

Objectives of the study: The present study is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To investigate India's trade performance with ASEAN countries in pre and post AIFTA period.
- ii. To identify factors which influence India's trade with ASEAN countries using Gravity Model Theory.
- iii. To assess India's trade potential and equilibrium with ASEAN countries.

Hypothesis of the Study: Corresponding to the objectives of the study, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

$H_{0(1)}$: There is no significant impact of independent variables on India's trade with ASEAN countries.

Scope of the Study: The scope of present study is confined to examine India's trade relations with ASEAN countries namely Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam during 1991-2019. The study is casual and empirical, which is based on secondary data. The data for analysis has been obtained from UNCOMTRADE database. The data related to GDP of India and ASEAN countries, Population of India and ASEAN countries, exchange rate, FDI inflows of India and per capita GDP of India and ASEAN countries been gathered from UNCTAD Stat. While data related to distance, language, border, landlocked and colonial link has been obtained from Centre for Prospective Studies and International Information (CEPII, France). Various software like MS-Excel, SPSS and STATA were used for computation and analysis purpose. The tools applied in the analysis include mean, standard deviation, unit root test dicky fuller and Philip Parron, correlation and gravity model. India's trade potential is computed with point estimates, and speed of convergence method. The random effect model was used for

empirical analysis as fixed effect model suffer from the problem of homogeneity and normality of data and also fails to recognise the impact of time invariant regressors such as distance, common language, common border etc. (Kabir and Salim, 2010; Kaur and Nanda, 2011; and Binh et al., 2011).

Theoretical Formulation of Gravity Model: Gravity model theory of trade based on the proposition of Tinbergen (1962) and Poyhonen (1963) is the analogous to Newton’s law of gravity in physics. Newton’s law of gravitation states that gravitational attraction between the two objects is the proportional to the product of their masses and divided by the squared distance between the gravity centres. The gravity model has been successfully applied to different types of flows such as migration, foreign direct investment, and more specifically, to international trade flows (Zarzo, 2003). Gravity model of Physics represented as follows:

$$F_{ij} = G \frac{M_i M_j}{D_{ij}^2} \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where, F_{ij} is the gravitational attraction; G is the gravitational constant; M_i and M_j are the mass of two objects; and D_{ij} is the distance. Thus, analogous to gravity model of physics the following gravity model of trade is represented:

$$T_{ij} = \frac{Y_i Y_j}{D_{ij}^2} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Where, T_{ij} is the trade flow from origin *country*_{*i*} to destination *country*_{*j*}; A is a constant term; Y_i and Y_j is the gross domestic product of country *i* and *j*; and D_{ij} is the distance between country *i* and *j*. Taking log of the both side of equation (2), we get:

$$\ln T_{ijt} = \ln A + \beta_1 \ln Y_{it} + \ln \beta_2 Y_{jt} - \beta_3 \ln D_{ijt} + \epsilon_{ijt} \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

The basic gravity equation (3) may be modified by adding some new variables to get Augmented Gravity Model Equation:

$$\begin{aligned} L_n(T_{ijt}) = & \alpha + \beta_1 L_n(Y_{it}) + \beta_2 L_n(Y_{jt}) + \beta_3 L_n(D_{ijt}) + \beta_4 L_n(Pop_{it}) + \beta_5 L_n(Pop_{jt}) \\ & + \beta_6 L_n(TOP_{it}) + \beta_7 L_n(TOP_{jt}) + \beta_8 L_n(ER_{ijt}) + \beta_9 L_n(RFE_{ijt}) + \beta_{10} L_n(FDI_{it}) + \\ & \beta_{11} (Language) + \beta_{12} (Border) + \beta_{13} L_n(Colonial) + \beta_{14} L_n(Landlock) + u_{ijt} \dots\dots (4) \end{aligned}$$

Where,

- i** = India
- j** = 1, 2, 3, ... (ASEAN countries)
- t** = 1991, 1992, 1993, ..., 2019
- L_n** = Natural Logs
- T_{ijt}**: Bilateral trade flows between India and country *j* in year *t*.

- Y_{it} :** India's GDP in Year t (measured in US\$ millions)
- Y_{jt} :** GDP of country j in year t (measured in US\$ millions)
- Pop_{it} :** India's population in year t (measured in millions)
- Pop_{jt} :** Population of country j in year t (measured in millions)
- Dis_{ij} :** Distance between India and country j (in kilometres)
- TOP_{it} :** Trade Openness of India with the World
- TOP_{jt} :** Trade Openness of country j with the world
- ER_{ijt} :** Exchange rate between India and country j in year t
- RFE_{ijt} :** Real Factor Endowment is Absolute Difference in per capita GDP of India and country j Hence, $RFE_{ijt} = |\ln PGDP_i - \ln PGDP_j|$, where $PGDP_{ij}$ is per capita GDP of respective countries.
- FDI_{it} :** FDI inflows into India in year t (measured in US\$ million)
- Language:** Dummy variable for pair of countries share common language that take the value 1 if countries having common official language, and 0 otherwise;
- Border:** Dummy variable for pair of countries share common border that take the value 1 if both countries share border, and 0 otherwise
- Colonial link:** Dummy variable for pair of countries share common colonial link that take the value 1 if both countries were under same colonizer and 0 otherwise
- Landlock:** Dummy variable that take the value 1 if country is landlocked, and 0 otherwise
- u_{it} :** Error-term, which is assumed to be normally distributed with zero mean and constant variance for all observations and to be uncorrelated.

The expected impact for the above variables:

- Variables $\beta_1; \beta_2; \beta_4; \beta_5; \beta_6; \beta_7; \beta_{10}; \beta_{11}; \beta_{12}; \beta_{13}$ and β_{14} have positive impact on India's trade with ASEAN countries.
- Variable β_3 has negative impact on India's trade with ASEAN countries.
- Variables β_8 , and β_9 , and may have negative or positive impact on India's trade with ASEAN countries. The positive coefficient of β_9 shows similar countries trade less than dissimilar ones which support the Heckscher-Ohlin hypothesis whereas, negative value of coefficient explains that similar countries trade more than dissimilar ones which support the Linder Hypothesis.

Trade Potential: The results of gravity model from Equation (4) was used to calculate trade potential between India and ASEAN countries following Batra (2006), and Kaur and Nanda (2011). These estimated values essentially depict the trade potential with each of the partner countries, given the constraints of GDP, population, distance, openness, exchange rate, investment inflows, relative factor endowment, common language, border, colony and landlock. Trade potential has been calculated from point estimates method and speed of convergence method. These are explained as follows:

Point Estimated Method: In this method, potential trade has been compared with the actual trade to consider whether the flows of bilateral trade between two countries has been overused or underused. For this, ratio method has been used in this study. It is the ratio of predicted trade flows (P) to actual export flows (A). If the ratio (P/A) exceeds one, there is an implication in terms of potential expansion of India's trade with the respective country and vice versa.

Speed of Convergence: There is an uncertainty in calculating trade potential based on the above point

estimates. Thus, speed of convergence has been also applied to avoids such uncertainty as this method

exploits the dynamic structure of data during estimation, which offers more reliability than the analysis

of point estimates (Kaur and Nanda, 2011). Speed of convergence is defined as the average growth rate

of potential trade divided by average growth rate of actual trade between the years of observations.

$$\text{Speed of convergence} = \left(\frac{\text{Average growth rate of potential trade}}{\text{Average growth rate of actual trade}} \times 100 \right) - 100$$

If the growth rate of potential is lower than that of actual trade then there is a convergence and the computed speed of convergence is negative. There is divergence in opposite case. Negative speed of convergence reflects large scope for trade expansion while positive speed of convergence reflects that India has overused its trade potential with a particular ASEAN country. However, negative speed of convergence cannot reflect the convergence of actual trade flows toward potential trade. Hence, the study estimated the following simple regression model to estimate the convergence of India's actual trade flows towards the estimated equilibrium:

$$\Delta T_{ij,t} = \alpha + \beta (T_{ij,t-1} - \text{Pot}_{ij,t-1})$$

Here, $\Delta T_{ij,t}$ = Change in actual trade value in time period t; $(T_{ij,t-1} - Pot_{ij,t-1})$ = Difference between actual and potential trade in the previous period (t-1).

Certainly, for convergence, β should be negative and significant.

4. Empirical Analysis: This section discussed the empirical analysis of the study and elaborated as below:

India’s Trade Performance in the Milieu of ASEAN-India FTA: India will be completing the three decades of her economic engagement with ASEAN countries under the aegis of “Look East Policy” during 2022. Therefore, it is pertinent to evaluate the success of India’s economic performance with ASEAN countries during pre and post Asian-India Free Trade Agreement (AIFTA, 2009) in terms of trade, exports, and imports. Table-2, presents the analysis of India’s trade performance with ASEAN countries during pre and post-AIFTA period. During the pre-AIFTA period India’s CAGR of trade with ASEAN and world were 20.42 percent and 16.44 percent respectively in 2008, which declined to 8.11 percent and 6.11 percent respectively during the post- AIFTA period. The overall CAGR of trade with ASEAN and world was 14.70 and 11.57. The findings confirm that India’s trade performance with ASEAN has been phenomenally good during the pre-AIFTA period as compared post-AIFTA period. The analysis implies that the AIFTA be enforced with full synergy to attain the maximum benefits of economic engagement. Thus, it can be concluded that India has been successful inattain ing the objective of economic integration with ASEAN countries. Among the ASEAN countries, India’s CAGR was highest for Cambodia followed by Brunei, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Philippines.

Table-2: Analysis of India’s Trade Performance with ASEAN Countries (Value in US\$ Million)

Year	Global	ASEAN	BRN	KHM	IDN	LAO	MYS	MMR	PHP	SNG	THD	VNM
1991	37409.30	1959.51	0.68	0.02	214.26	0.04	593.86	55.06	95.83	700.65	247.73	51.39
2008	497573.00	46131.90	343.02	58.12	9090.65	5.12	10495.80	1143.60	982.67	17158.65	4670.07	2184.21
CAGR	16.44	20.42	44.21	59.85	24.66	33.03	18.41	19.54	14.67	20.70	18.86	24.68
2009	443166.60	41866.93	514.34	45.31	10602.63	27.11	8514.98	1390.01	1040.28	12969.17	4486.69	2276.41
2019	802134.50	91289.64	638.18	250.59	20079.27	31.91	16676.11	1463.63	2192.45	25632.58	11365.96	12958.96
CAGR	6.11	8.11	2.18	18.65	6.59	1.64	6.95	0.52	7.74	7.05	9.74	19.00
CAGR (1991-2019)	11.57	14.70	27.69	40.07	17.60	26.95	12.65	12.43	11.83	13.72	14.64	21.84

Source: Authors’ Calculation, Data from UNCOMTRADE.

Table-3, presents the analysis of India’s exports performance with ASEAN countries. India’s CAGR of exports with ASEAN and world were 18.93 percent and 14.61 percent respectively during pre-AIFTA period which declined to 6.70 percent and 6.22 percent respectively during post-AIFTA period. India’s overall CAGR of exports with ASEAN was 13.37 percent which is greater than CAGR of exports with world i.e., 10.89 percent, which may be due impact of “Look East Policy”. Among the ASEAN countries, India’s CAGR of exports was highest for Cambodia followed by Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, and Thailand.

Table-3: Analysis of India’s Export Performance with ASEAN Countries (Value in US\$ Million)

Year	Global	ASEAN	BRN	KHM	IND	LAO	MYS	MMR	PHP	SNG	THD	VNM
1991	17899.90	1020.07	0.56	0.02	147.00	0.04	202.78	3.84	64.37	389.53	198.99	12.93
2008	181860.90	19433.47	17.15	53.85	2659.31	4.59	3034.41	237.33	755.03	8853.90	2005.28	1812.61
CAGR	14.61	18.93	22.30	59.14	18.57	32.18	17.25	27.45	15.58	20.17	14.56	33.74
2009	176765.00	17898.83	25.30	41.56	3002.99	26.92	3524.71	208.18	697.31	6827.54	1710.81	1833.50
2019	323250.73	34249.66	56.81	204.00	4515.38	29.29	6268.54	956.90	1635.53	10738.69	4331.65	5512.87
CAGR	6.22	6.70	8.43	17.25	4.16	0.85	5.93	16.48	8.90	4.63	9.73	11.64
CAGR (1991-2019)	10.89	13.37	17.94	39.05	13.01	26.56	13.04	21.78	12.25	12.58	11.63	24.14

Source: Authors’ Calculation, Data from UNCOMTRADE.

Table-4, presents the analysis of India’s imports performance with ASEAN countries. India’s CAGR of imports with ASEAN and world were 21.76 percent and 17.79 percent respectively during pre-AIFTA period which declined to 9.06 percent and 6.04 percent respectively during post-AIFTA period. India’s overall CAGR of imports with ASEAN was 15.79 percent which is greater than CAGR of imports with world i.e., 12.11 percent, which may be due the impact of “Look East Policy”. Among the ASEAN countries, India’s CAGR of imports was maximum with Brunei followed by Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and Myanmar.

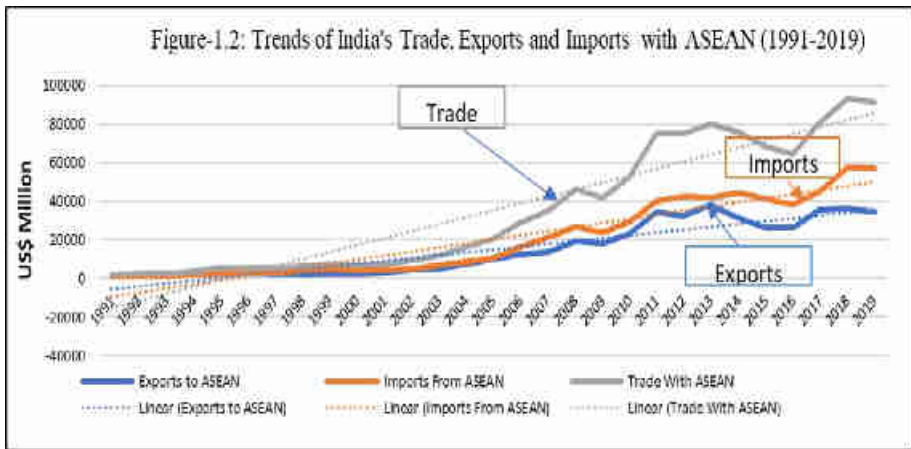
Table-4: Analysis of India’s Import Performance with ASEAN Countries (Value in US\$ Million)

Year	Global	ASEAN	BRN	KHM	IDN	LAO	MYS	MMR	PHP	SNG	THD	VNM
1991	19509.40	939.44	0.11	0.00	67.25	0.00	391.08	51.22	31.46	311.12	48.74	38.45
2008	315712.10	26698.44	325.86	4.27	6431.34	0.52	7461.39	906.27	227.64	8304.75	2664.79	371.60

CAGR	17.79	21.76	60.03	--	30.77	--	18.94	18.41	12.35	21.31	26.54	14.28
2009	266401.60	23968.10	489.04	3.74	7599.64	0.19	4990.27	1181.82	342.97	6141.63	2775.88	442.91
2019	478883.73	57039.98	581.37	46.59	15563.89	2.62	10407.57	506.73	556.91	14893.89	7034.31	7446.09
CAGR	6.04	9.06	1.74	28.69	7.43	30.00	7.63	-8.12	4.97	9.26	9.74	32.61
CAGR (1991-2019)	12.11	15.79	35.82	--	21.46	--	12.43	8.53	10.81	14.82	19.43	20.69

Source: Authors' Calculation, Data from UNCOMTRADE.

Figure-1.2, displays the trends of India's trade, exports and imports with and from ASEAN from 1991 to 2019. Trend lines state that India's imports from ASEAN are more than her exports which shows that balance of trade is in the favour of ASEAN. Until 2005 India's exports and imports were almost equal but after this period the gap between imports and exports widened consistently. The trends of India's trade, exports, and imports are reflecting the increasing tendency.



Source: UNCOMTRADE

Gravity Model Analysis of India's Trade Relations with ASEAN Countries: This sub-section summarizes the determinants that influence India's trade relations with ASEAN countries. The summary of means, standard deviation and correlation coefficient for all variables is reported in the Table-5. Correlation between all two pairs of independent variables is less than 0.75 except population of India and GDP of India, trade openness of India and GDP of India, trade openness of India and population of India, FDI inflows with GDP, population and trade openness of India. Thus, the analysis of correlation coefficient depicts that multicollinearity is not a serious problem in the analysis.

Table-5: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Trade	6.05	2.97	1													
2. GDP(I)	13.68	0.78	0.53*	1												
3. GDP(A)	10.80	1.72	0.90*	0.42*	1											
4. Population(I)	7.03	0.13	0.53*	0.98*	0.41*	1										
5. Population (A)	3.03	1.81	0.46*	0.07	0.58*	0.07	1									
6. Distance	8.19	0.25	0.15*	0.00	0.32*	0.00	-0.18*	1								
7. TOP(I)	3.21	0.35	0.50*	0.87*	0.37*	0.88*	0.06	0	1							
8. TOP(A)	4.40	0.65	0.39*	0.13**	0.3*	0.17*	-0.26*	0.19*	0.16*	1						
9. Exchange Rate	-1.24	3.51	0.23*	-0.01	0.19*	-0.02	-0.51*	0.38*	-0.03	0.48*	1					
10. GDPPCD	3.99	3.63	0.42*	0.04	0.48*	0.04	0.01	0.19*	0.04	0.60*	0.47*	1				
11. FDI inflow	8.96	1.71	0.52*	0.91*	0.38*	0.95*	0.07	0.00	0.90*	0.18*	-0.02	0.04	1			
12. Language	0.20	0.40	0.24*	0.00	0.31*	0.00	-0.02	0.42*	0.00	0.35*	0.43*	0.67*	0.00	1		
13. Boarder	0.10	0.30	0.04	0.00	-0.17*	0.00	0.16*	-0.58*	0.00	-0.44*	-0.10	-0.31*	0.00	-0.17*	1	
14. Colonial Link	0.40	0.49	0.19*	0.00	-0.04	0.00	-0.52*	0.06	0.00	0.30*	0.70*	0.03	0.00	0.10	0.41*	1
15. Landlocked	0.10	0.30	-0.51*	0.00	-0.49*	0.00	-0.24*	-0.32*	0.00	-0.26*	-0.33*	-0.35*	0.00	-0.17*	-0.11	-0.27*

*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level; **Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Source: Authors’ calculations, STATA output of Correlation Matrix

Table-6, reports the estimated results of India’s trade with ASEAN countries for the augmented gravity equation using random effects model. The estimated value of chi-square for overall model is significant ($\chi^2=3643.89$, p -value=0.000) which rejected the null hypothesis H_0 at 5 percent level of significance and states that independent variables have significant impact on India’s trade with ASEAN countries. The value of R^2 (0.929) revealed that 92.90 percent variation in trade is explained by the model and remaining 7.10 percent variation is caused by some other variables which is not included in the model. Thus, the study confirms that augmented gravity model is relevant in determining and predicting India’s trade with ASEAN countries and the findings of the most of the variables are in consistency with the existing studies (Batra, 2006; Bhattacharya and Banerjee, 2006; Binh et al, 2011; Renjini, et al.2017; Sarin 2018; and Chaudhary et al, 2018;).

GDP is used as proxy of economic size. The coefficient on India’s GDP is positive and insignificant ($\beta_1 = 0.252; P \text{ value} = 0.529 > 0.05$) which states that 1 percent increase in India’s GDP will tend to increase India’s bilateral trade by 25 percent but insignificant results do not support the hypothesis. The coefficient on GDP of ASEAN countries is positive and significant ($\beta_2 = 1.091; P \text{ value} 0.00 < 0.05$) suggesting that 1 percent increase in ASEAN countries’ GDP will increase India’s trade by 1.091 percent which is more than proportionately i.e., trade will increase at increasing rate. Hence, the findings confirm that coefficient on GDP of ASEAN countries is more

(1.091 > 0.252) than India which depicts that wealthy trading partner will tend to trade more.

Population is used as measure of the market size, a factor affecting international trade flows between nations. The larger the market size the more it trades. The estimated coefficient on India's population is positive ($\beta_3 = 1.235$) suggesting that 1 percent increase in India's market size will lead to increase in India's trade with ASEAN countries by 1.2353 percent but the insignificant results ($0.652 > 0.05$) outcomes indicate that due absorption effect, the growth of Indian population reduces the India's trade with ASEAN countries. The market size of ASEAN's countries has positive and significant ($\beta_4 = 0.346$; $P\text{ value} = 0.008 > 0.05$) impact on India's trade with ASEAN countries, indicating that 1 percent increase in ASEAN countries' population will boost India's trade by 0.3458 percent, which is less than proportionately; however, at decreasing rate keeping other factors constant.

Distance represents the transportation and transaction costs between the trading partners in international trade. Larger distance estimated to low bilateral trade between India and ASEAN countries and vice-versa. The coefficient on distance is negative ($\beta_5 = -0.2698$) as expected, indicating that with 1 percent increase in distance the trade flow will decrease by 0.2698 percent but the statistically insignificant result ($P\text{-value } 0.725 > 0.05$) do not support the hypothesis, because India's trade with distanced countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam is high as compared to immediate neighbouring countries like Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia etc (Kumari and Singh, 2018). Further, when distance reflects comparative advantage related to geography, then an increase in distance might increase trade between two countries if difference in comparative advantage prevails (Melitz, 2001).

The variable trade openness is the proxy of economic integration and trade liberalisation policies. The coefficient of India's trade openness is positive ($\beta_6 = 0.5173$) indicating positive influence on India's trade with ASEAN countries but the insignificant ($P\text{-value } 0.116 > 0.05$) results do not support the hypothesis. While ASEAN countries' trade openness has positive and significant ($\beta_7 = 0.5675$; $P\text{ value} = 0.005 < 0.05$) impact, which is in consistency with the expected sign. The estimated results show that 1 percent increase in ASEAN countries' trade openness will tend to enhance India's trade by 0.5675 percent, less than proportionately; however, at the decreasing rate.

Exchange rate plays a vital role in the determination of bilateral trade flows between the nations. The inclusion of exchange rate in gravity model facilitated to explain the trade variation among participating countries due exchange rate fluctuations. Exchange Rate is taken as India's currency units per one unit of partner country's currency. The coefficient of bilateral

exchange rate is expected to be positive for bilateral trade flow. This suggests that an increase in exchange rate or a depreciation of the rupee against trading partner currency leads to an increase in bilateral trade flows between countries (Binh et al, 2011; Chaudhary2018). The analysis confirms that coefficient on exchange rate is negative and significant ($\beta_8 = -0.10377$; $P \text{ value} = 0.003 < 0.05$), but contrary to the expected sign. This shows that with 1 percent increase in India's currency depreciation vis-à-vis ASEAN countries will lead to decrease in trade by 0.10377 percent.

Further, relative factor endowment has been included in the model to address the question whether trade flows are large among similar countries or dissimilar countries. The positive value of coefficient shows similar countries trade less than dissimilar ones and support H O hypothesis. On the other hand, Linder hypothesis will be supported if there is negative value of coefficient which explains that similar countries trade more than dissimilar ones. The estimated result of the variable is positive and insignificant ($\beta_9 = 0.06947$) and suggesting that Heckscher-Ohlin theory dominated in India's trade with ASEAN countries. Thus, trade would increase as difference between per capita GDP of India and ASEAN countries would increase but insignificant results ($P\text{-value } 0.109 > 0.05$) do not support the hypothesis.

FDI variable incorporated in the model to study the impact of FDI inflow on India's trade and analysed the business integration in the backdrop of trade and investment. The estimated coefficient is positive ($\beta_{10} = 0.1135$) and indicating that an increase of 1 percent in FDI inflows to India will increase its trade with ASEAN countries by 0.1135 percent which is less than proportionately but insignificant results ($P\text{-value } 0.267 > 0.05$) do not confirm the findings of the study.

To predict the impact of qualitative variables on trade, the dummy variables namely Language, border, colonial link, and landlockedness of the countries are also included in the gravity model. The variable common language (official or commercial language) between India and partner country tend to increase trade as speaking the same language facilitates trade negotiations (Meltiz, 2008). However, the estimated coefficient on language is negative ($\beta_{11} = -0.1998$), confirming that India's trade with ASEAN countries tends to decrease by 0.8188 times [$\exp(-0.1998)$] or by 18.115 percent [$\{\exp(-0.1998)-1\} * 100$], due to common official language among India and ASEAN countries but insignificant results ($P\text{-value } 0.555 > 0.05$) do not support the statistic.

The countries sharing the common border will tend to have more trade with each other. The coefficient of common border ($\beta_{12} = 0.1158$) is positive which indicated that India's trade with ASEAN countries tend to increase by

0.861 times or 12.28 percent but insignificant (P -value $0.861 > 0.05$) results do not support the hypothesis. However, the results are in line with the earlier studies conducted by Gul and Yasin (2011) and Renjini et al. (2017) that sharing a common border is not necessary to have increased trade between the countries. India shares common border with Myanmar only and border trade is very low due to poor infrastructure, rough terrain and instable trading environment (Routray, 2011; Cook, 2013; Singh, 2013; Renjini et al., 2017) and due to political instability.

The coefficient of colonial link showed positive ($\beta_{13} = 2.1269; P \text{ value} = 0.000 < 0.05$), influence on India's trade with ASEAN countries, which is in line with the expected outcome. It indicates that India's trade with ASEAN countries will step up by 8.388 times or 738.862 percent just because of having same kind of colonization (i.e. UK) among India and most of the ASEAN countries.

Laos is the only landlocked country among ASEAN nations and trade between India and Laos is found to be very low. The coefficient on landlockedness is negative ($\beta_{14} = -0.4674$), indicating that India's trade will get decreased by 0.6266 times or 37.339 percent due to landlockedness but statistically insignificant results (P -value $0.197 > 0.05$) do not support the hypothesis. Among the ASEAN countries, Laos is the only landlocked country. Landlockedness is not hurdle in the way of India's trade with ASEAN countries as ASEAN is considered as integrated market and treated equally by Indian policy makers.

Table 6: Random Effect Model of Trade

Random-effects GLS regression		Number of obs.	=	290		
Group variable: code		Number of groups	=	10		
R-sq.:		Obs. per group:				
within = 0.8076		min	=	29		
between = 0.9971		Avg.	=	29		
overall = 0.929		max	=	29		
		Wald chi2(14)	=	3643.89		
Corr (u _i , X) = 0 (assumed)		Prob > chi2	=	0		
Trade	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
GDP(I)	0.2523696	0.4010464	0.63	0.529	-0.53367	1.038406
GDP(A)	1.091684	0.1324999	8.24	0.000	0.831989	1.35138
Population(I)	1.235303	2.73999	0.45	0.652	-4.13498	6.605584
Population(A)	0.3458707	0.1302169	2.66	0.008	0.09065	0.601091

Source: Authors' calculations, STATA output of Gravity Model

Distance	-0.2698179	0.766959	0.35	0.725	-1.77303	1.233394
TOP(I)	0.5173061	0.3289908	1.57	0.116	-0.1275	1.162116
TOP(A)	0.5675373	0.2029647	2.80	0.005	0.169734	0.965341
Exchange Rate	-0.1037735	0.0349422	2.97	0.003	-0.17226	-0.03529
GDPPCD	0.069475	0.0433366	1.60	0.100	-0.01546	0.154413
FDI inflow	0.1135478	0.1043018	1.09	0.276	-0.09088	0.317976
Language	-0.1998599	0.338663	0.59	0.555	-0.86363	0.463907
Boarder	0.1158602	0.65972	0.18	0.861	-1.17717	1.408888
Colonial	2.126877	0.3639204	5.84	0.000	1.413606	2.840148
Landlocked	-0.4674312	0.3624835	1.29	0.197	-1.17789	0.243023
_cons	-23.06724	14.20379	1.62	0.104	-50.9062	4.771682
sigma_u	0	(Fraction of Variance due to u_i)				
sigma_e	0.73713416					
Rho	0					

Source: Authors' Calculations, STATA Output of Gravity Model

India's Trade Potential with ASEAN Countries: Gravity Model is also applied to predict the trade potential with ASEAN countries. Trade potential predictions are computed with the help of ratio method. The parameters of the ratio method suggest that if the value of ratio exceeds one, then there exists potential with respective ASEAN country while a value less than one indicates that India has already over-traded with the respective country (Kaur and Nanda, 2011). Table-7, highlights the results of India's trade potential with ASEAN countries.

Table-7: Trade Potential between India and ASEAN Countries using P/A Approach

Years	BRN	KHM	IDN	LAO	MYS	MMR	PHP	SNG	THD	VNM
1991	5.774	30.662	1.047	3.760	0.540	0.377	0.426	0.422	0.631	0.276
1992	9.492	0.195	1.388	5.280	0.730	0.213	0.836	0.405	0.636	0.258
1993	13.875	0.872	1.105	1.589	1.264	0.269	1.185	0.480	0.687	0.476
1994	2.686	0.694	0.855	4.255	1.134	0.352	0.963	0.555	0.677	0.553
1995	1.300	1.460	0.661	2.377	1.054	0.414	0.992	0.707	0.931	0.689
1996	1.842	2.303	0.745	2.353	0.976	0.397	1.034	0.797	1.040	1.125
1997	5.217	0.928	0.885	3.098	1.049	0.451	0.946	0.919	1.120	1.226
1998	2.647	0.514	0.611	0.695	0.681	0.598	1.365	0.695	0.810	1.230

1999	7.149	0.673	0.596	0.684	0.613	0.594	1.260	0.634	0.707	1.117
2000	4.815	0.790	0.775	0.351	1.165	0.764	1.255	0.875	0.816	1.245
2001	6.215	0.721	0.727	0.226	1.098	0.560	0.960	0.799	0.705	1.236
2002	3.657	0.586	0.628	0.658	1.213	0.659	0.599	0.742	0.766	1.076
2003	4.164	0.601	0.538	2.278	1.097	0.621	0.923	0.694	0.840	1.222
2004	5.652	1.069	0.591	13.583	1.290	0.661	0.973	0.621	0.946	1.200
2005	8.499	1.195	0.719	0.583	1.601	0.857	1.024	0.592	0.943	1.382
2006	0.248	0.775	0.869	2.267	1.352	0.963	1.256	0.666	1.052	1.527
2007	0.324	1.102	0.938	2.642	1.381	1.224	1.768	0.759	1.044	1.625
2008	0.367	1.314	1.100	2.461	1.463	1.627	1.848	0.843	1.280	1.743
2009	0.153	1.394	0.754	0.418	1.281	1.289	1.299	0.857	1.007	1.425
2010	0.442	1.179	0.844	0.617	1.627	1.764	1.590	0.972	1.058	1.232
2011	0.108	1.233	0.884	0.298	1.664	2.288	1.664	0.938	1.124	1.290
2012	0.177	1.132	0.896	0.168	1.532	2.100	1.601	1.063	1.030	1.306
2013	0.198	0.875	0.877	0.442	1.544	2.225	1.503	1.109	0.996	0.967
2014	0.154	0.861	0.914	0.328	1.564	2.441	1.687	1.471	1.035	1.056
2015	0.153	0.865	0.893	0.243	1.370	2.725	1.651	1.352	0.958	1.242
2016	0.153	1.108	0.962	0.249	1.455	2.257	1.622	1.399	0.988	1.151
2017	0.141	1.222	0.894	0.209	1.541	3.388	1.638	1.252	0.975	1.069
2018	0.231	1.114	0.997	1.242	1.585	4.189	1.861	1.123	0.961	1.129
2019	0.194	1.162	1.030	2.196	1.592	5.064	2.108	1.067	1.036	1.323
Average	2.966	2.021	0.853	1.916	1.257	1.425	1.305	0.856	0.924	1.117

Note: BRN- Brunei, KHM- Cambodia, IDN-Indonesia, LAO-Laos, MYS-Malaysia, MMR-Myanmar, PHP-Philippines, SNG-Singapore, THD-Thailand, VNM- Vietnam

Source: Authors' Calculations, STATA Output of Trade Potential from Gravity Model

Table-8, reports the results of speed of convergence and divergence in percentage. Convergence refers to the situation where growth rate of potential trade is lower than the growth rate of actual trade and the computed speed of convergence is negative while opposite situation referred as divergence (Kaur and Nanda, 2011). Thus, there are two groups; one characterized by overtraded group with positive sign and other reflecting trade potential with negative sign. The outcome of speed of convergence shows that India has not exploited whole trade potential with Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Laos, whereas India has overtraded with Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Table 8: Speed of Convergence (Value in Percent)

Countries	Average Growth Rate of Potential Trade	Average Growth Rate of Actual trade	Speed of Convergence
Brunei	16.56	228.11	-92.74
Cambodia	27.08	1004.38	-97.30
Indonesia	20.22	616.25	-96.72
Laos	26.78	180.35	-85.15
Malaysia	19.40	14.96	29.68
Myanmar	25.11	15.85	58.44
Philippines	19.89	15.04	32.22
Singapore	19.73	15.74	25.41
Thailand	18.77	15.69	19.60
Vietnam	30.82	24.13	27.71

Source: Authors’ Calculations, STATAO utput of Speed of Convergence from Gravity Model

Table-9, presents analysis of convergence of India’s actual trade towards potential trade or empirical equilibrium. For the convergence, the estimated coefficient should be negative and significant (Kaurand Nanda, 2011), while for divergence estimated coefficient should be positive and significant. The results of the model stated that coefficient for difference between actual and potential trade is positive (0.017) which reveals that there was a presence of divergence but insignificant(P -value 0.759 > 0.1) do not support the proposition.

Table 9: Convergence of India’s Actual Trade Towards Potential Trade

Model	Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	159.872	1.558	0.120
Difference Between Actual and Potential Trade	0.017	0.307	0.759

Durbin Watson = 2.022, R^2 = 0.000

Source: Authors’ Calculations, STATA Output of Gravity Model

5. Conclusion and Policy Implications: The current study is designed to empirically analyse the gravity impact of India’s trade with ASEAN countries during 1991-2019, using 14 independent variables of home and destination countries. Random effect modelis preferred over the fixed effect model due to its ability to make rational estimates in the presence of time-invariant or static binary variables. The phenomenal growth of GDP of India and ASEAN countries reveals that both economies are emerging economies

with vast potential for co-operation. The growth rate of India's GDP is higher than ASEAN stating India is compatibly growing at higher rate. The findings of the study confirm that the growth rate of India's trade, exports and imports is higher during the pre-AIFTA period compared to post-AIFTA period. However, overall growth rate of India's trade, exports and imports with ASEAN nations is higher than India's global growth rate, indicating India's priority for ASEAN region.

The findings confirm that economy size, market size and economic liberalisation programmes of ASEAN countries have positive and significant impact on India's trade with ASEAN countries, however, India's economy size, market size and economic liberalisation programmes have positive impact on trade with partner countries but insignificant p-values fails to support the propositions. The findings of trade liberalisation of India imply that to boost trade with ASEAN countries India need to relax trade barriers and adopt more liberal trade policies in relation to ASEAN countries. The coefficient distance carries negative and insignificant value, which states that transportation cost has negative impact on trade flows but insignificant value indicate that it is not causing serious problem as India's mean trade is highly concentrated with geographically distant countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines (Kumari & Singh, 2018). The exchange rate has negative impact on INDO-ASEAN trade linkages and FDI is not instrumental in boosting external sector, thus, suggesting the revisiting of FDI policy.

The variable per capita GDP differential is used to reports the findings in the milieu of Eli Heckscher–Bertil Ohlin (1933) and Staffan Linder (1961) theories. H-O theory argues that countries with different level of economic development based on comparative advantages will trade more compare to country with same level. Whereas, Linder theory emphasized that bilateral trade will occur between two countries having same level of economic development based on product differentiation. The coefficient GDPPCD bears the positive sign with significant p-value indicating dominance of H-O theory over Linder's theory suggesting countries with different economic structure will trade more. Therefore, H-O theory is more appropriate than Linder's theory in explaining India's trade with ASEAN countries.

6. Limitations and Scope for future Study: The research work is based on secondary data over the period from 1991 to 2019, applying the Random Effects Model by considering fourteen independent variables. The study in

the area international financial management specifically understanding India's economic relations with ASEAN countries has vast scope for future study. The empirical study can be pursued from the theoretical perspectives of Eli Heckscher – Bertil Ohlin theory, Staffan Linder's theory and J.H Bergstrand theory to get genuine understanding of INDO-ASEAN economic and strategic relations. This study provides appealing findings which may help policy makers for the formulation of trade policies and foreign policy for Asia –Pacific region.

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Raj Kumar Singh conceived the idea to pursue the study on India's trade relations with ASEAN countries and developed the theoretical framework, objectives, scope and hypothesis. Miss Jyoti Kumari extracted the research papers on gravity model and drafted the literature review relevant to the study. Mr. Ajay Kumar collected, edited, and coded the data. Dr. Raj Kumar Singh and Ajay Kumar analysed the data through MS-Excel, SPSS, and STATA software and prepared the tables and figure. The rough draft of the research paper was written by Mrs. Jyoti Kumari and Mr. Ajay Kumar. The rough draft so prepared was finally prepared by Dr. Raj Kumar Singh. This research paper is part of Ph. D. thesis of Mrs. Jyoti Kumari.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliation with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial and non-financial interest in the subject matter or material discussed in this manuscript.

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Access to and Usage of Radio Agricultural Information for Productivity among Cassava Farmers in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the level of access to, and extent of usage of agricultural information for productivity among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria. Using descriptive survey research design, the study drew a sample of 395 respondents from an estimated population of 30,000 cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria through the multistage sampling technique. Results showed that cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria had a very high level of access to radio agricultural information, and mostly accessed the information through stations in the Frequency Modulated band and mostly received the information through news. However, findings showed a weak positive relationship between the usage of radio agricultural information and the resultant productivity among the farmers. The study concluded that the format and language of radio agricultural information did not meet the needs of the farmers. It recommended that radio programme producers should identify the specific needs of farmers and appropriate timing for transmission.

Key words: Radio agricultural information, Access, Usage, Cassava Farmers, Productivity

Introduction

The prevailing food crisis in Nigeria is a cause for concern to stakeholders in agriculture and allied sectors of the Nigerian economy. In the early years of independence, Nigeria depended largely on agriculture for sustenance. Different regions in the country had revenue sources, a larger percentage of which was agriculture-based. Nigeria has a huge physical, human and natural

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resources, yet food crisis remains on the rise with increase in population without a corresponding increase in food production. A national survey by the National Bureau of Statistics between 2003 and 2004 showed that a little more than half of the population (51.6%) lived below 1 US dollar per day and the relative national poverty incidence was 54.4 per cent (NBS 2005). Scholarly debates on factors responsible for low productivity in the Nigerian agriculture sector identify attitude of government in the area of agricultural policy formulation and implementation, and attitude of farmers in the area of productivity. (Daneji 2011; Okoro and Ujah 2009)

One reason for the poor contribution of the agricultural sector to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the low productivity of cassava, botanically referred to as *Manihot Esculenta*. It should be noted that cassava is a source of staple food items and some industrial raw materials. It is an important domestic and industrial raw material used in the manufacturing of various products. Previous studies found that cassava farmers' productivity was low, subsistence farming was widespread and mechanization was rare. Scholars such as McNulty and Oparinde (2015), Okoro and Ujah, (2009) made a comparison between the Nigerian and Thai cassava sectors and concluded that the Nigeria's cassava sector was plagued by low productivity; average yields were 11.7 tons per hectare, compared to 22 tons per hectare in Thailand. Studies further revealed that Thai cassava yields had increased at an average of 1.7% every year in the last 15 years, while yields in Nigeria had stagnated, (McNulty and Oparinde 2015; Okoro and Ujah, 2009; Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) 2010).

A crucial issue connected with low productivity among cassava farmers is availability of innovative information to aid production. Access to, and usage of agricultural information by cassava farmers for productivity is crucial because information is a very important resource for all agricultural activities. Farmers, no doubt, constitute a particular group of people whose information needs are specific. A critical importance of agricultural information dissemination to cassava farmers is to help them increase their production to meet local demand and export. Use of information in the agricultural sector can improve farming productivity in many ways, for example, by providing information on weather trends and best farming methods. In addition, farmers would need information on: access to land and management, soil fertility, inputs (seed and fertilizer), pest and disease control, mechanization, storage and access to credit facilities. Armed with relevant market information, farmers can make useful decisions on crop planting and marketing for their harvested products. It follows therefore that agricultural information is important for farmers. Scholars allude to the fact the value of information as a tool to guarantee sustainable and competitive advantage in an evolving economic and production environment that uses

technology to meet new demands. (Morton and Matthewman 1996; Mooko and Aina 2007)

One of the basic functions of radio is information dissemination. Some previous studies have provided evidence that radio is an important tool in disseminating valuable agricultural information to farmers. (Agwu, Ekwueme and Anyanwu 2014; Kembero 2014) Familusi and Owoeye (2014) found that agricultural programmes on radio are a good means of technological transfer to farmers. Findings from past studies have also shown that majority of farmers listen to radio. (Kembero 2014; Haider 2014; Chapota, Fatch and Mthinda 2014; Ango, Illo, Abdullahi, Maikasuwa and Amina 2013)

Studies have also provided evidence that radio stations in Nigeria disseminated agricultural information to cassava farmers through discussion programmes, news broadcasts, jingles, drama, and public announcements. However, it is one thing for farmers to have access to agricultural information disseminated through radio; it is another for them to use the information for productivity. If such radio agricultural information are accessible to cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria and they use it, they could have increased their production to meet local and/or export demand. Therefore, it is not clear if cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria use agricultural information disseminated to them through radio for productivity like their counterpart in Enugu, Malaysia, Bomachoge, and Pakistan. (Agwu et al. 2008; Kembero 2014; Njoku 2016; Haider 2014) Against this backdrop, this study examined the levels of accessibility to and usability of radio agricultural information for productivity among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Cassava and its extracts are in high demand for domestic consumption as staple food and industrial use as raw materials for production locally and internationally. It would be expected that cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria would take advantage of the high domestic and industrial demands and increase their production. Unfortunately, their productivity is still low as they have not been able to meet local demands not to consider exportation. As a result of low productivity among cassava farmers, Nigeria continues to import cassava products such as flour, starch, chips, sweeteners, etc. (FMARD 2016) thereby contributing to low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and foreign exchange loss. There is no gainsaying that the world is presently in an information age and all its spheres, including agriculture are driven by information. Despite the fact that radio stations disseminate agricultural information to cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria, cassava production has not improved as expected as expected in meeting local demand much less for export. (FMARD 2016) Therefore, if radio stations disseminate agricultural

information to cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria, the low productivity among cassava farmers may be partly attributed to the level of accessibility and usability of radio information meant to improve production. In the light of this problem, this study examined the extent to which cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria had access to and used radio agricultural information for productivity.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the level of accessibility to and usability of radio agricultural information by cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria for improved productivity. The specific objectives were to:

1. Find out the level of awareness of cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria about radio agricultural information;
2. Investigate the level of accessibility of cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria to radio agricultural information;
3. Ascertain the level of usage of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria; and
4. Evaluate the level of productivity arising from accessibility and usability of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria about radio agricultural information?
2. What is the level of accessibility of cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria to radio agricultural information?
3. What is the level of usage of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria?
4. What is the level of productivity arising from accessibility and usability of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between the usage of radio agricultural information and productivity among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the uses and gratification theory (UGT). The UGT is a minimalists and an audience-focused postulation that discusses how people use the mass media and the resultant effects of media usage on the people. This

theory was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurvitch in the year 1974. It explains how people use the media to satisfy their needs, and interests, based on their aspirations and orientation. The theory challenges the direct impact of the media on people by considering the rationality of human beings who make choices regarding media usage and content selection based on the needs and interests they wish to satisfy, leading to resultant effects (McQuail 2010). It explains that media audiences are active participants who use the media for their own needs and derive satisfaction through such media usage. Griffin (2012) explains two principles on which the theory derives its validity: media audience are active and deliberate in their media choice and are aware of their reasons for their choice of specific media contents. As active participants, they consciously select the media that suit their needs and being aware of the supposed functions of specific media contents, they consume the contents that can satisfy their needs. The relevance of this theory to this study is that cassava farmers have needs that are related to their farming activities. As rational beings, they are bound to choose radio because it carries contents that address such needs. Also, in order to satisfy their major need of improved productivity, they are bound to choose specific radio programmes that treat issues of cassava production. Effect of listenership to such radio content is meant to be seen on the usage of agricultural information in farming practices, leading to improved productivity.

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive survey research design, and validated structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The population of this study comprised an estimated 30,000 cassava farmers in Southwest, Nigeria (Fadama Coordination Office 2020) made up of Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Ekiti and Lagos States. Population data from Fadama Coordination Office was used for this study because the Fadama project has been running consistently for over 20 years since 1993, it is being funded by the World Bank and has a stable structure and mechanism for effective agricultural empowerment of farmers unlike other programmes for cassava farmers that are relatively new and are still at developmental stages. To select the sample for this study, the Yaro Yamane formula (1967) was used to determine sample size at 95% confidence level.

The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= is the sample size

N= population size

E= level of precision

Therefore, $n = \frac{30000}{1 + 30000(0.05)^2}$

394.7 approximately sample size is 395.

However, 50% of the sample size was added in order to adjust for return rate. Consequently, the sample size for this study was 593.

The study adopted the multi-stage sampling technique for selecting the respondents to the instrument. The first stage of this sampling process was the use of simple random sampling technique and the fish bowl method for the selecting 3 states (50%) out of 6 in South-West, Nigeria. Thus, Ogun, Osun and Oyo States were selected. In addition, 50 percent of local governments were selected in each state in order to adequately represent the cassava farmers in each state. This process led to the selection of 10 local governments in Ogun State, 15 in Osun State and 17 local governments in Oyo State as recognised by the 2006 National Population Census. The next stage of the sampling technique was proportional sampling technique which ensured that participants were represented relative to the size of their population in each of the selected sub-units. Consequently, cassava farmers in Ogun State constituted 63.43 percent of the total number of cassava farmers in the three selected states (n=376). Osun State constituted 26 percent (n=154), while Oyo State constituted 10.57 percent (n=63).

Data Analysis

A total of 593 copies of the structured questionnaire were administered on the respondents under the strict guidance of the researcher. Out of that number, 578 copies were returned and considered valid for the study, giving a return rate of 97.5%. Data were coded from the questionnaire and their analyses are as presented in line with relevant research questions.

1. Research Question One: What is the level of awareness of cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria about radio agricultural information?

Table 1: Participants' Level of Awareness of Radio Agricultural Information

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Aware	92.6 (535)
Not Aware	7.4 (43)
Indifferent	Nil
Total	100 (578)

Source: Field Survey 2021

Table 1 contains data that answer the first research question in this study. Results of the analysis showed that a vast majority of cassava farmers (n=535, 92.6%) were aware of radio agricultural information. This implies that almost all (nine out of ten) cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria were aware of radio programmes that provided agricultural information.

Research Question 2: What is the level of accessibility of cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria to radio agricultural information?

To determine accessibility to radio agricultural information, three indices were listed on the research instrument: specific radios stations farmers listened to, programme formats listened to and frequency of listening.

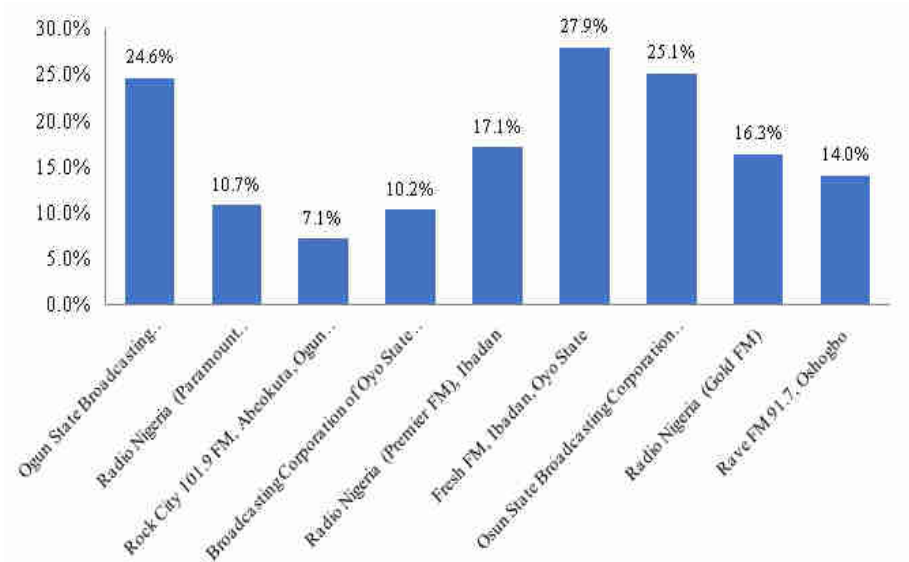


Figure 1: Specific Radio Stations through which Cassava Farmers Accessed Radio Agricultural Information.

Source: Field Survey 2021

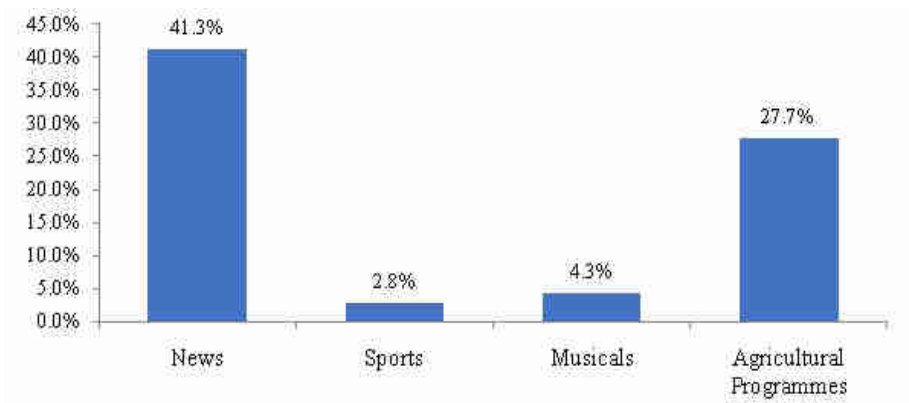


Figure 2 Radio Programme Formats through which Cassava Farmers Gained Access to Radio Agricultural Information Most

Source: Field Survey 2021

Table 2: Frequency of Cassava Farmers' Listenership to Radio Agricultural Programmes

<i>Variable</i>	Percentage (%)
Not at all	4.7 (27)
Not often	28.0 (162)
Often	32.5 (188)
Very often	34.8 (201)
Total	100.0 (578)
Mean (\bar{x})	2.97
SD	0.90

Decision rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 = Not at all; 1.5 to 2.49 = Not Often; 2.5 to 3.49 = Often; 3.5 to 4 = Very Often

Source: Field Survey 2021

Results of the analysis of data related to research question 2 showed that respective local radio stations in the localities of cassava farmers gave them access to radio agricultural information. It should be noted that while both government and private radio stations gave them access, they accessed radio agricultural information mostly through stations on the Frequency Modulated (FM) band. Fresh FM, Ibadan gave the most access (27.9%), followed by Osun State Broadcasting Corporation, Oshogbo (25.1%) and Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation (OGBC) (24.6%). By implication, stations in the FM band gave more access to radio agricultural information rather than the Amplitude Modulated (AM) band which is expected to be more local/rural. As regards the programme formats through which cassava farmers accessed radio agricultural information most, news ranked the highest (41.3%), followed by agricultural programmes, while sports programmes ranked the lowest. Thus, news was the media programme through which cassava farmers mostly gained access to radio agricultural information. Results regarding frequency of listenership showed that cassava farmers listened to radio agricultural programmes often ($\bar{x} = 2.97$, SD 0.90). A higher percentage (34.8%) of them listened very often, followed by those who listened often (32.5%) while only 4.7% did not listened at all. By implication, access to radio agricultural information was high among cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria.

1. Research Question Three: What is the level of usage of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria?

A number of items were designed to measure the uses to which cassava farmers put radio agricultural information in their farming practices. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Ways Cassava Farmers' Use Radio Agricultural Information

Use of radio agricultural information helps Cassava farmers to know:	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	DK F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
How to use agricultural information to increase cassava productivity.	283 (49)	228 (39.4)	57 (9.9)	2 (0.3)	8 (1.4)	4.34	0.78
How and when to plant and harvest their crop, and how to market it.	172 (29.8)	361 (62.5)	32 (5.5)	5 (0.9)	8 (1.4)	4.18	0.69
How and where to access credit facilities, and agricultural equipment.	172 (29.8)	342 (59.2)	49 (8.5)	7 (1.2)	8 (1.4)	4.15	0.73
How to use new farming methods.	228 (39.4)	258 (44.6)	61 (10.6)	10 (1.7)	21 (3.6)	4.15	0.94
How to use pesticides, insecticides and herbicides correctly on their farm.	185 (32)	293 (50.7)	74 (12.8)	11 (1.9)	15 (2.6)	4.08	0.87
Maximum Scale Score = 25;	Actual Scale Score= 20.89;Average Mean					4.18	0.80

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, DK= Don't Know*Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 Don't Know; 1.5 to 2.49 = Strongly Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Agree; 4.5 to 5= Strongly Agree**

Source: Field Survey 2021

Findings in relation to research question 3 showed that cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria agreed they used radio agricultural information for various agricultural practices ($\bar{x} = 4.18$, $SD=0.80$). They agreed they utilise radio agricultural information for the following specific practices: to increase cassava productivity ($\bar{x} = 4.34$, $SD=0.78$); planting, harvesting and marketing practices ($\bar{x} = 4.18$, $SD=0.69$), to accessing credit facilities and agricultural equipment ($\bar{x} = 4.15$, $SD=0.73$), how to use new farming methods ($\bar{x} = 4.15$, $SD=0.94$); and using pesticides, insecticides and herbicides correctly on their farms ($\bar{x} = 4.08$, $SD=0.87$). The implication of the foregoing is that cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria generally agreed to applying radio agricultural information to cassava farming and agreed to specific farming practices to which they utilised the information for productivity.

Research Question 4: What is the level of productivity arising from accessibility to and usability of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria?

Cassava farmers were asked to rate the extent to which access to and use of radio agricultural information improved their productivity and their responses are analysed in Table 4.

Table 4: The Extent to Which the Use of Radio Agricultural Information Improved Productivity

<i>Variable</i>	Percent (%)
Not at all	35.8 (207)
Very low	18.2 (105)
Low	18.2 (105+)
High	18.9 (109+)
Very High	9.0 (52)
Total	100.0 (578)
Mean (\bar{x})	2.47
SD	1.37

Decision rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 = Not at all; 1.5 to 2.49 = Very Low; 2.5 to 3.49 = Low; 3.5 to 4.49 = High; 4.5 to 5 = Very High

Source: Field Survey 2021

Findings as presented in Table 4 showed that productivity arising from cassava farmers' usage of radio agricultural information was generally very low (\bar{x} = 2.47, SD=1.37). Specifically, only 9 percent (n=52) of the farmers rated productivity arising from access to and usage of radio agricultural information very high, while majority (35.8%, n=207) considered no productivity arising from access to and usage of radio agricultural information, The implication of this result is that while access to and usage of radio agricultural information were high, such accessibility and usability did not yield the expected increase in productivity among farmers in South-West, Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis

The pre-set level of significance for this study was 0.05. The null hypothesis set in the study assumes that there is no significant relationship between the use of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers and their productivity. If the P-value (that is, the significance or the probability value) exceeds the pre-set level of significance (that is $p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis will be accepted; but if the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), then the null hypothesis will be rejected.

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between the use of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers and their productivity.

Table 5: Relationship between the Use of Radio Agricultural Information and Cassava Farmers Productivity

<i>Variables</i>	Productivity
Use of Radio Agricultural Information	Pearson Correlation 0.284**
	Sig. (2-tailed) 0.000
	N 578

Source: Field Survey 2021

The analysis in Table 5 showed that the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant relationship between the use of radio agricultural information among cassava farmers and their productivity ($r = 0.284$, $p < 0.05$). However, the result showed a weak positive relationship between the usage of radio agricultural information and the resultant productivity among cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria. This result is in consonance with those presented in Table 4 which showed that productivity arising from cassava farmers' access to and usage of radio agricultural information was generally very low.

Discussion of Findings

This study sought to examine the level at which cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria had access to and used radio agricultural information for productive practices. To achieve this aim, four research objectives and their corresponding questions were set in the study to test awareness level, accessibility, usability and the resultant productivity.

Findings in relation to the first objective, which was to determine the level of awareness, showed that a majority of cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria were aware of radio agricultural information. This implies that programmes that disseminate agricultural information exist on radio and about nine out of every ten cassava farmers were aware of such programmes. The second objective sought to examine how accessible cassava farmers are to radio agricultural programmes. To this end, results showed that specific local radio stations -government and private- gave cassava farmers access to agricultural information. However, stations in the Frequency Modulated FM band gave more access to radio agricultural information rather than the Amplitude Modulated (AM) band which is expected to be more local/rural. Among the programme formats through which cassava farmers gained access to agricultural information, news ranked the highest, followed by agricultural programmes while sports programmes ranked the lowest. The implication of this is that the information received by most farmers may not be detailed because news as a media programme delivers facts about happenings but not detailed explanations about processes and practices which are required by cassava farmers for improved productivity. Findings also showed that access to radio agricultural information was high among cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria as most of them listened to radio programmes often.

The findings of previous studies affirmed the results of this study regarding awareness of and access to radio programmes that disseminate agricultural information. Haider (2014) in a study that examined the role of local radio agricultural programmes in small scale farm extension in Pakistan reported that

94% of farmers listened to radio. On the Nigerian soil, several studies corroborated the findings of this study. Familusi and Owoeye (2014) reported that radio was the key information source that reached larger percentage of farmers. Oyeyinka, Bello and Ayinde (2014) also reported that majority (84%) of farmers in Oyo State had access to radio, which they used as the source of their agricultural market information. Oyetoro, Adewumi and Sotola (2017) revealed that cassava processors in Saki Zone of Oyo State mostly accessed agricultural information through radio while Tijani, Anaeto and Emerhirhi (2017) corroborated this by asserting that farmers in Imo State found radio as the most readily available channel of agricultural information.

The third objective of the study related to usability of radio agricultural information. Findings showed that cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria used radio agricultural information for various agricultural practices such as planting, weeding, harvesting, storage, packaging and marketing practices; access to credit facilities and agricultural equipment; usage of new farming methods; and application of pesticides, insecticides and herbicides all for improvement in productivity. This result has been established by previous studies such as Familusi and Owoeye (2014), Oyeyinka, Bello and Ayinde (2014), and Tijani, Anaeto and Emerhirhi (2017). In their study, Mbah, Agada and Ezeano (2016) affirmed that majority (98.8%) of farmers in Benue state used radio to access information about various agricultural practices. Haider's (2014) has earlier reported that farmers in Pakistan used radio agricultural programmes to adopt innovations in farming practices. Nenna (2016) also reported that radio was among the channels of information for cassava farmers in Anambra State and they applied such information to cassava production practices.

The last objective of this study evaluated the level to which usability of radio agricultural information led to improved productivity among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria. Findings showed that productivity arising from cassava farmers' usage of radio agricultural information was generally very low as majority considered no improved productivity arising from the usage of radio agricultural information. This implies that though access to and usage of radio agricultural information were high among cassava farmers in South-West Nigeria, improvement in productivity that should result from such was low. This could be associated with the FM band through which they accessed information, which mostly transmits programmes in English language and may not adapt contents to local languages. Also, the fact that news served as the programme format through which most cassava farmers gained access to information may account for low productivity because news does not offer detailed explanation about processes and practices, the sort that are required by cassava farmers. More importantly, radio agricultural programmes need to be

designed to meet specific needs of farmers if it is to be utilised for improved productivity. Odigie and Ojomo (2020) reported that the relevance of programme content to farmers' needs was a factor that determines usage of agricultural information to improved productivity.

Conclusion

It is an incontrovertible fact that information drives every facet of modern life, especially agriculture whose production requires dissemination of innovative information for improved productivity. Thus, access to and usage of agricultural information are in no small measure indispensable to cassava farmers in view of high demands of the product for domestic and industrial uses. Radio, by its rural focus and adaptability to local audiences, should be a potent tool in disseminating agricultural information. This study revealed that cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria mostly had access to radio agricultural information. However, the cassava farmers in the selected study area used radio agricultural information to a very low extent and this accounted for low level of increased production arising from the usage of the information received. The study also discovered that the cassava farmers under the purview of this study mostly accessed agricultural information through news programmes and through radio stations on the Frequency Modulation (FM) band. News as a programme format is not detailed enough to address the information needs of farmers for farming productive practices. Also, radio stations on the FM band are mostly urban-based and they address their audiences mostly in the English language. There was no radio station in the study areas that could be said to be a community radio that caters to the interest of people living in the rural areas especially farmers in terms of programme design and language of communication. Therefore, while access to radio agricultural information was high among cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria, the usage of the information among them for improved productivity was low due to the urban-based radio frequency and design of the programmes through which access was gained.

Recommendations

This study hereby recommends that cassava farmers in Southwest Nigeria should improve on their use of radio agricultural information by listening to other radio programme formats such as discussion, documentaries and expert interviews which provide more detailed information that can be applied in order to increase their cassava production. The design and timing of transmission of radio agricultural information should address the need of the end users, in this case cassava farmers. Radio programme planners and producers should identify the specific information needs of cassava farmers and the times the farmers are available to listen to them as radio programmes. This way, it is

expected that there would be minimal waste exposure of radio programmes and improved impact on farmers.

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The Long-Term Demographic Consequences and Youth Unemployment in India From Census Results

-K. Ramesh Kumar

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the nature of the nexus observed in the recent census periods in India nearly four decades of data used and we try to find out the consequences of demographic, workforce participation rate change in youth workforce participation and unemployment in India particularly in four southern state of India. The paper has tried to argue that the quarter century of demographic dividend experience in India and brings out that there is an urgent need for adopting pro-youth employment strategies, what are the problems and constrains to achieving the benefits of demographic dividend and youth employment in the country. After 1980, India is undergoing demographic transition and it is gaining economically from the changing age structure. Among the age structure, the age 15-34 is an important human resource for economic development. The youth population in the age- group 15-34 years is increasing from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011 and then continue to increase to 464 million in 2021 and finally to decline to 458 million in 2026. Youth population comprises 35 per cent of the urban population and 32 per cent of the rural population. According to 2011 census 84.5 million young people in India live below poverty line, which is the highest rate worldwide, at 44.2 per cent of the total youth population, at the same time there are 44 million Indian youth who are undernourished, which constitutes 23 per cent of the youth population of India. The work participation rate among young people has declining from 55.5 percent to 46.0 per cent. In this context this paper examines the long-term demographic consequences and youth unemployment in india from census results. The paper is concluded that in sufficient employment opportunities should be generated for the young Indians and the phase of demographic dividend holds the key for achieving sustained growth.

Keywords: Demographic, Youth Unemployment, India

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Introduction

It would be of interest to understand as to what happened to the process of employment growth in the post transformation period and made a discussion around whether youth are more likely to benefit from economic transition in terms of employment and decent work. Although the reform process resulted in an acceleration of high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, it was not accompanied by a commensurate increase in employment particularly the youth employment. Any nation in the world, youth population is an important human resource for development; they are vital elements for social, economic development and technological innovation change. But, in recent years these resources have been facing many challenges particularly the employment for the young labour force. Young people have been disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment, vulnerable employment (sum of percentage of unpaid family workers and own account workers in the total employment) and working poverty. Even during periods of more than 8 percentage of economic growth, the labour market is often unable to assimilate large numbers of youth. Recent estimates published by the United Nations Estimates indicate that young people between 15 and 24 years of age number 1.21 billion and account for 15.5 per cent of the global population. Projections suggest that the youth cohort will reach 1.29 billion (15.1 per cent of the world total) by 2030 and almost 1.34 billion (13.8 per cent of the overall population) by 2050 (UN, World Youth Report 2020), and 600 million productive jobs would need to be created for young people over the next decade and provide job opportunities for the 40 million youth expected to enter the labour market each year. Further, more than 96.8 percent of the youth labour force participation is from informal sectors (ILO). The impact of COVID 19 on youth labour force participation has created negative impact; globally more than 200 million of youth were out from their jobs in 2022, said by the UN labour experts. The IEG World Bank (2012) in their study on youth employment programme, clearly pointed out that the youth employment issues are major concerns because they affect the welfare of youth people and potentially the long-term performance and stability of the rest of the economy.

Although since 2012 there has been a decrease in youth unemployment rates in many regions, this has not been the case everywhere. In 2014, youth unemployment was highest in the Middle East, rising from 27.6 in 2012 to 28.2 per cent in 2014 and in North Africa, rising from 29.7 to 30.5 per cent during the same period. Increase also occurred in South-East Asia and the Pacific. (12.7 to 13.6 per cent) Youth unemployment seems to be quite moderate in India conventionally measured as a percentage of the corresponding 'active' labour

force; as per 2009-10 NSSO data the youth unemployment was around 10 per cent, for rural 6.5 and urban 17 per cent. According to Mahesh Vyas (2022) more than 24 million young aspirants were applied for the 0.138 million jobs.

In the International Labour Conference 2005, the discussion on youth employment, it concluded that there were many young workers who did not have access to decent work. A significant number of youth are underemployed, unemployed, seeking employment or between jobs, or working unacceptable long hours under informal, intermittent and insecure work arrangements, without the possibility of personal and professional development; working below their potential in low-paid, low-skilled jobs without prospects for career advancement; trapped in involuntary part-time, temporary, casual or seasonal employment; and frequently under poor and precarious conditions in the informal economy, both in rural and urban areas (ILO, 2005).

In India the large proportion of young people reach productive age due to transition from high to low fertility, and the proportion of children and the elderly remains small. It is seen as an advantage, even characterised as a “demographic dividend”. In 2020, an average Indian is expected to be only 29 years old, as against 37 in china and the United States. His counterpart in Western Europe would be 45 and the average Japanese, 48 years old. Youth have specific socio economic needs and play an important role in determining the future trend of economic development of any region. Therefore, it becomes extremely important to provide them with adequate educational facilities as well as income-earning opportunities. Based on this back ground this paper examines the Long Term Demographic Consequences and Youth Unemployment in India. The broad objectives of this paper are to understand the level of population change and the youth employment in India and the selected states, and to comprehend the relation of youth workforce participation rate and unemployment in India.

Data source and Methodology

The present paper is based on various Census of India reports, National Sample Survey rounds on Employment and Unemployment situations of India and for 2017-18 youth unemployment data, and Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). We, used Annual Report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (2017-18), published in 2019 by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Statistical Office. Further, from the census data following three estimations have been made:

1. Rate of growth of population and youth population in India by place of residence and sex from 1981 to 2011.

2. Rate of work participation rate in India and selected states from 1981 to 2011.
3. Youth unemployment rate as a percent to total labour force in India and selected states

Concept and definition

Youth

The definition and age grouping may vary in different socio-cultural contexts across countries. The sociological viewpoint might wish to define “youth” as the transition stage from childhood to adulthood. However, differences continue to exist in the way national statistics programmes in different countries define and measure youth. The government of India officially defines youth as persons between the ages of 13 and 35 years. For instance, the National Youth Policy (NYP)-2003, 'youth' was defined a person of age between 13-35 years, but in the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2014, the youth age-group is defined as 15-29 years with a view to have more focused approach. In the present paper, both United National and National youth Policy 2014 definitions are followed.

Unemployment Rate

Unemployment Rate is the proportion of the labour force that does not have employment and is seeking and/ or available for work.

The labour market parameters viz., labour force participation rate (LFPR) worker population ratio (WPR) and unemployment Rate (UR) provides and important insight into the labour market conditions. The usual principal & subsidiary status approach is a hybrid one which takes into consideration both the major time criterion and shorter time period (30 days or more in any economic activity). Thus a person who has worked even for 30 days or more in any economic activity during the reference period of 365 days is considered as employed under this approach. In this approach also, the same reference period as taken in the usual principal status approach (UPS) is used. This approach is also called usual status approach.

Importance of youth for the demographic dividend in the Indian context

India is undergoing demographic transition and it is gaining economically from the changing age structure. Among the age structure, the age between from 15 to 34 is an important human resource for economic development for any country and they are playing significant role for social change and driving force for economic development. Since the 1980s India's growth of about 2 per annum

can be attributed to the growing working age population. The youth population in the age-group 15-34 years is increasing from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011 and then continue to increase to 464 million in 2021 and finally to decline to 458 million in 2026. Youth population comprises 35 per cent of the urban population and 32 per cent of the rural population. According to 2011 census 84.5 million young people in India live below poverty line, which is the highest rate worldwide, at 44.2 per cent of the total youth population. There are 44 million Indian youth who are undernourished, which constitutes 23 percent of the youth population of India.

Youth in the age group of 15-29 years comprise 27.5 per cent of the population 3. India is expected to become the 4th largest economy by 2025, contributing about 5.5 per cent -6 per cent to the world GDP, only after the United States, China and Japan. While most of these countries face the risk of an ageing workforce, India is expected to have a very favourable demographic profile is expected to exceed 1.3 billion by 2020 with a median age of 28 which is considerably less than the expected median ages of China and Japan. The youth population is expected to increase from 195 million in 2001 to 240 million in 2011 and then continue to decrease to 224 million in 2026, pointing to the fact that youth will make a significant contribution to the economic development of the country. This 'demographic dividend' offers a great opportunity to India.

State of the Economy under Transition period

The broad patterns of changes in sectoral composition of value added in India and southern states over the last four decades are examined in the light of the objective of attaining pro-poor growth. While, over the years, the value added composition has changes away from agriculture, the structure of the workforce is still dominated by agriculture.

The growth rates of net state domestic product (NSDP) for the selected states and per capita NSDP given in table. The per capita NSDP better reflects development than NSDP; this is one of the most important commonly used economic indicators to measure the growth of the economy. These estimates when studied in relation to the total population of the state indicate the level of per capita net output of goods and services available or the standard of living of the people in the state. These are referred as estimates of per capital income (PCI). The table 1 shows the economic growth of southern states and all India both NSDP and Per capita NSDP gives a positive trend.

Table 1 Economic Growth: a comparison with southern states and all India*(Constant price)*

State	Growth of NSDP (in billions)				Growth of per capita income (in rupees)			
	1981	1991	2001	2011	1981	1991	2001	2011
Andhra Pradesh	73.24	135.80	1260.35	1860.41	1380	2060	16574	37707
Karnataka	55.87	91.12	911.36	2408.17	1520	2039	17352	40699
Kerala	38.23	52.62	629.09	1671.78	1508	1815	19809	50146
Tamil Nadu	72.18	124.23	1263.49	3599.61	1498	2237	20319	53507
All India (NDP)	7273.63	12191.54	21043.65	43482.32	10712	14330	20418	36202

Source: RBI, Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy, 2018.

Characteristics of Youth in India**Size of the Youth Population**

In order to understand the situation of young people in India, it is important to understand the rapid demographic changes that produced the historically unprecedented numbers of young people. These demographic changes potentially have important implications on the labour market opportunities, access to public resources, and access to family resources for youth. The size of the youth population has increased three fold during last four decades of the 20th century. It increased from 73.22 million in 1961 to 234 million 2015. The share of youth population in the total population in India increased from 16.7 per cent 1961 to 18.3 per cent in 2015. Both the size and share of youth population is increasing in India and it is a clear indication of increasing in youth population in the country.

Table 2 Population and Decadal Growth: State-wise*(Millions)*

State	Total Population in				Decadal variations			
	1981	1991	2001	2011	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	2001-2011
Andhra Pradesh	53.55	66.51	76.21	84.67	10.05	12.96	9.7	8.46
Karnataka	37.14	44.98	52.85	61.13	7.85	7.84	7.87	8.28
Kerala	25.45	29.10	31.84	33.39	4.11	3.65	2.74	1.55
Tamil Nadu	48.41	55.86	62.41	72.14	7.22	7.45	6.55	9.73
All India	688.33	846.39	1028.61	1210.19	140.18	158.06	182.22	181.58

The population of India, at the beginning the twentieth century, was only around 238.4 million. This has increased by more than four times in a period of one hundred and ten years to reach 1210 million in 2011. Table 2 presents the population of India as recorded to 1981 to 2011 for all India and southern states

in absolute terms; the population of India has increased by about 181.58 million during the decade 2001-2011. Although, the net addition in population during each decade has increase consistently but the changes in net addition in the state level has showsa marginal fluctuation trends over the decades starting from 1981. Kerala shows negative decadal variations among the southern states from 1981 to 2011.

Table 3 Youth population as percent of total population

(millions)

State	Youth Population in				Decadal variations			
	1981	1991	2001	2011	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	2001-2011
Andhra Pradesh	18.99	18.24	19.05	19.58	2.65	-0.75	0.81	0.53
Karnataka	18.77	18.90	19.43	19.23	1.60	0.13	0.53	-0.2
Kerala	22.11	21.07	18.74	15.85	1.84	-1.04	-2.33	-2.89
Tamil Nadu	19.08	19.50	19.21	20.65	1.78	0.42	-0.29	1.44
All India	18.26	18.31	18.47	20.00	1.74	0.05	0.16	1.64

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

The estimate of the number of youth population and their proportion in the total population are more difficult than might be expected a priori even for the census years, because of the common errors of age reporting. The above table-3 shows the decennial census data on the number of youth population and decadal variations from 1981 to 2011. The data shows that the growth population is faster a compared to any other age group. Youth population for all India increased from 18.26 million to 20 million, at the same time the data for the southern states shows a positive trend except Kerala (negative trend). However according to the UN Population Division in India will begin to decline from the year 2025, while the census of India states that the decline may begin on early 2015.

Employment and Unemployment among the Youth Labour force

Addressing youth unemployment is difficult because the problem is multidimensional in nature. It is driven by both job scarcity and skill scarcity (skill mismatches and shortages). Too few jobs are being created for new entrants to the labour market, and many young people, including those with a tertiary education, do not possess the skills required to meet today's labour market needs the proportion of informal workers among employed youth rises to 80 per cent in India.

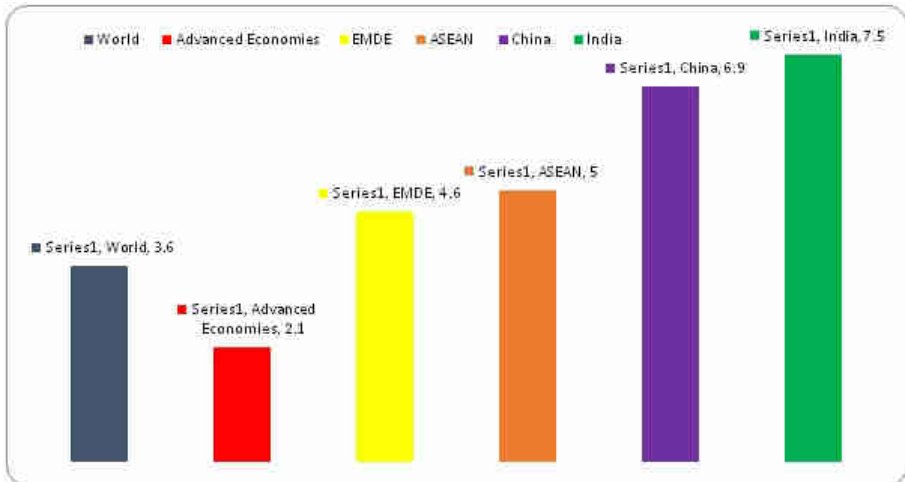
According to United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Article 23 gives, everyone a right to work, to free choice in employment, to just and favourable

conditions of work, and to protection against unemployment. (United Nations, 1948)

India's significant record on employment growth has, however, not been adequate in view of a faster growth of labour force. Further, there are a few disconcerting features of employment growth in recent years. First, employment growth has decelerated. Second, employment content of growth has shown a decline. Third, sectors with higher employment potential have registered relatively slower growth. Fourth, agriculture, despite a sharp decline in its importance in gross domestic product, continues to be the largest employer as the non-agricultural sectors have not generated enough employment to affect a shift to workforce. Fifth, most of the employment growth has been contributed by the unorganised, informal sector which is characterised by poor incomes and conditions of work. And, sixth, employment growth in the organised sector which seems to have picked up in recent years has been mostly in the categories of casual and contract labour (Papola, 2013). According to Mahesh Vyas (2020) employment prospects for youngsters between 20 and 24 years of age who are looking for jobs are not much better. The unemployment rate for these has more than doubled from 17 per cent in May-August 2017 to 37 per cent in September-December 2019. Similarly, it has risen from 8 per cent in May-August 2017 to 11 per cent for youngsters between 25 and 29 years of age.

In India many of the youth remain unemployed and some of living under chronically unemployed. The employability will be low with lack of education and skills. Young women in India face a higher risk of unemployment than men, in particular in urban areas. The problem of youth unemployment particularly that of educated youth, is gradually becoming a major concern. Even in India, unemployment rates are rising. This can largely be attributed to a failure of the agriculture sector that forces workers to migrate and be part of the unorganized sector. Nor are employment opportunities in the manufacturing and service sectors growing. In India, young people are withdrawing from the labour force for the sake of education. (Rangarajan, 2011) The recent data published by the UNICEF, even with the strong demographic dividend, India is still face the challenge of youth employment and under employment compared with rest of the world. (Figure 1)

Figure 1 Percentage of growth of economic growth and youth employment in GDP in India and the rest of the World



Source: UNICEF, India Country Report, 2019.

Work Force Participation Rate (WPR)

WPR is the one of the most obvious economic implications of changes in the absolute and relative numbers of young people is in the youth labour market. The way in which the increasing youth population is absorbed into or adjusted in the labour market is a matter of concern Work Force Participation Rate (WFPR) indicates the supply of labour and is an important input for production of goods and services.

Table 4 Percentage of workforce participation rate

State	General participation rate				Youth participation rate			
	1981	1991	2001	2011	1981	1991	2001	2011
Andhra Pradesh	45.76	45.05	45.78	51.50	33.63	32.00	31.63	40.40
Karnataka	40.252	41.99	44.60	45.62	35.00	33.50	32.20	43.00
Kerala	30.53	31.43	32.32	36.30	38.44	34.42	30.00	20.60
Tamil Nadu	41.73	43.31	44.78	45.60	35.20	31.67	30.14	34.50
All India	36.71	37.46	39.26	39.80	34.00	33.02	32.50	36.90

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Table 4 reveals the workforce participation rate, constructed from census data. In principle, a higher workforce participation rate should also have a positive impact on economic growth. The work force participation rate both general and

youth population in southern states and all India shows since 1981 the general workforce participation rate between 15 to 59 years increased in percentage for all India from 36.80 during the period 1981 to 2011. This is quite surprising because during the last twenty five years, with the economic reforms were in progress and the economy was reaping an average growth rate of between 6-7 percent per annum, the WPR of the youth was declining. This could be either due to increasing participation in the education or disappearance of the traditional jobs. The southern states shows that an increasing trend except Kerala and Karnataka shows an high participation rate from 35 per cent to 43 per cent during the same period.

Table-5 presents the dimensions of youth unemployment in southern states and all India level from 1993-94 to 2009-10. The percentage of youth unemployment rate in India shows that the urban unemployment rate is high compare with rural unemployment. The table 5 clearly shows that unemployment is most serious problem of Kerala particularly educated unemployment among the southern states followed by Tamil Nadu.

Table 5 Percentage of Youth unemployment rate in Southern states and All India in Place of Residence

State	1993-94		2001-2002		2004-05		2009-2010		2017-18	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Andhra Pradesh	1.7	9.0	2.3	10.0	2.7	9.1	3.4	8.8	13.4	22.8
Karnataka	2.7	10.1	1.7	7.3	2.2	7.1	1.8	7.5	14.9	17.1
Kerala	25.2	26.8	25.8	28.8	33.5	39.4	26.9	22.0	32.5	41.5
Tamil Nadu	5.3	13.3	5.7	10.8	5.1	9.2	6.6	9.8	29.3	21.4
All-India	4.4	12.4	4.6	12.4	5.7	11.9	5.7	9.6	16.6	20.6

Source: Various Rounds of NSSO Employment and Unemployment Surveys

Table 6 presents the estimates of the unemployed youth according to the place of residence, separately for rural area, the data shows that the both male and female youth unemployment for all India is creased from 4.8 percent to 17.7 percent and 3.2 percent to 13.6 percent respectively between 199-94 and 2017-18. Southern states shows that an increasing trend in both male and female youth unemployment in rural area. Rural India has a low unemployment rate compare with urban and this has a big impact on lowering India's overall unemployment rate. But, the employment condition of rural India is poor quality with low paid.

Table 6 Percentage of Youth unemployment rate in Southern states and All India by Sex (Rural)

State	1993-94		2001-2002		2004-05		2009-2010		2017-18	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	2.5	0.7	2.9	1.5	3.4	1.9	3.5	3.3	15.6	9.3
Karnataka	3.3	1.6	2.2	0.7	2.1	2.5	1.9	1.7	14.4	16.8
Kerala	19.2	39.4	17.8	45.1	19.1	58.9	13.5	51.6	20.5	61.7
Tamil Nadu	7.0	3.0	7.6	2.8	4.7	5.6	5.9	7.5	30.3	26.7
All-India	4.8	3.2	5.1	3.7	5.2	7.0	5.5	6.5	17.7	13.6

Source: Various Rounds of NSSO Employment and Unemployment Surveys.

Table 7 presents the percentage of urban youth unemployment rate in southern states and all India urban areas shows that the unemployment rate of urban male declined between 1993-94 and 2017-18. But, it emerges from the above that the unemployment rate for the urban females is the mixed trend, except Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and All India show declined, at the same time it was increased in the year 2017-18. The nature of unemployment rate in the urban youth and in particular, the urban educated youth.

Table 7 Percentage of Youth unemployment rate in Southern states and All India by sex (Urban)

State	1993-94		2001-2002		2004-05		2009-2010		2017-18	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	8.3	11.3	10.1	9.7	8.6	10.5	7.0	14.0	20.4	26.9
Karnataka	8.0	16.6	7.0	8.5	5.1	14.1	6.3	11.9	16.5	18.9
Kerala	19.0	45.2	18.4	50.8	21.6	71.1	10.0	46.0	27.4	65.2
Tamil Nadu	11.4	18.4	9.4	14.8	7.5	13.4	7.5	16.4	19.6	25.6
All-India	10.8	19.4	11.5	16.6	10.0	19.9	7.9	17.2	18.7	27.2

Source: Various Rounds of NSSO Employment and Unemployment Surveys.

Consequences of youth unemployment

Apart from financial impact, unemployment has many social impacts like theft, violence, drug taking, crime, health as well as it leads to psychological issue and poverty that is directly linked with unemployment as well as inequality. Long term unemployment can actually ruin the family and the society. According to CSO report on Youth in India (2017) says Youth are a source of immense energy and drive. If not harnessed and moulded properly, this energy not only goes waste, but at times becomes destructive to society.

Government Support to Youth Unemployment Eradication

Both Union and State Governments of India spends a considerable amount of money on youth development through various Ministries that have schemes targeted at the youth and schemes that target the general population of the

country. After the Covid 19 struck many youth are voluntarily became a unemployed one, basis on this situation the budget 2022 announced the production link incentive helps to create 60 lakh more jobs for young people of India. Currently invests more than Rs 90,000 crores per annum on youth development programmes and approximately Rs 2,710 per young individual per year, through youth-targeted (higher education, skill development, healthcare etc.) and non-targeted (food subsidies, employment etc.) programmes. In addition, the State Governments and a number of other stakeholders are also working to support youth development and to enable productive youth participation. (NYP 2014, p.3.)

Under the Pradhan Mantri Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), which targets offering 24 lakh Indian youth meaningful, industry-relevant, skill-based training and a government certification on successful completion of training along with assessment to help them secure a job for a better future, 5,32 lakh persons have already been enrolled. Of this number, 4.38 lakh have successfully completed training throughout India. In addition, the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), a placement-linked skill development scheme for rural youth who are poor, as a skilling component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) has also been launched. During 2015-16, against a target of skilling 1.78 lakhs candidates under the DDU-GKY, a total of 1.75 lakh have been trained and 0.60 lakh placed till November 2015. (Economic Survey 2015-16, p.202)

Barriers in the labour market

In order to implementing a appropriate policies to promote better labour market outcomes for youth, it is necessary to understand the specific barriers faced by the young people in India.

Skills mismatches

In India between the skills that employers require and those that the potential working population has hinder the chances of finding employment. This problem can result from inadequate educational systems, through which youth do not acquire the specific skills that are needed to take up productive work in particular economic sectors. However, mismatches in basic and non-technical skills, such as numeracy, literacy, soft and life skills, are also increasingly recognized as key barriers to employing youth.

Young employers suffer disproportionately from economic fluctuations

Many young people faced disproportionate difficulties in securing a job during the economic fluctuations. These vulnerabilities, in turn, translate into higher

probabilities of working participation is often highly sensitive to shifts in labour market situations. These kinds of economic fluctuations affect not only youth unemployment but also the morale of young people and their attitude toward work and responsibilities in general.

Job search barriers

The information gaps between jobseekers and potential employer's leads to sub-optimal job allocations, especially among the most disadvantaged jobseekers in rural areas to meet that lack access to job networks. In many developing world, acquiring a degree does not mean much in the labour market if employers are not aware of what the degree means in terms of skills levels.

Barriers to the creation of young entrepreneurs

Many young people are faced my entrepreneurial constraints, particularly in financial, physical, and social capital, negatively affects young entrepreneur's ability to secure decent self employment opportunities. Young entrepreneurs face numerous barriers to starting a business, especially when their initiative is driven by necessity rather than choice.

Inequality between economic growth and youth employment India has reached highest robestic economic growth even in the ongoing COVID 19 situations, but the formalizing employment to the youth is loss.

Conclusion and Implications

To concluded that demographic dividend and youth have played an important role in the development of every advanced nation. According to National Crime Report, 2018 warning that the educated youth unemployment suicides reached at the level of 2.8 percentages of total suicides in India. Therefore, it is the duty of the parents, elders and leaders to look into the problems of our youth and channelize their boundless energy for nation-building activities. Otherwise, their energy maybe dissipated in wrong direction creating chaos in the country. To check unemployment among the youth in India, various measures have been initiated and there is a need to learn others' experiences, their employment programmes, understand the nature of unemployment and measures to enhance employability and employment opportunities. The following suggestions can be reduce the youth unemployment problem in India.

1. Government should step up their efforts to uport skill and retraining activities to address the gaps between demand and supply of work skills and qualifications and to address long-term unemployment.
2. There is a need to huge investment training and skills amongst the youth. It

means 'a complete overhaul of our education system closely integrating it with an effective apprenticeship regime, create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to India's economic development.

3. Policies should ensure that the education systems prepare young people for the skill demands of employers through outreach programmes, training, apprenticeships, and access to job-search assistance measures.
4. Many young people have quit blaming someone else for their lack of opportunities. Youth should rely on their own entrepreneurship skills and create opportunities for themselves.
5. To reach many self-employment and wage-employment programmes have been launched India with limited success. For various reasons their full potentialities are not realised. Involvement of youth in the implementation of programmes for distribution of job-cards, ration-cards, Aadhar cards etc, along with officials would reduce the leakages to a great extent.
6. Youth must be made to realize their power and responsibility. Youth must be encouraged in all possible manners to start their own business. They should become entrepreneur that is job-providers and not mere job-seekers. India has a great opportunity to meet worldwide demand for work force.

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Consumer Protection Law Developments : An Overview

-Kusum Chauhan

Abstract

With the emergence of the welfare state concept and industrial revolution in almost all countries for raising the living standard of common man, consumer protection has assumed great importance in modern jurisprudence. One can't live without keeping touch with the global developments or without the modern telecommunication facilities. Almost all the consumers find themselves helpless as the corporate sector (including e-commerce) with its vast resources & control over the media exploits the consumer. Needless, to say that the consumer exploitation has become the fashion of day, because the producer, supplier, manufacture and retailer are in a much superior position as compared to the consumer. Various laws have been enacted by the legislative body for the protection of consumer rights. Going a step ahead the Indian Parliament, in order to meet the contemporary challenges faced by the consumers, has enacted a new law i.e. the Consumer Protection Act 2019 replacing the old Act of 1986. This Article broadly analyses the new provisions that to what extent they protect the consumer rights, reduce the prolonged litigation & fasten the pace of finality of a complaint.

Keywords: Consumerism, Consumer Rights Protection, Act of 2019, Redressal Agencies, Regulatory Body.

Introduction

Modern age is the age of industrial revolution. The industries are producing various types of goods for the use of consumers in their daily life. There has been a tremendous increase in respect of consumer goods in the country which were hitherto unknown to us two decades before such as, refrigerators, mopeds, scooters, televisions, various types of electronic goods, coolers, heaters,

detergents, cosmetics and food article etc. There is a great demand of these modern products in the society, particularly among the middle class people of the society. It is interesting to note that most of these products, except some luxury goods, are purchased by low income groups of people in society. The people of these categories want to purchase these goods at a low price. Consequently, the manufactures of these products try their best to keep the price of the products low even though it may mean compromising the quality and durability of their products. There is cut throat competition among the manufacturers to produce spurious goods to fulfil the increasing demand of these goods by the low income section of the society. The quality goods are available but they are highly priced and therefore, beyond the reach of low income groups. Consequently, the majority of consumers of this class have no option but to buy these inferior quality products. Besides, the people of this class do not have any knowledge about the consumer protection laws and consumer protection movements. As a result, the manufacturers of consumer products flood the market with these spurious goods, to satisfy the ever increasing demand of low income groups. (Pandey, 2019)

The production of goods and the services provided to consumers must suit them for the success of economic activity. If the goods produced are not suitable to consumers or the services provided are not to the expectations of consumers, they reject them and this results in utter failure of the market of such goods and services. When the market is full of competitions of consumer products and services to be provided, the consumer have choice whether or not to buy particular goods or services and further to buy them from whom. This is what we term “Consumer Sovereignty”. Consumer choice is however, a relative them. If production capability is limited or there are only limited products in the market, the consumer has to depend on those items only as he has no choice to select from many products. If production capability is not limited, the consumer has sufficient choice to select the goods of his choice. The quality, price, standard and purity of good etc. are determining factors of consumer choice when products are not limited. Further, products if not limited, there is a competition amongst the producers and manufactures and consumers are expected to get qualitatively better goods. In such a situation, market is influenced by consumer choice and business activities revolve round consumer. Consumers do not revolve round the market. Some products become successful and some products fail. It is all because success depends on consumer choice. The consumer behavior needs to be studied for the success of economy.

Despite the fact that the market is considerably influenced by the consumers'

choice, the consumers' choice is affected by certain, factors. The advertisement of products by the business concerns attract consumers. Sometimes, practices adopted by the industrialists: and business concerns and glitters of advertisements influence consumers without any knowledge as to how far the products are beneficial to them. The domestic articles of daily use relating to toilet and kitchen, and other articles e.g., fridge, TV, medicines, cosmetics, scooters, cars, etc. the literary works besides many other things are the need of the people. The grand and the big advertisements regarding the quality and durability within the reach of the people affect their choice. Consumer choice is also affected by the governmental policies. If a product is subjected to heavy excise duty, the price of the product increases. If product of a specific brand is banned by the Government, consumers have no choice but to depend on those products only which are available in the market (Srivastava, 2000).

Journey of Consumerism :

The term 'consumerism' is related to the modern consumer movement launched in the mid. 1960 s by the concerns triggered by Rachel, Carson and by Ralph Nader's auto safety investigation and by President Kennedy's efforts- to establish the rights of consumer to safety, to be informed, to choose and to be heard (Aker & Day, 1974).

Thus consumerism is a movement directed to protect the consumers to ensure in term of; satisfaction that the consumer gets the best return in exchange for the money he spends. Dr. James Turner close associate of Ralph Nader and a leading consumer experts says that consumers are to economics what voters are to politics. His suggestion is that instead of banning cigarette production one should educate the consumers on the ill effects so as to make them aware to decide for themselves that this is a product they do not want. This is based on the premise “that power flows from the bottom up that is from the people to the powers that be. However, the policy decision of Government supplements the economic vote of the consumer. Business, consumers and; Government live on each other, live off each other and because, of each other. Consumer satisfaction is the end for which the means are producers and Government. Emphasizing the consumer movement former Vice President of India M. Hidayatullah observed:

“Why have milk prices gone up much? In the olden days the mothers milked the cows, the daughters set it out in pans to separate the cream, one of the sons sold it in the market. Today the agricultural' department is mobilized, the cow sheds are immunized, the milk Is homogenized, the supplies are motorized, the dairies are organised, the milkmart are subsidized, the political leaders are engerised. The result is the Indian Consumer is victimized”. (Khanna, 2002).

The interests, of the consumers have three kinds of protections-viz. (a) economic protection; (b) social protection and (c) legal protection. Hence the protections, available to the consumers are not solely dependent upon the rights, available to the consumers under any legal system. Since the aim of the legal order, has been advocated by Bentham to promote the happiness of the greatest number; therefore in order to achieve this, there has to be a balancing of individual interests with the Communal Welfare. This was referred by him as 'Felicific Calculus'. This idea or balancing of interests has come to play an important role in; the development process of the law in the twentieth century Pound equated; the task of the lawyer to that of engineering. Again, the aim of social engineering is to secure the satisfaction of 'maximum wants with minimum friction and waste. This involves the balancing of the competing interests. Therefore the conversion of an interest of the consumer into a right has also to compete with other conflicting interests. The crystallisation of a consumer interest into a consumer right also involves social engineering. In this process some of the interests do fail to get recognized as a right. In our country too, the need for a strong consumer movement was realised, hence the process of converting the interests of consumers into legal rights was started. As this transformation involves four steps, the consumer interests were not converted into the rights simultaneously. These steps include (a) identification of the interests of consumers, (b) recognition of these under the laws providing protection to the consumers, in the shape of legal rights, (c) ensuring of consumer rights and his legally protected interests and (d) ensuring adequate reliefs to the consumers when these legally protected interests are in jeopardy. (Bangia, 2012)

Historical Perspective of Consumer Protection Law :

Consumer Protection through trade regulations is not new to our country. History reveals that the interests of the sellers and buyers have involuntarily pulled apart, the former trying to obtain the highest price and the latter hesitating to be exploited. Consumer resistance is an age long phenomenon though it has remained limited only to ineffective, resentment. Before dealing with the present legal position of consumer protection laws, a brief discussion of the historical development of 'consumerism' and the laws prevailing in ancient and medieval India in the field will also be worth discussing.

1) In Other Countries :

Competitive activities in U.S. led to the passing of Sherman Act in 1890. The economic scene also witnessed a change in the consumer's condition, particularly after the formation of a Consumer's League in 1891. Consumer

associations, acting as pressure groups brought various legislations on the Statute book, beginning with the Pure Food and Drug Act 1906 Federal Trade Commission, which was formed in 1914, recommended from time to time amendments in the laws aiming at to prevent unfair methods of competition and also in order to provide better protection to the consumers. Contrary to the US approach, in England consumers were being protected by judicial activism alone for a considerable period upto 1965. Yet the condition of consumers was not satisfactory, as the judge's views were dominated by the *laissez faire* approach and by the maxim 'Caveat Emptor'. Uniformity in the judicial decisions cannot be found in England. Era of Codification, began in England in the last part of the 19th Century but the laws were codified in parts upon the demands of the businessmen Sale of Goods Act was enacted in 1889, which continued to protect the consumer sale transactions as well, recognising several exceptions to the 'Caveat Emptor' rule, upto 1979. However, the earlier Sale of Goods Act was supplemented by supply of Goods (Implied Terms) Act 1979, Consumer Credit Act 1974 and Unfair Contract Act 1977 etc. Anti-trust kind of situation of US also attracted attention and became a matter of concern in England, which led to the passing of Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1956, Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (Inquiry Control) Act 1948. Resale Prices Act 1964, Fair Trading Act 1973 and Competition Act 1980. (Bangia, 2007)

2) In India :

The historical development of India legal system reveals that consumer's interest was also protected in the past. We can divide the legal development in India in three stages for proper appreciations (1) The Ancient period, (2) The Medieval period and (3) The pre independence period. All the three stages of the developments reveal that whatever might have been the idea behind the laws the public welfare was the ultimate goal.

Ancient Hindu Law was a mixture of law and religion. As aptly observed by the English Judges, 'vinculum juris and vinculum pudoris' was not discernible in the earlier Hindu Law. The Indian society has been a duty conscious society. The idea of civil wrongs was over shadowed by criminal wrongs in Hindu Jurisprudence. It may be noticed, that even for the breaches of contracts, punishments were prescribed. In this sense, consumer was a better protected lot in those times, Indian Law of torts was not as advanced as the English Law of Torts. A consumer also had a right of replacement or a right to claim a refund of price. He also had a right to rescission in several cases, but these rights were subject to the principle of 'Caveat Emptor'. Under law of crimes provisions were made to ensure standard weights and measures, realizing the criminal tendency prevalent amongst traders There were also rules for preventing

adulteration and for strict adherence of quality control A Superintendent of Commerce was also appointed to enforce the trade regulations covering sale of goods and also for enforcing the terms of services. Moghuls ruled India in the Medieval Period. They were much concerned with the expansion of their Empires and thus they had not much concern for the public in general and consumers in particular. Yet, law of sales was much concerned with the interests of consumers (as was observed by Bailee). Exceptions to Caveat Emptor rule were recognised under Muslim law of sale, which recognised warranty of title and warranty of free from all defects. Several options to cancel the bargain were available to the consumers in cases of absence of consent, or fraud or where the goods were defective. Freedom of contract and sanctity of contract was also recognised under Muslim Law, as it did not allow stepping in for completing the bargain. It may still be submitted that the position of consumers was not satisfactory during this period. In pre independence India, gradually the Common Law principles came to be applied by the Britishers. Codification of laws was embarked upon, and in this process, the laws came to be enacted even prior to the creation of public opinion in their favour. From Consumers angle, Indian Contract Act 1872 was enacted, which also provided for the regulation of Sale of Goods. Later on in 1930, this part was repealed and re-enacted as Sale of Goods Act. The other too enactments, viz. Transfer of Property Act and Specific Relief Act also came to be enacted and had a bearing upon the consumers. Law of Torts did not develop at the same speed as it did in England. Indian Courts were apt to follow the law, as laid down in *Donoghue v. Stevenson*. Various provisions of the Indian Penal Code 1860, also declared certain activities of the trades and penal offences Section 272-276 dealt with the penalty for adulteration of food & drink. Section 486 further made sale of goods marked with false counterfeit property mark, punishable. Further Sections 415-425 made cheating an offence. Indian economic scene was also dominated with scarcity of goods during the World wars. Various laws were thus enacted as emergency measures to solve the problem of scarcity of essential items. Hence the licensing system and commodity control measures, were introduced by Britishers in India through the enactment of Defence of India Act, 1939 and Essential Supplies Act 1946 etc. Formation of Consumer Co-operatives was supported, which was regulated through the Cooperative Societies Act 1904 and of 1912. In the last phase very many other laws too came to be enacted for the efficient and satisfactory functioning of the public utility services, like electricity, transportation, posts and telegraphs etc. Pre independent India pictured a plethora of laws, which in some way or the other protected the consumers of India. (Khanna, 2002)

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 :

India has an ancient history of consumer protection. Consumer protection was part of ancient culture and formed the core of its administration. But the introduction of boundless commercialization of activities eclipsed the old rich heritage. As in Europe, in India also the origin of the Consumer Movement was in the form of Consumer Co-operatives. Since Independence, India has been struggling to develop and strengthen its industrial base. However, during this period the Indian consumer has borne incredible hardships and has been subjected to exploitation of every kind in the name of self-sufficiency. Passive by nature, most Indian consumers have had to put up with adulterated food, faulty weights, under measures spurious and hazardous drugs, exorbitant prices, endemic shortages leading to black marketing and profiteering, substandard products, useless guarantees, callous and indifferent services from public utilities and a host of other ill. (Pandey, 2019)

The term 'Consumer Protection' has undergone several changes with growing consumerism and modification of the Common law doctrine of "*Caveat Emptor*" i.e. let the buyer beware which permits the seller not to shoulder his liability as it shifts the whole of responsibility on the buyer. However, the consumer movement in India is still far behind in comparison with advanced countries like Japan, USA, UK and Germany etc. During the first half of 20th Century, the development of consumer welfare societies mushroomed. Although the enactments of some protective laws for the benefit and protection of consumer in the old times cannot be denied. The growing socio-economic culture pushed helpless consumer to become easy target of exploitation by unscrupulous traders and manufacturers. Hence, the movement for the consumer's rights commenced in every sphere of the world. The crusade for the consumer's right started in USA in 1927 and subsequently led into formation of Union of Consumer of United States of America in 1936. In 1957 the Sweden's Government took over the Institute of Consumer Information. In due time the worldwide consumer associations, unions and organisations were established namely, in Japan, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, UK and USA. The then President of USA. Mr. John F. Kennedy in his speech to the Congress, while introducing a bill on consumer's right, has outlined four rights of the consumers, namely:-

- 1) The right to safety
- 2) The right to be informed
- 3) The right to choose
- 4) The right to be heard

This Bill of Consumer's Right is now regarded as the *magna carta* of the rights of consumer. (Tripathi, 2011)

In a welfare State, the protection of consumer's interests can never be over emphasized. The consumers in India, like in other countries, belong to the unorganized sector. Consequently, united efforts on their part to protect their interest against unscrupulous activities of the trade and business have become almost impossible. The condition of the consumers has not been changed appreciably despite some scattered efforts made by the consumers to protect their interest through co-operation movement and other institutional means. The modern state, as pointed out by Prof W. Friedmann, functions as the protector or dispenser of social service, industrial manager, economic controllers and as arbitrator and has to take within its functional ambit the protection of the consumers. The word “consumer” is a compendious word which includes all people irrespective of their sectional or group denominations. The word “consumer is synonymous with the word “public” and “consumers interest” is to tantamount to “public interest”. Thus the “public interest” is the predominant concern of every democratic State. The consumer protection is, therefore, one of the most important duties of the modern democratic States. (Pandey, 2019)

The preamble of the Indian Constitution declares its resolve to secure “social justice to all its citizens. Article 38(1) of the Constitution imposes a duty on the State to strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting a social order in which justice-social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of the national life. Article 39(b) and (c) imposes a duty on the State “to direct its policies towards securing the distribution of the ownership and control of the material resources of the community in such a way to subserve the common good and that the operation of the economic system should not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to common detriment”. These provisions in fact make the role of the State as the role of the dispenser of socio-economic justice and it is obliged to play it effectively to promote the welfare of the people Thus, it is clear that consumer protection is one of the duties imposed on the State. (Bare Act, The Constitution of India, 1950)

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of Nation, had categorically stressed the importance of the consumers or customers in these words in 1934:

“A consumer is the most important visitor in our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider on our business. He is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an

opportunity to do so". (Tiwari, 2007)

Prior to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 consumer interest were protected by certain Acts, e.g., Indian Penal Code 1860, The Dangerous Drugs Act, 1930 Sale of Goods Act, 1930, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. After independence, Banking Regulation Act, 1949, Industrial Development and Regulation Act, 1951 were the first enactments aimed towards securing the protection to consumers. Thereafter, Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, Essential Commodities Act, 1955 aimed at providing the availability of essential goods by the control of production of supply and distribution. Indian Standards Institution (Certification of Marks) Act, 1956 ensured quality in marketable products providing certification of goods. Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 was enacted to prevent the concentration of economic power to the common detriment and to prohibit monopolistic and restrictive trade practices which were prejudicial to public interest. In 1984, in the Act the concept of unfair trade practice was also brought to safeguard consumer's interests. The Act is aimed to keep a watch on big business houses and also to safeguard the interests of consumers.

The problems of consumers were highlighted with more attention drawn towards them by many consumer organizations in country. Their role has been significant in drawing the attention of the Government towards consumer problems. The nationalization of 14 Banks in 1970, and prior to it the nationalization of Insurance Companies in 1956 aimed at utilization of money collected by them in the investment in protection of goods and other things in the interests of the society as a whole which money was hitherto being utilized by the business houses only. Prevention of Black-marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act was enacted in 1980 to deal with adulteration, black-marketing, hoarding and smuggling of goods. The provisions of Maintenance of Internal Security Act, 1971 which has been replaced by the National Security Act, 1980, was also resorted to deal with such evils. In 1977, a high powered expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Nath Sachar laid the emphasis on social responsibility of business concerns to the community so that the corporate sector should function as being responsible to the society like any other individual. The need for accountability was emphasized on the part of management not being limited to shareholders alone. The claims of various interests should be balanced in such a way as not to be the best for shareholders but to be the best for the community at large. A company must accept its obligation to be socially responsible. The profit should not be the primary purpose. The Committee recommended for a provision of the "Social Report", along with the report of the Director

indicating the activities relating to social responsibility done by the Company. On the recommendation of the Sachar Committee, the concept of Unfair Trade Practice was brought in the MRTP Act, 1969, in 1984 for the protection of consumers. The Indian Companies Act, 1956 was amended in 1988. The United Nations General Assembly also adopted guidelines for the protection of consumers on 9th April, 1985 (General Assembly Resolution No. 39/248) after extensive discussions and negotiations among Governments on the scope and content of guidelines. Prior to it the Secretary General of the United Nations consulted Government and International organizations and submitted draft guidelines for Consumer Protection to the Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) in 1983. (Srivastava, 2000)

The Consumer Protection Act 1986 was enacted as a result of widespread consumer protection movement. On the basis of the report of the Secretary General on Consumer Protection dated 27 May 1983, the United Nations Economic and Social Council recommended that the world governments should develop, strengthen and implement a coherent consumer protection policy taking into consideration the guidelines set out therein. The governments were to further provide adequate infrastructure including the bodies as well as financial facilities to develop, implement and monitor consumer protection policies. The introduction of new products in the developing countries was to be assessed in relation to the local conditions having regard to the existing production, distribution and consumption patterns of the country of region concerned. With reference to consumer movement and the international obligations for protection of the rights of the consumers, provision has been made in the said Act with the object of interpreting the relevant law in a rational manner and for achieving the objective set forth in the Act. A rational approach and not the technical approach is the mandate of law. (Singh, 2009) (Indian Photographic Co. Ltd., v. H.D. Shaurie AIR 1999 SC 2453)

The industrial revolution and the development in the international trade and commerce has led to the vast expansion of business and trade, as a result of which a variety of consumer goods have appeared in the market to cater to the needs of the consumer and a host of services have been made available to the services like insurance, transport, electricity, housing, entertainment, finance and banking. A well-organized sector of manufactures and traders with better knowledge of markets has come into existence thereby affecting the relationship between the traders and the consumers making the principle of consumer sovereignty almost inapplicable. The advertisements of goods and services in television, newspapers and magazines influence the demand for the same by the consumers though there may be manufacturing defects or

imperfections or short comings in the quality, quantity and the purity of the goods or there may be deficiency in the services rendered. For the welfare of the public, the glut of adulterated and sub-standard articles in the market have to be checked. In spite of various provisions providing protection to the consumer and providing for stringent action against adulterated and sub-standard articles in the different enactments like code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Indian Contract Act, 1872, the Sale of Goods Act, 1930, the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Standards of Weights & Measures Act, 1976 and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, very little could be achieved in the field of consumer protection. Though the Monopolies & Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 and the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 have provided relief to the consumers, yet it became necessary to protect the consumers from the exploitation & to save them from adulterated & sub-standard goods & services & to safe guard the interests of the consumers. In order to provide for better protection of the interests of the consumers, the Consumer Protection Bill was introduced in the Parliament. (Bare Act, The Consumer Protection Act, 1986)

According to the Preamble of the Act, the Act was enacted, 'to provide for the protection of the interests of consumers. Use of the word 'protection' furnishes key to the minds of makers of the Act. Various definitions and provisions which elaborately attempt to achieve this objective have to be construed in this light without departing from the settled view that a preamble cannot control the otherwise plain meaning of a provision. The Act meets long felt necessity of protecting the common man from such wrongs for which the remedy under ordinary law for various reasons has become illusory. The importance of the Act lies in promoting welfare of the society by enabling consumer to participate directly in the market economy. It attempts to remove the helplessness of a consumer which he faces against powerful business, described as 'a network of rackets' or a society in which, 'producers have secured power, to 'rob the rest' and the might of public bodies which are degenerating into storehouses of inaction where papers do not move from the one desk to another as a matter of duty and responsibility but for extraneous consideration leaving the common man helpless, bewildered and shocked. The legislature has taken precaution not only to define 'complaint', 'complainant', 'consumer' but even to mention in detail what would amount to unfair trade practice by giving an elaborate definition in cl(r) and even to define 'defect' and 'deficiency' by cll (f) and (g) for which a consumer can approach the Commission. The Act thus aims to protect the economic interest of a consumer as understood in commercial sense as a purchase of goods and in the larger sense a user of services. It is a milestone in history of socio-economic legislation and is directed towards achieving public benefit. (Singh, 2009)

The preamble to this Act leaves no ambiguity regarding the intention of the framers of this Act. It is a benevolent social legislation that enshrines the rights and remedies of the consumers. The dictum, *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) is a thing of the past and *caveat venditor* (let the seller beware) compels the seller to take responsibility for the product and discourages sellers from selling products of unreasonable quality. The consumer can now seek redressal against manufactures, traders of goods and providers of various types of services. A separate Department of Consumer Affairs was also created in the Central and State Government to exclusively focus on ensuring protection of the right of consumers, as enshrined in the Act. (Dhirajlal, 2016)

This Consumer Protection Bill, 1986 provided for better protection of the interests of consumers and for the purpose, made provisions for the establishment of Consumer Councils & other authorities for the settlement of consumer disputes and for matter connected therewith. It received the assent of the President on 24th December, 1986 & became the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The Act of 1986 endeavoured to promote & protect the rights of consumers such as: (a) the right to be protected against marketing of goods which are hazardous to life & property (b) the right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices (c) the right to be assured whenever possible, access to an authority of goods at competitive prices (d) the right to be heard & to be assured that consumers interests will receive due consideration at appropriate forums (e) the right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers and (f) right to consumer education. These objectives were sought to be promoted & protected by the Consumer Protection Council established at the Central and State level. Under the Act of 1986, to provide speedy & simple redressal to consumer disputes, a Quasi-Judicial Machinery was set up at the District, State and Central levels. These Quasi-Judicial bodies observed the principles of natural justice and were empowered to give relief of a specific nature and to award, wherever appropriate, compensation to consumers. It also provided for the penalties for non-compliance of the orders given by the quasi-judicial bodies. (Singh, 2005)

The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was amended four times; first in 1991, secondly in 1993, thirdly in 2002 (which was later repealed in 2015), and then finally by the Finance Act, 2017. In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 30(1) of this Act of 1986, the Central Government made the Consumer Protection Rules, 1987. Further in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 30 A of the Act, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission with the previous approval of the Central Government made the Consumer

Protection Regulations, 2005, and the Consumer Protection (Procedure for Regulation of Allowing Appearance of Agents or Representatives or Non-Advocates or Voluntary Organizations before the Consumer Forum) Regulations, 2014.

The Need of New Legislation :

Several years have passed since the Act of 1986 was enacted. Many shortcomings have since been noticed while administering various provisions of the Act. Although, the working of the consumer dispute redressal agencies has served the purpose to a considerable extent under the said Act, the disposal of cases has not been fast due to various constraints. Consumer markets for goods & services have undergone drastic transformation since the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act in 1986. The modern market place contains a plethora of products & services. The emergence of global supply chains, rise in international trade & the rapid development of e-commerce have led to new delivery systems for goods and services and have provided new options & opportunities for consumers. Equally this has rendered the consumer vulnerable to new forms of unfair trade & unethical business practices. Misleading advertisements, tele-marketing, multi-level marketing, direct selling & e-commerce pose new challenges to consumer protection & will require appropriate & swift executive interventions to prevent consumer detriment. Therefore, it became inevitable to amend the Act to address the myriad & constantly emerging vulnerabilities of the consumers. In view of this, in 2011, a bill was introduced to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. However, the bill lapsed due to dissolution of the Lok Sabha. A new bill, namely, the Consumer Protection Bill, 2015 was introduced in Lok Sabha to replace the 1986 Act. The bill was sent to Standing Committee, which submitted its report in 2016. Considering the recommendations of Standing Committee, a new bill, namely, the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018 was introduced in Lok Sabha. But it lapsed due to dissolution of Lok Sabha, consequently, a new Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha in 2019. The present Bill incorporates, many innovative features. The proposed bill provided for the concept of product liability, setting up of regulatory body, penalties for misleading advertisements & endorsers of such advertisements, pecuniary jurisdiction of the adjudicatory body at the district level etc. The Bill passed by both the Houses of Parliament, received the assent of the President on 9th August 2019 and came on the statute book as The Consumer Protection Act, 2019. (Bare Act, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019)

What makes the Act of 2019 so different & comprehensive is the provision for a powerful regulatory body called the Central Consumer Protection Authority

that will protect, promote & enforce the rights of consumers. To be more specific, the 1986 Law encapsulated the rights of consumers, but, failed to provide for a regulator to enforce them. Similarly, even though the consumers have a right to be protected from unfair trade practices, the 1986 law did not provide for a watchdog to investigate *suo motu* into such practices, including false & misleading advertisements and put a stop to them. To put it differently the 1986 law only provided for an adjudicatory body to compensate consumers for the harm or injury caused on account of violations of consumer rights. It did not provide a regulatory body to prevent such violations & the resultant injury. The 2019 law finally addresses this issue through the creation of the Central Consumer Protection Authority. (The Tribune, 2019)

The Authority will have a Chief Commissioner (Section-10) & as many Commissioners as the rules may suggests (Section-14) to deal with different issues such as (Section-18) unsafe goods & services, unfair trade practices including misleading advertisements, unfair terms in consumer contracts, enforcement of consumer laws and promotion of consumer awareness. The authority thus has the power to recall unsafe goods (Section-20) & direct refund of the cost of such goods to the consumers. The need for such an authority was long overdue with abolition of the Monopolies & Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Commission. A crucial area the body will regulate is misleading advertisements that affect the safety and health of consumers. Under the 2019 Act the manufacturer and endorser of such advertisements are liable (Section 89) to pay a penalty of Rs. 10 lakh and serve a jail term of 2 years in the first instance. For repeat offenders, the penalty is Rs. 50 lakh and a jail term of 5 years. The provision will act as a deterrent, ensuring both manufacturers and endorsers understand the implications of misleading consumers. The Act holds celebrity endorsers too liable for false and misleading promotions. By providing stringent punishment, including financial penalty and jail term for advertisers as well as endorsers found guilty of promoting false advertisements, the Act takes a very serious view of the violations of consumer rights. (The Tribune, 2019)

All in all, it's a Dynamic Act that keeps up with the developments in the digital arena. Another issue that the Act of 2019 seeks to address is the delay in disposal of consumer complaints, something the 1986 Act failed to resolve. The new Act, however provides a way out of prolonged litigation as parties can opt for mediations (Section-74) to resolve disputes at any stage of proceedings. This will widen the scope of early settlement if the parties agree. Mediation cells will be set up and attached to commissions & parties can't appeal once a dispute has been resolved through mediation. The mediator shall prepare a settlement report

(Section-80) of the settlement & forward the signed agreement along with such report to the concerned Commission. Whereby, such Commission shall within seven days (Section-81) pass suitable order recording such settlement of consumer dispute and dispose of the matter accordingly. The concept of product liability has also been defined in the Act and manufactures & service providers will be held accountable for any harm to consumers from defective products or deficient services (Section-83). This will ensure better quality products and services to consumers. A product liability action can't be brought against the product seller (Section-87) if, at the time of harm, the product was misused, altered or modified. A product manufacturer shall not be liable for failure to instruct or warn about a danger which is obvious or commonly known to the user or consumer of such product or which, such user or consumer, ought to have known, taking into account the characteristics of such product.

The nomenclature of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies has been changed to bring about uniformity. The district forum will now be known as District Commission (Section-28). The pecuniary jurisdiction of the commissions has also been enhanced. The District Commission will entertain complaints (Section-34) where the value of goods & services does not exceed Rs. 1 crore the State Commission (Section-47) upto Rs. 10 crore and the National Commission (Section-58) will entertain complaints exceeding Rs. 10 crore. Another significant improvement is simplification of the process of filing a complaint. A consumer now has the provision of e-filing complaints (Section 35). Another important provision is that after the second stage of appeal (Section-5), further appeals will be entertained only on the question of law. This will reduce prolonged litigation & fasten the pace of finality of a complaint. As e-commerce in India is growing at a fast pace due to the availability of a variety of products & services at discounted prices and the convenience of the process, so the terms e-commerce {Section-2(2)(16)} and electronic service provider {Section-2(2)(17)}, are defined under the Act of 2019. The new law also makes provision for compounding of offences (Section-96) with the leave of the court by the Central Authority. It also provides the consumer courts with wider jurisdiction to deal with complaints pertaining to e-commerce, direct selling entities & unfair contracts. It is in tune with the digital age, facilitating e-filing of complaints & hearing through video conferencing, offers an enlarged definition of unfair trade practices, would include refusal to take back defective goods & issue refund & also failure to issue receipts or cash memo.

Overall, the Consumer Protection Act 2019 can act as a game changer if executed well. The regulatory authority can really bring about far-reaching changes in the way consumers are protected in the country. We have really come a long way and one looks forward to quick implementation of the Law.

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Subverting Hegemonic Narratives on Kashmir: A Critique of Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator* and Siddhartha Gigoo's *The Garden of Solitude*

-Yogesh Kumar Negi & Surekha Dangwal

Abstract

The present article seeks to problematise the current narratives on Kashmir by offering a critical discussion subverting the power-driven discourse on the issue. The contemporary literature extensively reflects the subjugation of the Kashmiris, exerted through dominant repressive and hegemonic forces. During the 1980s and post-1990, Kashmir became a contested land where power politics is exercised at the cost of millions of the native people. The partition serves as a flashpoint between two post-colonial nations that the region is located between. At present, multiple narratives are manufactured, which blow out in Kashmir and outside to fulfil the vested interests of these two post-colonial nation-states. The present study will therefore examine Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator* and Siddhartha Gigoo's *The Garden of Solitude*, both written in 2011. Waheed ably depicts the language of political propaganda of the states, carried out through its media agencies aiming to monitor the territory. Whereas, Gigoo presents the Pandit narratives and the picture of their painful exodus portraying the harsh realities by fictionalising the history.

Keywords: Hegemony, Narrative, Subjugation, 'power', nation-states.

People in different locations are trapped in diverse narratives in this post-colonial phase. Several discursive methods can be seen at work hegemonising the narratives and apparatuses employed to govern or control the masses of particular spaces/places. While referring to the Althusserian viewpoint of the state apparatus, one has to construe a systematic discussion on the ideological as well

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as repressive apparatuses through which he simply defines the state as “a machine of repression” which empowers the oppressor to “ensure their domination” over the people who are pushed to margin (Althusser 137). Since the states still employ both ideological and repressive means at different socio-political levels, the concept does not seem to be losing its coherence even at the present age which they call a 'welfare state'. The task has equally been carried out by the two competing hegemonies of Indo-Pakistani nations for trespassing in the territory and subjugating its masses. With the advancement of technology and mass media, it has become much easier for the states to govern the masses and lead it in a particular direction that largely serves the political purposes of the 'power'.

In the words of Chitralkha Zutshi, “Kashmir conflict is as much a battle of narratives as it is a fight over territory” (Zutshi). Both Indian and Pakistani nation-states actively promote their narratives inside and outside their territories. But sadly, in between the Indo-Pakistani nationalistic discourse, the indigenous discourse of Kashmir becomes insignificant or marginalised. Therefore, when dealing with the problems concerning Kashmir, it is apparent that the narratives on the issue largely serve these nation-states that are in a position to govern. Simultaneously, one must look at the divisive methods of modern nation-states that promote suitable narratives that further divide the masses of the whole territory into fractions. *The Collaborator* (2011), authored by Mirza Waheed, is primarily set in the early 1990s in the village called Nawgam, the border passes, in which an eponymous narrator describes the exchanges between an insurgent and an army officer as “an encounter, a battle, a skirmish, whatever they chose to call it” (5). On the other hand, in *The Garden of Solitude* (2011), Siddhartha Gigoo laments the loss of Kashmiri Pandits' homes, history, culture and distinct identity.

It is a heart-breaking account of Pandits of Kashmir, a minority yet influential community of the valley that was compelled to leave the valley in the wake of armed rebellion in the 1990s. Gigoo presents the relationship of Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits who have lived together for centuries. He fictionalises the historical and autobiographical account in this story that reflects love, suspicion, betrayal, loss, and longing. Nageen Rather aptly examined that the text paints “despondency, stink, and hopelessness, of rot and dirt, of despair and existential and identity crisis” (Rather 206). Gigoo provides an indigenous narrative of Kashmir that had otherwise been masked behind the veil of politically complicated narratives of Indo-Pakistani nation-states. Apart from this, the novel depicts a sense of loss of a centuries-old mixed culture and tradition of Kashmir and reveals how the narratives of power that sparked

violence were floated out and how they broke the relations between communities that left the people deserted.

Now looking onto the historicity of the select texts, it is much needed to go back to the late 1980s, when Kashmir witnessed explosive upheaval and violence, lugging the centuries-old harmonious culture at the margins, communities parted on religious identities, hundreds and thousands of people were exiled whereas thousands were killed, tortured, and made to disappear, women were raped and widowed, children were orphaned. But, despite the enormous sacrifices of both Hindus and Muslims of the territory, the situations have either remained the same or have become worse, as the protagonist in *The Collaborator* asserts, “I’m no-man’s land what happens here is off the record, means nothing to anyone” (98). *The Garden of Solitude* visits the tragedy as the author puts, “[t]here is not a single Muslim family which has not lost a son. There are tales of loss in every house” (176). While the Kashmiris face the mentioned tragedies and are appealing to the global community for a peaceful solution, the Indo-Pakistani nation-states are engaged in promulgating their narratives within the states concerned and to the external world.

Apart from looking separately into these recent events, one must be precise enough to ascertain that since 1947 Kashmir has been a victim of both hyper-nationalist and jingoistic/patriotic media, which promotes false positions/false realities thus maintain the status quo. Bruce McComiskey, in his book *Post-Truth Rhetoric and Composition* (2017), refers to the present days’ flowering of post-truth landscapes and its fakeries as a “purely strategic medium” (6). He goes on to define that in this post-truth “communication landscape, people [especially those own power] say whatever might work in a given situation, whatever may generate the desired results, without any regard to the truth value or facticity of statements” (6). Likewise, one-sided half-truths, exaggerations, and lies through fake news and commercial avarice has always provoked and commercialised the dead bodies of Kashmir. Waheed efficiently subverts the media agencies and their hateful content, often presented and shown on TV to the common masses outside the territory. He relates it to a part of the more extensive Indo-Pakistani propaganda. In the seventh chapter of *The Collaborator*, the protagonist argues with his boss Kadian on fabricated reporting by armies and the media agencies. For instance, the media concocts news around incidents that have never happened, such as TV shows that “foreign militants were killed after a fierce battle” in the concerned territory. The author ridicules the concerned agencies that “during search operations” in the jungles “how do you know they are “foreign[ers]” even before they are

killed?” (90, 91). The boundaries of insiders and outsiders are consequently constructed in the minds of the territory's masses and outside it. The common mass remains either uninformed or misinformed about the state's machination to sway them in a certain direction. Captain Kadian, one of the leading characters through which connivance of armed forces on the one hand and their imperatives on the other is represented, utters to the boy [a Collaborator] that these things “[are] not as simple as you people make it out to be”, and, he also maintains that “[c]ivilian don't understand. Sometimes things just need to be done, that's it, extraordinary things”, and captain finishes his conversation by arguing that the things that they do are the “requirement of job” (91).

The Garden of Solitude equally reveals the media hypocrisy when it comes to the exodus of Pandits and its aftermath, through which the present article provides a discussion on the question of dignity and legitimacy of media on the Kashmir issue and shows how media has either ignored or betrayed the life of Kashmiris. Both the authors contest the state agencies; parliamentarian, media, “thankless NGO[s]” as Gigoo notably remarks that “Kashmir is a place where human values never mean anything (267). Don't you watch television? People are hoodwinked into believing lies. We can't admit the truth to ourselves” (230). Reckoning the damage and the impact of this propagandist media, Shah Faesal, a former IAS officer and a bureaucrat, writes in an article in *The Times of India* that “Every hour of prime time TV news' aggression pushes Kashmir a mile westward from India” (Faesal). He determines it aptly by looking onto the existing pain, anger, massive violence and collective loss of Kashmiris (of Muslims, Pandits and other minorities) and what the Indian state seems to be committed to doing with the valley. Waheed juxtaposes the language of media that “exaggerates, distorts, sensationalises” the stories/news and often “focus[es] on the negative stuff” (Waheed 267). It satirises the media's “framing” of the events; that is how the media and military exchange “scored a big hit or thwarted a major attempt” (130). The media is never allowed in the territory concerned, except for “delegations sent by the centre and the governor of Kashmir” to fulfil some specific political purposes and “to show off their catch” through “film[ing of] their bodies” and, also to store the collections of footages for the “present” or “future use” (13). This is how the list of dead “terrorists” is being sent to the police and news agencies, and that is also what “we see on TV” and social media (13). Petula Dvorak construes today's social media universe in his article “When Spreading Fake News Leads to Real Consequences” that “there is a flood of stories from fake news sites that look legit” and so much so that people “too share them freely with others and tempt them that stories look legit” (qtd. in McComiskey 16). Gigoo likewise contrasts

the prejudiced tales floated through corporate media agencies. He disagrees with the half-true hateful tales and honestly depicts the feelings that the Muslims of the territory had for Pandits and vice-versa. For instance, Ali's panicking requests to his lifelong friend Lasa not to leave home gives us a feeling of a disaster which some have prognosticated by looking onto the mounting signs of the conflict at that time, as he expresses, "Muslims are safe in Kashmir so long as the Pandits live here. Once the Pandits leave, the Indian forces will kill us" (Gigoo 65). Apart from the incidents before and during the exodus, the story also tells what followed the exodus. Hence, when looking back towards the period of the exodus when hundreds and thousands of the Kashmiri Pandits were forced to flee from their homes, the author unleashes the duplicity of media houses after that, where the journalist crews and the news agencies had "stopped carrying news and reports about the life in migrant camps unless some politician or an international delegation visited them" (125). Thus the authors attempt to categorise the bulletins on the 'subject' closely that reject the media narratives of hate and portray the realistic picture of the conflict-ridden territory microscopically.

Reclaiming the Kashmiri narrative from the discourses of power, the author attempts to destabilise the Indo-Pakistani narratives at a point in time when both the nation-states categorise one another as "external forces" in Kashmir (Waheed 231). The authors widely depict the colonising mission of both the nation-states in Kashmir. Every Indian establishment is now seen as the state's colonising mission with vested interests. The eponymous protagonist of *The Collaborator* describes when a curfew is imposed in the valley, the announcement is made in an "alien voice" or the voice of "someone not local- someone not from among us" (177, 217). By showing the 'alienness' of voice in Hindi and Urdu, instead of "local Kashmiri language", the author wants to proclaim the Indo-Pakistani control over the territory as 'alien' and 'foreign' (217). Kashmiris see the presence of every non-Kashmiri individual as alien, or foreigner in the valley concerned. It therefore has to get unfettered and differentiated the indigenous discourse of love and hate, violence and peace, history and culture, and power and politics from that of the two neighbouring giant nation-states' powerful discourses. On the oft-repeated discourse of normalcy amid the battle of narratives between the indigenous and the outer, both Waheed and Gigoo's novels echoed back to the masses inside and outside by telling their native versions of the conflict-ridden valley. *The Garden of Solitude*, while rejecting the status quo increased by the state agencies, records that "as days progressed, there were funeral processions all the time in the streets. A portion of land at Eidgah was converted into a graveyard and named the 'Freedom Graveyard'. . . There were graves all around

and tombstones with names and dates”. What alarmed the most is which he adds further that “[m]ost of the dead were in their twenties” (26). Since he belongs to the Pandit community and experiencing the painful departure, he does not victimise himself merely but reflects upon the period and uncovers what remained either ignored or fictitious. He unveils the silence of media agencies and describes that “[t]he migrants and their stories did not appear in most news items related to Kashmir . . . There were no stories of people's past. There were no memories of ancestors. There was no remembrance of a generation which had lived in Kashmir”. (196)

While arguing upon the discourse of natives and aliens, it would be essential to reflect upon the Kashmiri viewpoint, which remained of subdued voice till the natives rejected ascendancy upon the valley, and started seeing Indian rule as a foreign. Since the 1990s, bookshelves have been jam-packed with the books, engraved by the pioneering minds such as Agha Shahid Ali, a Kashmiri-American poet who pioneered a voice at the behest of the unheard Kashmiris. It is resonated in his poetry the pain and suffering of his people since the insurgency engulfed the Valley. Afterwards, many like him began to assert their voice in their poems, songs, memoirs, fiction, cinema and so on to represent the indigenous narrative of the inhabitants of Kashmir. However, most of it has been contributed by the non-natives and taking on the discourse and hegemonic interests of both Indo-Pakistani nation-states and resisting their control as something non-native. Among the various other writings of the kind, *The Collaborator* and *The Garden of Solitude* come up with “an alternative and heterogeneous account of a reality that seems to counter the view of the “other” hegemonic discourses that neglect very basic and yet very important facets of Kashmir's reality and experience”, as Shameem argued. (Shameem) Kashmir remains a contested land between India and Pakistani nation-states, and since the partition, at least three wars have been fought over the territory. (Bose 154) The Indian state claims the whole territory of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir as its “integral part”, and, on the other hand, the Pakistani nation-state claims the territory as its “jugular vein”, based on its demographic distribution. (Kalis and Dar 115) In-between these claims and arguments, the indigenous sentiments of the Kashmiris are marginalised who associate Kashmir with its glorious past and aspire for socio-cultural unity. They battle for the 'self-determination' for the territory and strive to be an independent state as the lawmaker Er. Rasheed argued in the Greater Kashmir. Similarly, Gigoo in *The Garden of Solitude* bravely represents indigenous sentiments and emotions. He states:

Think of Kashmir as an independent country!.... 'We will have our own

embassies across the world and other countries will have theirs in our Capital. Our universities will be famous. We will welcome the Indians. We will have foreign relations with both India and Pakistan. And most importantly, we will have our own cricket team, which will beat both India and Pakistan. It will be a Kashmir in which Muslims and Pandits will live in harmony like before. (153)

Besides it, the study attempts to examine how the ruling 'power' practices the discursive political tactics to push or prompt the people into certain positions. The Indian state accuses the Kashmiri Muslims of the painful departure of the Pandits from the valley, but the numerous authors, critics, filmmakers, historian and the academician vary in their opinion and also interrogate the vested interests of the states culpable for the divide between centuries-old close bond between the communities that further pushed one community to flee from the Valley and other to get terrified in their own homes and homeland. Gigoo topples the government's prerogative over the issue and depicts how the government agencies tried to persuade the people to leave the valley. When there witnessed complete chaos among the Pandits, the situation could be evaluated from Lasa's neighbour who stated: “[t]he situation will not improve” because “a secret message” has been conveyed to the Pandit families to leave Kashmir. They conveyed it covertly that “[n]obody can guarantee our safety and security any longer”, instead “. . . we have been promised safety in Jammu”. (46) Some people label the then Governor" as a "real villain" culpable for propagating hate amongst the communities, which promoted aggression of one community over the other. (68) The author rejects the contemporary political norms and narratives which criminalises one community while favouring the other. As a result, conflict is engendered between communities, leaving them poles apart from each other.

It becomes essential here to refer to the Foucauldian way of looking into the issue, and certainly, many sociologists argue that 'power' operates both relationally and reciprocally. One has to construe how the youth of the territory are forcibly or unwillingly drawn to a war zone to kill and get killed. Waheed's other character Hussain, a friend of the narrator, goes missing after an incident and never comes home. His family and friends feel dejected at his disappearance. At this point in time, the narrator feels ashamed of himself for working for rival armies rather than fighting for his people, as Hussain does. One must comprehend how the crops of young men are deviated and hijacked by the state apparatus. Every one of narrator's age feels it essential to jump into the war arena as the narrator retorts in *The Collaborator*, “I should really be with Hussain, I thought, by his side, in it together with him”. (Waheed 56) But, instead of being

at his side, the protagonist is forced to be with his opponent “team” as if he “were a long-serving counter-insurgent” and “a loyal servant of the Indian army”. (268) Besides, he also is imbued with an overwhelming idea of killing captain Kadian and thinks, “what if I really was to kill him”. (73) He immensely hopes for a change in fortune, anticipates freedom if the Captain is killed, and thinks, “I will be freed. Baba will be freed, Ma will be freed”. (287) The narrator also understands his catch-22 situation and knows that his end is inevitable in either eventuality. It is where the 'power' operates through the minds of the masses at the surface level; hence, the Foucauldian 'power' connoting a unilateralism, that is, only 'the state' will be served in any situation when the youth are trapped into the discursive apparatuses, for instance; security forces, legalised terror through many horrendous acts like AFSPA and PSA, imprisoning, armed forces with impunity. The media's communal avarice picturises how the youth of the valley is left with no option but to kill and get killed either by joining the militant outfits or remaining at home to get tortured and slain.

The paper concludes that among the numerous other platforms, literature is a battlefield of ideas and narratives, and certainly, the resistance literature on Kashmir's conflict has constantly been foregrounding the historical facts, glorious past of both Muslims and Pandits and their shared culture, and the native perspective amid the political ambitions of the nation-states before the readers. The beginning of the 21st century witnessed an emergence of the new genre of literature known as Kashmiri resistance writing. The two debut novels, *The Collaborator* and *The Garden of Solitude* have been published, with the former carrying the Muslim and the latter carrying the Pandit narrative. Both Mirza Waheed and Siddhartha Gigoo battle the Indo-Pakistani rhetoric by contesting these popular or established discourses. In several situations in the novels, the authors allow their characters freedom to debunk the truth even when they are alien to each other in public. Thus the discourse of these characters becomes highly relevant, especially when common people from mainland India and beyond are often served with fallacious, prejudicial information about the ongoing tragedy. The plot shifting from 'then and now' in both the books is a device to look back to the bygone age of communal harmony and the present eclipsed by everyday tragedies and restore a harmonious socio-cultural environment. These writings promulgated the indigenous perspectives of the conflict, their lived experiences of uproar, and sturdily resisted the hegemonic narratives that have disregarded the native sentiments or emotions of suppression and oppression, marginalisation, struggle, and their cultural identity and collective history.

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Empirical Analysis of Inequality in the Distribution of Assets among Farmers in Cotton Belt of Rural Punjab

-Mandeep Kaur, Ravita and Sarbjeet Singh

Abstract

The present study attempted to analyse the inequality in the distribution of assets such as land, livestock, farm machinery and equipments, buildings, transport vehicles and household durables among farmer households of different farm-size categories in the cotton belt of rural Punjab. The study was based on primary data for the period 2016-17. The results highlighted that land and buildings were the predominant component of total assets, constituting 92.82 per cent in the value of all assets for all the sampled farmer households. The per capita value of household assets was the highest (₹4578408) among the large farmers followed by the medium (₹2575730), semi-medium (₹1287909), small (₹782254) and marginal (₹392339) farm-size categories. As a whole, per capita value of assets was found to be ₹1473688 among all the sampled farmer households taken together. The distribution analysis revealed that the bottom 10 per cent of the sampled farmer households had only 1.58 per cent of the total assets whereas the top 10 per cent had 30.51 per cent of the total assets. The value of Gini coefficient was worked out to be 0.44 in case of all the sampled farmer households. It represented a huge inequality in the distribution of household assets. The analysis revealed that majority of the marginal and small farmer households had uneconomic size of land holdings and due to lower income levels, they had inferior quality of livestock and other productive assets so relevant efforts should be made to reduce disparities among the different farm-size categories.

Keywords: Assets, inequality, farmers, land, livestock

Introduction

Development is a process of change that combines economic growth with improvements in social well-being. The extent to which people participate in,

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and benefit from, development processes invariably depends not only on their initial asset endowment but also on the extent to which they are able to exercise agency within their available opportunity structure. Despite the impressive gains in overall economic growth by developing countries in the recent decades, vast numbers of people continue to be left behind to face structural disadvantages that have proved resistant to conventional social policy. This uneven growth gives rise to social tensions that are fuelled by deprivation and perceptions of inequality. (Moser & Dani, 2008)

There are various dimensions of Inequality in India. Inequality can be found not only in wealth, income and assets but also in access to the basic services such as education, health and nutrition. The rising disparity across several dimensions, accompanied by an acceleration in the growth rate of the economy, is a matter of worry. It has also raised questions about the nature of economic growth and its impact on income distribution.

Assets represent all the things that are owned by the household having monetary value, e.g. land, buildings, livestock, agricultural machinery and implements, etc. (NSSO, 2016) Assets are an important indicator of economic well-being of households. Acquired through inheritance, gifts (including dowry) and accumulated savings, assets provide means of livelihood as well as security against adverse economic shocks. (Sarma et al., 2017) Assets are the resource endowments and capabilities that people have to sustain their livelihoods and to enhance their welfare. In the absence of realistic prospects of formal sector employment, the vast majority of poor people rely on the meagre assets with which they are endowed, as well as those they can accumulate through the informal economy. (Moser & Dani, 2008)

Secure access to productive assets mainly land is critical to the millions of poor people living in rural areas and depending on agriculture, livestock or forests for their livelihood (IFAD, 2008). Land is the important contributing factor to total assets, income of farmers as well as to the inequalities among them. In a society, with uneven distribution of assets, measures to modify income distribution are short term measures for development. Not only land, the other farm assets like farm implements and equipments are also highly skewed towards large farmers. (Sharma et al., 1994) Therefore, immediate measures should be undertaken to reduce disparities in productive assets mainly land, livestock etc, for raising the income and consumption levels as well as for solving the problem of poverty and indebtedness among farmers.

Objective and Research Methodology

The present study attempted to analyse the ownership and distribution pattern

of assets such as ownership of land, livestock, farm machinery & equipments, buildings, transport vehicles and household durables among farmer households in the cotton belt of rural Punjab.

For this purpose, primary data has been collected through a well-structured schedule from 520 sampled farmer households of different farm-size categories consisting of 118 marginal, 126 small, 134 semi-medium, 115 medium and 27 large by using multi-stage stratified random sampling technique for the period 2016-17. The descriptive statistical tools such as averages, percentages, Gini coefficient, etc. have been used to analyse the results of the present study.

Results and Discussions

This section deals with the ownership and distribution pattern of household assets among sampled households of different farm-size categories in the cotton belt of rural Punjab.

Pattern of Land, Livestock and Farm Machinery & Equipments

Land, livestock and farm machinery & equipments are the main productive assets for the farmers. Table 1 highlighted the pattern of land ownership, livestock and farm machinery and equipments among different farm-size categories in the cotton belt of rural Punjab. Land is an important livelihood asset for the households. The ownership of land helps to enhance the income opportunity and reduce poverty and it acts as collateral for accessing credit. It can be reused multiple times, offering enhanced economic returns to the households. It can offer the advantage of liquidity and acts as a general indicator of affluence (NABARD, 2018). The table shows that out of the total value of productive assets, land had the highest proportion of 94.64 per cent. As far as different farm-size categories were concerned, the share was 91.26, 93.23, 94.09, 95.08 and 95.68 per cent among the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium and large farmer households respectively. It has been observed from the field survey that in the cotton belt of rural Punjab, a large majority of the farmer households focused highly on the cultivation of wheat, paddy and cotton while only a few farmer households were partially engaged in the horticultural cultivation. The results also outlined a huge disparity in the total value of land ownership as the total value of owned land among the large farmer households was 23.36 times higher than the marginal farmer households. It indicated the fact that land was highly concentrated in rich hands in the cotton belt of rural Punjab. Basu (1976) and Rawal (2008) in their studies showed that value of land was acutely concentrated among the richer sections in Punjab in particular as well as in India.

Table 1: Average Value of Land, Livestock and Farm Machinery & Equipments among Sampled Farmer Households (Mean Value in ₹)

Productive Assets	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Households
Land	1287076 (91.26)	2986905 (93.23)	6034328 (94.09)	13708043 (95.08)	30074074 (95.68)	7163942 (94.64)
Livestock						
Buffaloes	36076 (2.56)	60460 (1.89)	66075 (1.03)	85852 (0.60)	138889 (0.44)	66062 (0.87)
Cows	15475 (1.10)	15627 (0.49)	16903 (0.26)	21835 (0.15)	31852 (0.10)	18137 (0.24)
Calves	1341 (0.10)	1706 (0.05)	1787 (0.03)	2400 (0.02)	3519 (0.01)	1892 (0.02)
Others*	492 (0.03)	1052 (0.03)	556 (0.01)	5991 (0.04)	21019 (0.07)	2927 (0.04)
Sub-Total	53384 (3.79)	78846 (2.46)	85321 (1.33)	116078 (0.81)	195278 (0.62)	89016 (1.18)
Farm Machinery and Equipments						
Tractor	19831 (1.41)	51873 (1.62)	150299 (2.34)	278261 (1.93)	564815 (1.80)	146665 (1.94)
Trolley	3686 (0.26)	13373 (0.42)	25485 (0.40)	52217 (0.36)	91296 (0.29)	26933 (0.36)
Harrow	453 (0.03)	1270 (0.04)	2511 (0.04)	6478 (0.04)	9815 (0.03)	3000 (0.04)
Cultivator	907 (0.06)	1929 (0.06)	4466 (0.07)	8926 (0.06)	14296 (0.05)	4540 (0.06)
Sealar	148 (0.01)	397 (0.01)	433 (0.01)	1704 (0.01)	4898 (0.02)	873 (0.01)
Wheat/Cotton Drill	564 (0.04)	1139 (0.04)	2888 (0.05)	10687 (0.07)	18592 (0.06)	4477 (0.06)
Crah/Leveler	110 (0.01)	404 (0.01)	1153 (0.02)	12479 (0.09)	10630 (0.03)	3732 (0.05)
Electrical Tube well	32966 (2.34)	43373 (1.35)	50000 (0.78)	130957 (0.91)	250926 (0.80)	72865 (0.96)
Fodder Cutter	3860 (0.27)	4319 (0.13)	5201 (0.08)	5643 (0.04)	7148 (0.02)	4882 (0.06)
Diesal Engine/ Electric Motor	1869 (0.13)	3143 (0.10)	2664 (0.04)	4061 (0.03)	5111 (0.02)	3036 (0.04)
Spray Pump	567 (0.04)	901 (0.03)	1380 (0.02)	3133 (0.02)	13852 (0.04)	2115 (0.03)
Rotavator	0 (0.00)	238 (0.01)	1657 (0.03)	8452 (0.06)	22037 (0.07)	3498 (0.05)
Reaper	0 (0.00)	1746 (0.05)	2463 (0.04)	11478 (0.08)	26852 (0.09)	4990 (0.07)
Combine	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	31343 (0.49)	39565 (0.27)	81481 (0.26)	21058 (0.28)
Farm Building	4364 (0.31)	13270 (0.41)	10657 (0.17)	17652 (0.12)	40000 (0.13)	12933 (0.17)
Others**	499 (0.04)	661 (0.02)	800 (0.01)	1102 (0.01)	1968 (0.01)	826 (0.01)
Sub-Total	69825 (4.95)	138036 (4.31)	293400 (4.58)	592797 (4.11)	1163718 (3.70)	316422 (4.18)
Total	1410285 (100.00)	3203787 (100.00)	6413049 (100.00)	14416918 (100.00)	31433070 (100.00)	7569380 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17.

Note: Figures given in parentheses represent percentages.

*Bullocks, Goats, Horses, Hens, Cocks, Dogs etc.; **Thresher, Hoe, Spade, Axes, Sickles, etc.

Animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries activities play an important role in the national economy and in the socio-economic development of country. These activities have contributed to the food basket, nutrition security and household income of the farmers and play a significant role in generating gainful employment in the rural areas, particularly among the landless, small and marginal farmers and women, besides providing cheap and nutritious food. Livestock are the best insurance for farmers against vagaries of nature like drought and other natural calamities. (NABARD, 2018)

The results further revealed that livestock contributed 1.18 per cent to the value of productive assets. Of the average value of livestock, buffaloes had the highest share (0.87 per cent), followed by cows (0.24 per cent) while, the share of calves was 0.02 per cent and other livestock was 0.04 per cent. The share of bullocks was negligible in the total value of livestock. The lowest contribution of bullocks in the livestock indicated the fact that the mechanisation of agricultural activities had totally replaced the bullocks. It was noticed during the survey that few farmer households had old-aged bullocks and they were used only for carrying fodder from the fields. The highest proportion of buffaloes and cows in the cotton belt of rural Punjab was due to the fact that both of these livestock were the main milch animals. As far as different farm-size categories were concerned, the combined share of buffaloes and cows in the total value of livestock was 3.66, 2.38, 1.29, 0.75, and 0.54 per cent for the respective categories which indicated a decreasing tendency with an increase in the size of land holdings. As a whole for all the sampled farmer households taken together, the share was 1.11 per cent.

The average value of livestock was calculated to be ₹53384, ₹78846, ₹85321, ₹116078 and ₹195278 among the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively, while, it was ₹89016 for all the sampled farmer households. The average value of livestock indicated a positive relationship with the size of land holdings in the cotton belt of rural Punjab, because the farmer households with large resource base and higher incomes were able to afford the costly breeds of animals and their higher caring cost. On the other hand, the uneconomic size of holdings reduced the access of the poor marginal and small farmer households for keeping the good quality of animals and they owned only inferior quality of animals. The relative value of livestock was the highest (3.79 per cent) among the marginal farmer households and the lowest (0.62 per cent) among the large farmer households, which reflected a

negative relation with the size of land holdings because livestock were the second main source of income for the marginal and small farmer households and therefore occupied a significant share in the productive assets.

The extent of ownership of farm machinery and equipments like tractor trolley, harrow, cultivator, sealer, wheat drill, cotton drill, crah, leveller, farm generator, rotavator, reaper, combine, farm building etc. has a major impact on productivity and profitability of agricultural activities (NABARD, 2018). Table 1 further highlighted that the share of farm machinery and equipments was 4.18 per cent in the value of productive assets in the cotton belt area of rural Punjab. The data showed that the tractor contributed the highest share of 1.94 per cent to the value of farm machinery and equipments of all the sampled farmer households taken together, followed by electrical tube well (0.96 per cent), trolley (0.36 per cent), combine (0.28 per cent), farm building (0.17 per cent), reaper (0.07 per cent), fodder cutter (0.06 per cent), cultivator (0.06 per cent), wheat/cotton drill (0.06 per cent), rotavator (0.05 per cent), harrow (0.04 per cent), etc. As far as different farm-size categories were concerned, the share of tractors among the marginal farmer households was 1.41 per cent, whereas, it was 1.62, 2.34, 1.93 and 1.80 per cent among the small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively. The share of tractors to the total value of farm machinery and equipments was the highest among the semi-medium, medium and large farmer households and the lowest among the marginal and small farmer households.

Among the marginal farmer households, electrical tube wells had a significant share of 2.34 per cent, whereas, the share was 1.35, 0.78, 0.91 and 0.80 per cent among the small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively. Almost all the sampled farmer households had owned spray pumps, fodder cutter, and diesel engine/electric motor. None of the marginal farmer households had rotavator and its share in the total value of assets showed an increasing trend with the increased size of land holdings. Its share was 0.01 per cent among the small farmer households while it was 0.07 per cent among the large farmer households.

As the farm machinery and equipments like rotavator, reaper, and combine required a huge amount of investments, the marginal and small farmer households could not afford all these costly assets. On the other hand, the combined share of these assets was 0.42 per cent among the large farmer households. As far as the average value of farm machinery and equipments was concerned, it was found to be ₹69825 among the marginal farmer households, whereas, it was ₹138036, ₹293400, ₹592797, and ₹1163718 among the small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively. The average

value of farm machinery and equipments among all sampled farmer households taken together was worked out to be ₹316422.

The tractor was found to be the predominant component of farm machinery and equipments for all the sampled farmer households except for the marginal farmer households. It was the electrical tube well which accounted for the highest share followed by tractor to the total value of farm machinery and equipment assets among the marginal farmer households. Singh *et al.* (2016) and Kaur (2017) also found direct relationship between the ownership of different types of farm assets and the size of the farm. It has been observed in the field survey that the large farmer households had owned with all types of farm machinery and equipments required in the cultivation. Thus, the results of study revealed that with the increase in the size of land holdings, the value of productive assets owned by the farmer households increased. The study by Prahladachar (1987) also found out the same results that as the farm size increased, the share in the value of agriculture equipments, irrigation equipments, cattle and buffaloes progressively increased.

Pattern of Buildings, Household Durables and Transport Vehicles

Dwelling house, household durables and transport vehicles are those assets which do not generate income but represent the socio-economic status of household in the society. Table 2 represented the ownership pattern of buildings, household durables and transport vehicles among the sampled farmer households. The dwelling house represents not only the economic but also the social status of a person in the village so it is an important asset in the society. The share of buildings was found to be the highest (77.28 per cent) whereas the percentage share of transport vehicles and household durable assets was 10.87 and 11.86 per cent respectively among all the sampled farmer households. The average value of the dwelling house was the highest (₹1740741) among the large farmer households followed by ₹954783, ₹564030, ₹523492, and ₹281695 among the medium, semi-medium, small, and marginal farm-size categories respectively, while, for all the sampled farmer households taken together, it was ₹637654. In relative terms, the share of the dwelling house was 71.68 per cent for all the sampled farmer households. The share of buildings used for other purposes such as animal shed, nonfarm business, etc. was the highest (7.87 per cent) among semi-medium and the lowest (3.57 per cent) among the large farmer households. The analysis highlighted the fact that the value of buildings of the large farmer households was about 6 times higher than the value of buildings of the marginal farmer households which indicated the huge disparities prevailing in the socio-economic status of the different farm-size categories.

Table 2: Average Value of Buildings, Household Durables and Transport Vehicles among the Sampled Farmer Households (Mean Value in ₹)

Household Assets	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Households
Buildings						
Dwelling House	281695 (73.61)	523492 (76.53)	564030 (72.92)	954783 (69.57)	1740741 (67.35)	637654 (71.68)
Others*	24169 (6.32)	36413 (5.32)	60903 (7.87)	67826 (4.94)	92222 (3.57)	49790 (5.6)
Sub-total	305864 (79.92)	559905 (81.86)	624933 (80.79)	1022609 (74.52)	1832963 (70.92)	687444 (77.28)
Household Durables						
Furnishing Articles						
Chairs	611 (0.16)	1098 (0.16)	1131 (0.15)	1689 (0.12)	2952 (0.11)	1223 (0.14)
Table	475 (0.12)	774 (0.11)	943 (0.12)	1768 (0.13)	3852 (0.15)	1129 (0.13)
Bed	3000 (0.78)	4468 (0.65)	5078 (0.66)	10243 (0.75)	23704 (0.92)	6568 (0.74)
Cots	2983 (0.78)	3789 (0.55)	3633 (0.47)	3900 (0.28)	4241 (0.16)	3614 (0.41)
Sofa	822 (0.21)	3492 (0.51)	3500 (0.45)	10774 (0.79)	20778 (0.80)	5396 (0.61)
Dressing Table	133 (0.03)	833 (0.12)	646 (0.08)	1922 (0.14)	2704 (0.10)	964 (0.11)
Almirah	2136 (0.56)	2757 (0.40)	3393 (0.44)	5148 (0.38)	11556 (0.45)	3765 (0.42)
Floor Mats	0 (0.00)	147 (0.02)	78 (0.01)	1091 (0.08)	2833 (0.11)	444 (0.05)
Boxes & Trunks	2963 (0.77)	3659 (0.53)	3530 (0.46)	3735 (0.27)	4389 (0.17)	3522 (0.40)
Briefcases & Suitcases	36 (0.01)	310 (0.05)	429 (0.06)	1478 (0.11)	3148 (0.12)	684 (0.08)
Others**	899 (0.23)	964 (0.14)	1088 (0.14)	1181 (0.09)	1485 (0.06)	1056 (0.12)
Sub-total	14058 (3.67)	22291 (3.26)	23449 (3.03)	42929 (3.13)	81642 (3.16)	28365 (3.19)
Electrical Appliances						
Radio/Tape Recorder/CD	28 (0.01)	93 (0.01)	115 (0.01)	122 (0.01)	259 (0.01)	99 (0.01)
TV	3325 (0.87)	5095 (0.74)	5448 (0.7)	8730 (0.64)	13815 (0.53)	6041 (0.68)
Fans	2708 (0.71)	3183 (0.47)	3228 (0.42)	5498 (0.4)	7019 (0.27)	3798 (0.43)
Mixer	120 (0.03)	452 (0.07)	358 (0.05)	1604 (0.12)	2463 (0.1)	712 (0.08)
Washing Machine	1432 (0.37)	2960 (0.43)	3668 (0.47)	5135 (0.37)	5481 (0.21)	3408 (0.38)
Air Conditioner	508 (0.13)	1000 (0.15)	836 (0.11)	6322 (0.46)	22778 (0.88)	3154 (0.35)
Cooler	1326 (0.35)	2897 (0.42)	3304 (0.43)	4752 (0.35)	7481 (0.29)	3294 (0.37)
Refrigerator	3483 (0.91)	4409 (0.64)	4981 (0.64)	7070 (0.52)	10778 (0.42)	5265 (0.59)
Geysers	169 (0.04)	952 (0.14)	799 (0.10)	2570 (0.19)	5259 (0.20)	1316 (0.15)
Inverter/Generator	856 (0.22)	1881 (0.27)	2455 (0.32)	5826 (0.42)	8704 (0.34)	3023 (0.34)
Laptop/PC	619 (0.16)	1183 (0.17)	873 (0.11)	5104 (0.37)	5259 (0.2)	2054 (0.23)

R.O.	214 (0.06)	295 (0.04)	669 (0.09)	1774 (0.13)	3889 (0.15)	887 (0.10)
Telephone/ Mobile	2379 (0.62)	3641 (0.53)	4055 (0.52)	9291 (0.68)	21630 (0.84)	5645 (0.63)
Others***	480 (0.13)	681 (0.10)	783 (0.11)	1443 (0.11)	2378 (0.09)	918 (0.11)
Sub-total	17647 (4.61)	28722 (4.20)	31572 (4.08)	65241 (4.75)	117193 (4.53)	39614 (4.45)
Utensils	7186 (1.88)	8040 (1.18)	9284 (1.2)	14139 (1.03)	25074 (0.97)	10400 (1.17)
Bedding and clothing	10695 (2.79)	15159 (2.22)	15612 (2.02)	28078 (2.05)	37704 (1.46)	18290 (2.06)
Sub-total	49586 (12.96)	74212 (10.85)	79917 (10.33)	150387 (10.96)	261613 (10.12)	96669 (10.87)
Transport Vehicles						
Bicycle	764 (0.20)	913 (0.13)	981 (0.13)	1269 (0.09)	2704 (0.10)	1068 (0.12)
Scooter/Scooty/ Motorcycle	20560 (5.37)	29142 (4.26)	33732 (4.36)	40783 (2.97)	64260 (2.49)	32775 (3.68)
Car/Jeep	5932 (1.55)	19841 (2.9)	33918 (4.39)	157261 (11.46)	422963 (16.37)	71635 (8.05)
Sub-total	27256 (7.12)	49896 (7.29)	68631 (8.87)	199313 (14.52)	489927 (18.96)	105478 (11.86)
Total	382706 (100.00)	684013 (100.00)	773481 (100.00)	1372309 (100.00)	2584503 (100.00)	889591 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17.

Note: Figures given in parentheses represent percentages.

* Buildings used for animal shed, non-farm business etc; **Sewing Machine, Knitting Machine etc.

***Press, electric bulbs, tubes etc.

Ownership of high valued consumer durables is also reflective of the economic well being of households. Their availability primarily indicates the ability of households to allocate their income for such aspirational expenses (NABARD, 2018). The share of electrical appliances for all the sampled farmer households taken together was found to be the highest (4.45 per cent) in the total average value of durables followed by the furnishing articles (3.19 per cent), bedding and clothing (2.06 per cent), and utensils (1.17 per cent).

Among the different farm-size categories, the percentage share of furnishing articles came out to be 3.67, 3.26, 3.03, 3.13, and 3.16 for the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large sampled farmer households respectively. The percentage share of electrical appliances was the highest (4.75 per cent) among the medium farmer households and the lowest (4.61 per cent) among the marginal farmer households. The absolute values showed an increasing trend with the increase in the size of land holdings. Due to small size of land holdings and lower levels of income, the marginal and small farmer households could not afford the costly electrical appliances like washing machine, refrigerator, geyser, air condition, etc. It observed from the field survey that either they had outdated or second-hand models of some of these appliances. As a whole, the average value of household durables was worked out to be the lowest (₹49586)

among the marginal and highest (₹261613) among the large farmer households. The field survey clearly revealed that the poor marginal farmer households had durable goods of poor quality and in limited quantity as compared to the large farmer households in the cotton belt area of rural Punjab.

The ownership pattern of transport vehicles among different categories of the sampled farmer households revealed that out of the total percentage value of transport vehicles (11.86) with all sampled farmer households, the highest share (8.05) was constituted by car/jeep followed by two-wheelers such as motorcycle/ scooter/ scooty (3.68) and bicycle (0.12). So far as the different farm size categories were concerned, the percentage share of bicycles came out to be 0.20, 0.13, 0.13, 0.09, and 0.10 per cent among the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively. The share of bicycles represented a decreasing trend with the increase in the size of land holdings. Majority of the marginal and small farmer households had mainly bicycles and two wheelers.

The proportionate share of the motorcycle/ scooter/ scooty was the highest (5.37 per cent) among the marginal farmer households, whereas, it was 4.26, 4.36, 2.97, and 2.49 per cent among the small, semi- medium, medium, and large farm size categories of sampled households. The share of car/jeep to the total value of transport vehicles showed a positive relationship with the the size of landholding. As, it was 1.55 per cent among the marginal farmer households proceeded by 2.90, 4.39, 11.46, and 16.37 per cent among the small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmers households respectively. The analysis highlighted the fact that the large farmer households had the highest share of car/jeep to the total value of transport vehicles. The total average value of transport vehicles was found to be the lowest (₹27256) among the marginal farmer households and the highest (₹489927) among the large farmer households, whereas, it was ₹105478 among all the sampled farm-size categories. The percentage value of transport vehicles increased with the increased farm-size.

Average Value of All Household Assets among Farmers

The average value of all household assets among the sampled farmer households is given in Table 3. The results reflected that as a whole, land and buildings were the predominant components of total assets, constituting 84.69 and 8.13 per cent respectively in the value of all assets whereas, the share of other household assets such as farm machinery and equipments, transport vehicles, household durables and livestock came out to be 3.74, 1.25, 1.14, and 1.05 per cent respectively.

In absolute as well as relative terms, land constituted a major proportion of the average value of all household assets. Several studies (Basu, 1976; Shankar, 1990; Bhat, 1993; NSSO, 2013; Sarma *et al.*, 2017; Singh & Singh, 2019) revealed that land occupied a key position in the asset structure. The proportionate share of per household average value of land was worked out to be 71.78 per cent among the marginal farmer households and it increased to 76.83, 83.97, 86.82, and 88.41 per cent in the case of the small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively. It clearly indicated a positive relationship between the share of land in the total value of assets and the increasing size of land holdings.

Table 3: Per Household Average Value of All Household Assets among the

Assets	Marginal Farmers	Small Farmers	Semi-medium Farmers	Medium Farmers	Large Farmers	All Sampled Farmer Households
Productive Assets						
Land	1287076 (71.78)	2986905 (76.83)	6034328 (83.97)	13708043 (86.82)	30074074 (88.41)	7163942 (84.69)
Livestock	53384 (2.98)	78846 (2.03)	85321 (1.19)	116078 (0.74)	195278 (0.57)	89016 (1.05)
Farm Machinery and Equipments	69825 (3.89)	138036 (3.55)	293400 (4.08)	592797 (3.75)	1163718 (3.42)	316422 (3.74)
Sub-total	1410285 (78.66)	3203787 (82.41)	6413049 (89.24)	14416918 (91.31)	31433070 (92.40)	7569380 (89.48)
Household Durable						
Furnishing Articles	14058 (0.78)	22291 (0.57)	23449 (0.33)	42929 (0.27)	81642 (0.24)	28365 (0.34)
Electrical Appliances	17647 (0.98)	28722 (0.74)	31572 (0.44)	65241 (0.41)	117193 (0.34)	39614 (0.47)
Utensils	7186 (0.40)	8040 (0.21)	9284 (0.13)	14139 (0.09)	25074 (0.07)	10400 (0.12)
Bedding and clothing	10695 (0.60)	15159 (0.39)	15612 (0.22)	28078 (0.18)	37704 (0.11)	18290 (0.22)
Sub-total	49586 (2.77)	74212 (1.91)	79917 (1.11)	150387 (0.95)	261613 (0.77)	96669 (1.14)
Transport Vehicles	27256 (1.52)	49896 (1.28)	68631 (0.95)	199313 (1.26)	489927 (1.44)	105478 (1.25)
Buildings	305864 (17.06)	559905 (14.40)	624933 (8.70)	1022609 (6.48)	1832963 (5.39)	687444 (8.13)
Grand Total	1792991 (100.00)	3887800 (100.00)	7186530 (100.00)	15789227 (100.00)	34017573 (100.00)	8458971 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17.

Note: Figures given in parentheses represent percentages.

Land and buildings were the major components of total assets, constituting 92.82 per cent of the total value of all household assets for all the sampled farmer households taken together. This result was almost similar to the findings of NSSO (2013) which indicated that the percentage share of land and buildings

when taken together was 95.50 in the total assets of households in rural Punjab. The studies of Sharma et al. (1994) and Singh and Singh (2019) were also in consonance with the findings of the present study. Although there was a direct relationship between the farm-size and the average value of buildings in absolute terms among the farmer households, while in relative terms, per household value of buildings showed a declining trend with the increase in the size of land holdings as its share reduced from 17.06 per cent among the marginal farmer households to 14.40, 8.70, 6.48 and 5.39 per cent among the small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively.

Similarly, the percentage share of livestock per household also revealed a decreasing trend with the increase in the size of land holdings and the ratio was 2.98, 2.03, 1.19, 0.74, and 0.57 among the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively. The livestock is another important source of income after land for the poor marginal and small farmers in the rural areas. The study also reflected a negative relation between the proportionate share of household durables and the size of land holdings. As this ratio was 2.77, 1.91, 1.11, 0.95, and 0.77 per cent in case of marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively.

The average share of farm machinery and equipments to the total value of all household assets was the highest among the semi-medium farmer households (4.08 per cent) followed by marginal (3.89 per cent), small (3.55 per cent), medium (3.75 per cent) and large (3.42 per cent) farmer households. The percentage share of transport vehicles was worked out 1.52, 1.28, 0.95, 1.26 and 1.44 for the respective categories of the farmer households. In absolute terms, the average value of all assets was the lowest (₹1792991) for the marginal farmer households and the highest (₹34017573) for the large farmer households. The results highlighted that the average value of all household assets owned by the large farmer households was 18.97 times higher than that of the marginal farmer households which clearly indicated the concentration of wealth among the large farmer households.

Thus, the study revealed that with the increase in the size of land holdings, the absolute value of all assets owned by the farmer households increased. But, in relative terms, an inverse relationship was found between farm-size and the percentage value of buildings, household durables as well as livestock assets. The results of the study were aligning with the study by Singh et al. (2016). The analysis of distribution pattern of assets among farmers in the cotton belt highlighted the huge disparities in the ownership pattern of household assets among the different farm-size categories. It was mainly due to the reason that the marginal and small farmer households had lower levels of income and they found it hard to meet their food requirements. They had access to only second hand transport vehicles and the majority of them had bicycles and scooter/

motor cycles. They were not in a position to afford the heavy investments on farm machinery and other household luxuries due to their low levels of income.

Per Capita Value of Assets among the Sampled Farmer Households

The data related to the per capita value of assets of sampled farmer households is given in Table 4. The per capita value is a better indicator to reflect the inequalities among different farm-size categories. The results showed that per capita value of land was lower among the marginal (₹281636), small (₹600987) and semi-medium (₹1081421) farmer households, while, for the medium and large farmer households, the per capita value of land was found to be ₹2236222, and ₹4047655 respectively. Among all the sampled farmer households taken together, the per capita value of land was worked out to be ₹1248074. The per capita value of livestock was lower among the marginal farmer households because majority of them could not afford expensive high breed livestock. The per capita value of farm machinery and equipments was low among the marginal, small, and semi-medium farmer households because they were not in a position to afford the heavy investments required to purchase these implements due to their low levels of income from agricultural and non-agricultural sources.

Table 4: Per Capita Value of Household Assets among the Sampled Farmer Households (Mean Value in ₹)

Assets	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Households
Productive Assets						
Land	281636	600987	1081421	2236222	4047655	1248074
Livestock	11681	15864	15291	18936	26282	15508
Farm Machinery and Equipments	15279	27774	52581	96704	156624	55126
Sub-total	308596	644625	1149292	2351863	4230561	1318707
Household Durable						
Furnishing Articles	3076	4291	4485	7003	10988	4942
Electrical Appliances	3861	5779	5658	10643	15773	6901
Utensils	1572	1618	1664	2307	3375	1812
Bedding and Clothing	2340	3050	2798	4580	5075	3186
Sub-total	10850	14932	14322	24533	35210	16841
Transport Vehicles	5964	10039	12299	32514	65939	18376
Buildings	66929	112657	111995	166820	246698	119764
Grand Total	392339	782254	1287909	2575730	4578408	1473688

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17.

The per capita value of furnishing articles was ₹3076, ₹4291, ₹4485, ₹7003, and ₹10988 among the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farm-size categories respectively, whereas, the per capita value of electrical appliances was ₹3861, ₹5779, ₹5658, ₹10643, and ₹15773 for the respective categories. For all the sampled farmer households taken together, the per capita value of furnishing articles was worked out to be ₹4942 and that of electrical appliance was ₹6901. The per capita value of all household durables taken together was found to be ₹10850, ₹14932, ₹14322, ₹24533, and ₹35210 among the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium and large farmers households respectively, whereas, for all farmer households taken together, its value was ₹16841. The buildings contributed significantly higher share in the per capita value of total assets after the land. This value was the lowest (₹66929) among the marginal farmer households and the highest (₹246698) among the large farmer households, while, among all the sampled farmer households taken together, this value came out to be ₹119764.

The per capita value of transport vehicles indicated the huge inequalities among the different farm-size categories as it was ₹5964, ₹10039, ₹12299, ₹32514, and ₹65939 among the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively, whereas, it worked out to be ₹18376 for all the sampled farmer households. The per capita value of all assets among the sampled farmer households revealed the fact that there existed large inequalities among the different farm-size categories. The per capita value of household assets was the highest (₹4578408) among large farmer households followed by the medium (₹2575730), semi-medium (₹1287909), small (₹782254), and marginal (₹392339) farm-size categories. As a whole, the per capita value of assets was ₹1473688 among all the sampled farmer households taken together. The per capita value of all household assets owned by the large farmer households was 11.67, 5.85, 3.55 and 1.78 times higher than that of the marginal, small, semi-medium, and medium farmer households which clearly highlighted the concentration of assets among the farmers owning larger size of holdings.

Thus, the above analysis revealed that the marginal and small farmer households were the most deprived categories in terms of the ownership of assets which reflected the existence of huge gap in the economic status of different farm-size categories in the cotton belt area of rural Punjab.

Distribution of Household Assets among the Sampled Farmer Households

The results pertaining to per household distribution of total household assets among the sampled farmer households in the cotton belt of rural Punjab are given in Table 5. The results revealed that the bottom 10 per cent of all the sampled farmer households had only 1.58 per cent of the total assets whereas

the top 10 per cent enjoyed 30.51 per cent of the total assets. It represented a huge disparity in the distribution of household assets as the share of the top 10 per cent of the households was 19.31 times the share of the bottom 10 per cent of the sampled farmer households. It was confirmed by the value of the Gini coefficient which worked out to be 0.44 in the case of all the sampled farmer households. The category-wise analysis showed that the share of bottom 10 per cent of the sampled farmer households in the total household assets for the marginal, small, medium, semi-medium and large farmer households was 4.69, 7.32, 7.12, 6.61, and 5.35 per cent respectively.

Table 5. Per Household Distribution of Households Assets among the Sampled Farmer Households

Cumulative Percentage of Households	Cumulative Percentage of Household Assets of					
	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Households
10	4.69	7.32	7.12	6.61	5.35	1.58
20	11.09	14.96	14.48	13.33	13.78	4.29
30	17.97	23.71	22.56	21.29	22.40	7.97
40	26.36	32.10	31.60	29.47	28.40	12.80
50	35.83	41.78	40.62	38.91	38.01	18.74
60	46.63	52.08	51.09	48.21	48.49	26.60
70	58.08	62.07	61.56	59.51	59.77	36.81
80	69.98	73.91	72.87	71.08	68.06	49.95
90	84.14	85.53	86.21	85.35	81.72	69.49
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Gini Coefficient	0.19	0.11	0.12	0.15	0.17	0.44

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17.

On the other hand, the share of the top 10 per cent of the households was 15.86, 14.47, 13.79, 14.65, and 18.28 per cent for the respective categories which was 3.38, 1.98, 1.94, 2.22 and 3.42 times the share of the bottom 10 per cent for each respective category. The value of the Gini coefficient was calculated to be 0.19, 0.11, 0.12, 0.15 and 0.17 for the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households respectively. The value of Gini coefficient was the highest for the marginal farmer households followed by the large households and the lowest among the small farmer households.

Table 6 represented the per capita distribution of household assets among the sampled farmer households. The results revealed that the share of the bottom 10 per cent persons of all sampled farmer households in the per capita household assets was 1.72 per cent whereas the share of the top 10 per cent was 30.77 per cent which was 17.89 times the share of the bottom 10 per cent. The value of the

Gini coefficient was 0.43 representing a highly skewed distribution of the per capita assets among persons of all the sampled farmer households in the cotton belt areas of rural Punjab. In the case of different farm-size categories, the respective share of bottom 10 per cent persons of the marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households in the per capita household assets was 3.98, 5.08, 4.37, 4.35, and 2.71 per cent and the share of top 10 per cent was 19.99, 18.42, 18.81, 18.84, and 18.70 per cent for the respective categories.

Table 6: Per Capita Distribution of Household Assets among the Sampled Farmer Households

Cumulative Percentage of Persons	Cumulative Percentage of Per Capita Assets of					
	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Households
10	3.98	5.08	4.37	4.35	2.71	1.72
20	9.24	11.37	10.23	11.01	6.26	4.50
30	15.86	17.89	16.64	18.14	13.09	8.41
40	23.52	26.50	24.52	25.67	22.24	13.36
50	32.24	35.01	33.87	34.41	31.59	19.68
60	41.65	45.23	43.42	43.95	40.36	27.66
70	52.74	56.20	54.27	54.39	50.73	37.84
80	65.15	67.67	66.61	67.16	64.10	50.97
90	80.01	81.58	81.19	81.16	81.30	69.23
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Gini Coefficient	0.25	0.21	0.23	0.22	0.28	0.43

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17.

The value of the Gini coefficient was the highest (0.28) in the case of the large farmer households followed by the marginal (0.25), semi medium (0.23), medium (0.22), and small (0.21) farmer households. The per capita and per household distribution of assets highlighted the existence of wide disparities among the farmers in the cotton belt of rural areas of Punjab.

Concluding Remarks

In nutshell, land and buildings constituted the predominant assets among the farmer households in the cotton belt of rural Punjab. The study found a positive relationship between the ownership of household assets and the size of farm. There was an existence of huge disparity in the ownership and distribution of household assets among the different farm-size categories. One the one hand, being owner of larger size of land holdings, the large and medium farmer households were in a position to invest into high breed livestock and heavy farm machinery and equipments to enhance their income levels. On the other

hand, the poor marginal, small and semi-medium farmer households had smaller size of land holdings and lower levels of income and they were not able to invest in better quality of livestock and farm machinery. The average value of all household assets owned by the large farmer households was 18.97 times higher than that of the marginal farmer households which clearly indicated the concentration of land among the larger farmers. It has been observed from the field survey that majority of the marginal, small and semi-medium farmer households were the most deprived categories in terms of ownership and distribution of productive assets mainly land, quality livestock machinery etc. As land occupied a key position in the asset structure, inequality in ownership of land created disparity in the income and consumption levels also. Thus, for reducing disparities in assets mainly land government should be properly implement the land reforms through distribution of ceiling-surplus land to the marginal and small farmers. The financial assistance should be provided to these farmers for purchasing the better quality of livestock for enhancing their earnings and heavy farm machinery and equipments should provide through cooperative society for improving their levels of living.

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Book Reviews

Narayani Basu, *V.P. Menon: The Unsung Architect of Modern India*. New Delhi: Simon & Schuster, 2020.

Book Review: Harish K. Thakur

V. P. Menon: The Unsung Architect of Modern India by Narayani Basu is an interesting account of the life and contribution of V.P. Menon during the partition process and integration of Indian states in the post-independence era. The 440 paged volume has been divided in to five parts dealing with Menon's early life, official engagements, meetings with commissions, British officials and Sardar, partition process and the integration plan.

If Sardar Patel is considered the architect of modern India V.P. Menon was unarguably the prime man behind. From the world of anonymity, he is brought to light by Narayani Basu who tells us how V. P. faced several ups and downs in his career. The volume discusses how V.P. Menon struggled for women suffrage; strategized for integrating the princely states in India; decided to join forces with the Swatantra Party and final relegation to relative obscurity. V.P. Menon remained as Reforms Commissioner to India's Viceroy- Lord Linlithgow, Wavell and Mountbatten and then as Secretary, States Ministry. His selection as the most reliable person by Lord Mountbatten was in a time when the Indian independence plans of Mountbatten were failing to materialise and was a quick work of V.P. that he could design the final draft.

In recent years Sardar Patel, B.R. Ambedkar, Morarji Desai and many more have turned favourite to the readers keeping in view the changed political scenario and the governmental narrative that aims at giving due to the deserving and bring them out of the clouds of anonymity or deliberate neglect. While Sardar receives the greatest honour with the erection of the Statue of Unity at Kevadia in Gujarat, the people who were immediate to him in implementing the integration plan and foiling the divide India designs of the continent come into discussion and V.P. Menon is the first one whose role has been discussed and examined since he was a crucial link between the key players of the time. As a lieutenant of Sardar Patel V.P. Menon played the most crucial role in the integration of Indian states. However, under the shadow of stalwart like Sardar his name reflected little in the public domain and the volume is an attempt at brining V.P. out of this shadow. V.P. together with V. Shankar, an ICS who later served as Sardar's Private Secretary formed a formidable duo who kept Sardar's position strong and unchallenged till his last.

While Basu presents a detailed account on different dimensions of Menon's life ranging from his early life, education, official engagements and assignments and meeting with important figures around the partition time, certain points raised by the biographer are alarmingly informative and have been, in fact, immediately refuted by many. Narayani Basu pokes the hornet's nest again by raising the issue of deliberate drop of Sardar by Nehru from his cabinet. The inclusion took place only with the intervention of VP Menon who alerted Lord Mountbatten about the move and who in turn spoke to Gandhi. According to Menon, Patel's name was included "as a sop" which was mentioned by Menon in an interview that he gave to H.V. Hodson. Basu makes no effort to read this evidence or check it against other available evidence (282, 220). However, the view has been criticised by several historians like Srinath Raghavan as far from truth and according to whom Sardar Patel was directly involved in the formation of the first cabinet.

In 'The Menon Plan' Basu discusses how V.P. Menon prepared the final draft of partition and convinced Lord Mountbatten about the inescapability of the division of the subcontinent. Basu quotes V.P. Menon remarking "When I got to Viceregal Lodge, Lady Mountbatten was there, in the study, holding her husband's hand, I could see their faces that this was disaster... I told him sir, you have never listened to me before, but I beg of you to please listen to me now. He (V.P.) repeated his plan, modifying it according to what he had heard from both Mountbatten and Nehru. He now urged the Viceroy to think about the partition seriously, because it was the only way to ensure both the early demission of power, and as a result, obtain congress approval." (253). While the plan prepared by Mountbatten would have broken India into several pieces the Menon Plan saved the essential unity of India. The blatant statement of the truth told by Menon to Hodson, in fact burdens Hodson for maintaining credibility of the source.

The Sardar-Gandhi differences also find some highlights as Narayani quotes Menon saying "Sardar was a disciple of Gandhi until he took office and then he never agreed with Gandhiji's wild ideas." (225) According to V.P. Menon power meant different things to Gandhi and Sardar. Patel's dislike for Gandhi's new disciples and Gandhi's dislike for 'Patel's famous temper' as Rajmohan would argue, created an atmosphere of mistrust between the two. The complaining Nehru about the Sardar's speeches and references added to the fuss. In 'Two Menons' Basu compares the personalities of V.P. Menon and Krishna Menon, unequal in myriad of ways. According to Basu "Krishna Menon was everything VP was not. He had a privileged upbringing; he was given to hysterical outbursts; he was a dissembler and mischief maker who had managed to acquire a deep and lasting emotional hold over Nehru (much to the despair of Nehru's sister, Mrs. Pandit). While Congress leaders languished behind bars in India (and while he portrayed himself as their indefatigable champion) he served for

fourteen years as Councillor for St. Pancras, in London. (240)

Basu writes about the state of Sardar Patel and decline of his relations with Nehru, especially in the aftermath of defeat Nehru's candidate Kriplani in party presidential elections. "In the weeks following Gandhi's assassination, there were calls for Patel to resign, and Nehru wearily told Krishna Menon that it was perhaps for the best if Patel stepped down." (874) Nehru was also alarmed over Sardar's behaviour when he remarks "He (Patel) has rather changed in some ways during the past few months. He has been a target of many attacks, more especially in regards to Gandhi's assassination and he has become rather nervous on certain subjects. Any express or implied criticism of him in this context upsets him." (874)

The volume gathers several new threads of information out of a well-researched exercise that is based on archival sources and personal correspondence. The volume over-relies on Hodson papers but succeeds in maintaining an objective assessment of V.P. and his role during the partition. The book has no index and that perplexes the readers who want shortcut landing on the issues and subjects of their interest.

Terry Beitzel, Chandrakant Langare (ed.), *Rethinking Mahatma Gandhi: The Global Appraisal*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2021.

Book Review: Abha Chauhan Khimta

Rethinking Mahatma Gandhi: The Global Appraisal edited by Terry Beitzel and Chandrakant Langare is a welcome addition to the huge corpus of literature available on Mahatma Gandhi. In all there thirty contributors who have examine different aspects of Gandhi's thought and philosophy in the backdrop of diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary angels. The contributions present a rich and nuanced view of Gandhi, his thoughts and vision about the contemporary issues and the future society. The present book project commemorated the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary.

The volume makes an attempt to revisit Gandhi's life and work and the contemporary relevance of Gandhian philosophy in the twenty first century. The present collection has demonstrated and exhibited incredible significance of Gandhi in meeting the social crisis and disasters of the current times. It aims at exploring a diverse range of questions and applications of Gandhian thoughts

and works in the contemporary global context. A striking feature of this book is the global appraisal of the Gandhian thought and discourse and its contemporary significance for the world in meeting diverse issues like food, health, climate and industry.

The book contains thirty-one chapters written by different writers. Talat Ahmed has discussed about Gandhi's relationship to anarchism in the first chapter of the book entitled "An Enlightened Anarchist: Gandhi's Relationship to Anarchism." For the author the swaraj was not the mere replacement of British colonial rule for the rule of the brown sahibs. Gandhi considered self-rule as complete mental and psychological break from existing society. Antonino Drago claimed in the chapter entitled "But, Who was Gandhi" that the traditional Hindu world considered nonviolence subjectively. He pointed out that Gandhian approach was to create an attitude which was more attentive to the structural issues of social life. He invented non violent techniques capable of fighting the most powerful opponent or social structure in the form of British Empire. Ashok Chousalkar and Chetana Jagriti discussed about Gandhi's views on nationalism and about three formulations of nationalism and the question of truth. Chetana Jagriti executes a comparative examination of Gandhi, Golwalkar and Tagore with respect to the notions of swaraj and swadeshi. The author claims that the term nationalism was understood and dealt with in fundamentally different ways by the founding figures of the Indian nation and the conflicts that existed at that time persist even today as they had a deeply conflicting and ambiguous relationship with modern nationalism.

Chousalkar points that Gandhi believed India's independence had a meaning for the world because it was the beginning of the decline of colonialism and national self-determination was an important aspect of nationalism. Basavaraj Naikar has revisited Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth.' He claims that Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography occupies a distinct place in Indian Literature in English translation. He further claims that the practice of writing autobiography seems to have influence of Western literature and it started in India in the 19th century. However, in case of Gandhi and Nehru, both were compelled by the circumstances to write their autobiographies during the period of their imprisonment.

Priya Bhala, Medha Bisht and Charu C. Mishra have written chapters on 'Rudiment of Gandhian Economics: Exploring a Simple Virtuous Cycle'; 'Democracy some reflections from Mahatma Gandhi and John Stuart Mill' and 'Gandhian Encounter and Transformation: Study of Recent Indian Movies'. It has been claimed that Gandhi's ideal state is a classless, ethical and equitable society and it is akin to equilibrium in social, economic and political realms. According to Bisht, the fragility of soul force and trivializing of the other at the cost of glorifying the self need to be corrected and the approach of

Mill and Gandhi provide an insight for refashioning democratic values. Datta Bhagat and Namita Nimbalkar have focused on major social evil, untouchability. Bhagat has discussed on the problem of untouchability and socio-political relation between Gandhi and Ambedkar. Nimbalkar traces the genesis of Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable* in Gandhian Thought. Pooja Halyal, Akira Hayashi, Indrani R. and RaminJahanbegloo have written chapters on 'M.K.Gandhi: A Votary of an Androgynous self'; 'Japan and Hind Swaraj'; 'Gandhi and the Art of Asceticism' and 'Martin Luther King, Jr.: An African American Gandhi' respectively. Siby K. Joseph and Nitika Ladda observe that the role played by Gandhi in bringing women into freedom struggle became change agents and the participation of women in Satyagraha endowed in women a sense of power which was localized in nature since it was largely for a historical cause. Neha Kapoor focused on tracing relevance of Gandhian ideas in an era of trust deficit. S. Gurusamy and Jagan Katade and Prakash Pawar highlighted on the social aspects of Gandhi in their chapters. It has been pointed out that Gandhi's vision of social justice is genuinely associated and linked with political ecology as the thought of Sarvodaya.

M. Shanthi, Suratha Kumar Malik and Peter Ruhe have discussed the Gandhian revolution and recapturing of Gandhi's role as the leader of the masses. Gandhi's views on village development and its contemporary relevance and the significance of Mahatma Gandhi's works in the changing world have also been examined. Surya Prakash Verma and Binod Mishra, Sunil Sawant, Harivadan Shah have talked about the truth force of Gandhi, Gandhian shift from urban to rural and the charisma of Gandhigiri in business. Aparna Tiwari, Shaleen Kumar Singh and Sabita Tripathy highlight on Mahatma Gandhi and fake news, Gandhi's inspiration to do good and decolonization of Indian mind, Gandhi and other philosophers. In the last, Jitendra Wasnik, Vivek Sachdeva and Queeny Pradhan and Suchitra Awasthi have discussed about revisiting village swaraj and Gandhi's idea of self rule, debating the ideas of a nation of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh and Mahatma Gandhi's views on true civilization and education.

The current book by Terry Beitzel and Chandrakant Langare provide contemporary application of the holistic body of Gandhian thought. The present work is significant to the students, scholars and other interested in Gandhian studies.

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