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Wrong Move

A recent media report on a major shift being considered in India's Palestine policy is both alarming and unwarranted at this juncture. The reported move of the NDA government to alter India's supporting vote for the Palestinian cause at the United Nations to one of abstention could amount to a tectonic shift in India's foreign policy. Such an eventuality would not only mark a fundamental departure from India's unstinted support to the cause of a Palestine, but also send wrong signals to the Arab World. In the wake of NDA government's silence on this media report, opposition parties, especially Congress and the CPI (M), have demanded a statement on the issue in Parliament. While pointing out that India's position on Palestine had not changed for over six decades, irrespective of which government was at the helm in New Delhi, the Congress spokesperson said: "We would like the government to inform Parliament and tell us outside if there has been a shifting of the goalpost on Palestine."

A media report cites the statement of former Congress Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar: "It's deeply shocking... I condemn it because it introduces communalism into foreign policy. It shows the BJP Government's justification for a state based on religion... we're going to lose the friendship and solidarity with the Arab world that was established by Nehru." While reacting to the reported move of the NDA government vis-à-vis Palestine, Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Sitaram Yechury said India would be letting down the people of Palestine: "It runs completely against the ethos of our freedom movement and is completely against the consistent position India has taken ever since Independence." India's support to the Palestinian cause has been one of the cornerstones of its foreign policy. Besides, India's solidarity with the Palestinian people and its attitude to the Palestinian question was given voice through its freedom struggle by Mahatma Gandhi. India's empathy with the Palestinian cause and its friendship with the people of Palestine have become an integral part of its time tested foreign policy.

In 1947, India voted against the partition of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly and India was the first Non Arab State to recognize PLO as sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974. India was one of the first countries to recognize the State of Palestine in 1988. In 1996, India opened its Representative Office to the Palestine Authority in Gaza, which later was shifted to Ramallah in 2003. In 1997, an MoU between India and Palestine was signed, which provides for promoting scientific, technical and industrial cooperation including provision of training facilities in specialized areas and undertaking of mutually agreed projects. India always played a proactive role in garnering support for the Palestinian cause in multilateral fora. New Delhi co-sponsored the draft resolution on "the right of Palestinians to self-determination" during the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly and voted in favour of it. India also voted in favour of UN General Assembly Resolution in October 2003 against construction of the security wall by Israel and supported subsequent resolutions of the UNGA in this regard. India also voted in favour of accepting Palestine as a full member of UNESCO.

When at the United Nations General Assembly on 29 November 2012, the status of Palestine was upgraded to a non-member state; India co-sponsored this resolution and voted in favour of it. There have been regular exchanges of bilateral visits at the highest levels between India and Palestine. Apart from the strong political support to the Palestinian cause at international and bilateral levels, India has been contributing, since long time, material and technical assistance to the Palestinian people. Undoubtedly, the previous UPA government committed the folly of buckling under American pressure to vote with the United States at the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2005 by junking traditional ally Iran; nevertheless, it balked at making any change in India's support to the Palestinians despite India's growing ties with Israel. Even the previous NDA regime under A.B. Vajpayee did not amend India's voting record at the U.N. Thus the reported move of re-examining of India's voting stance on Palestine would send wrong signals to the Arab World and also entails the potential of undermining India's credibility in the comity of nations.

— BK

India's Quest for Energy in Central Asia

Dr. Gurpreet Singh Uppal*

[India remains an energy deficient country. By the first half of the twenty-first century, it is estimated that Indian will become one of the top five consumers of energy. In order to fulfill the growing demands of its burgeoning population and expanding economy, India needs to look for alternative sources of energy and to augment those which it is presently acquiring from the Persian Gulf region. India's growing need for energy coupled with its aspirations of becoming a regional power, and ultimately a global one, underlies New Delhi's increased interest in the region of Central Asia.]

Over the centuries, Central Asia has been India's 'gateway' to the outside world and this region has deeply influenced India's history, culture and polity. While the region south of the Himalayas has largely determined the mainstream features of Indian civilization, Central Asia has continued to exert influence on India in many an important way.¹

New Delhi has often described this region as its "extended neighborhood".² India has always been closely connected with Central Asia and the close contracts continued during the Soviet period as well due to India's close relations with the former USSR. Remnants of Buddhist monasteries have been found in many towns of Central Asia.

During the medieval period, travelers and merchants further consolidated the bonds of relationship between the peoples of the two regions.³ The region provided the link in the shape of the fabled silk route between China and India and Europe till the discovery of sea routes in the fifteenth century.

India and Central Asia have number of common interests and can cooperate in many areas. Their relations, based on a shared commitment to open and progressive societies, secularism and democracy, and improving the lot of the common people have been reinforced by similarity of views in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and in many other areas of security.⁴

Economic cooperation is a major pillar of establishing strategic depth in Central Asia. As Indian economy

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grows, there would be ever increasing requirement of energy and natural resources to fuel and maintain the momentum of our growth. Discovery of large reserves of hydrocarbon deposits and other resources needed for sustaining economic growth also make the region immensely attractive for forging a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship.⁵

In the first half of the twenty first century, it is estimated that Indian will become one of the top five consumers of energy. In order to fulfill the growing demands of its burgeoning population and expanding economy, India needs to look for alternative sources of energy, to augment those which it is presently acquiring from the Persian Gulf region.⁶

The region has more than 6 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and almost 40 percent of its gas reserves. According to US department of energy estimates in June 2000, even if one did not count Russia's and Iran's regional assets, the rest of the Caspian region (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan) has about 16-32 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, and another 206 billion barrels of possible oil reserves.

The energy resources of the Caspian Sea region (which includes two Central Asian states – Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan) and rest of Central Asia is least unexplored and unexploited at present. The Caspian region's proven oil reserves (16-32 billion barrels) are far greater when compared with 22 bb for the US and 17 bb for the North Sea.

A proven gas reserve in the region was estimated at 23 -337 trillion cubic feet (tcf.), compared to reserves of 300 tcf in the USA.⁷ The opening up of these resources to the outside world generated huge expectations among international oil companies. Although Central and South Asia have been geographically more connected through the ancient “Silk Road,” the analogy has not been observed in practice during the past two decades.

India, particularly, has displayed limited engagement with the Central Asian Republics. It lags significantly behind all the major players in the region (Russia, China, Iran, US and Turkey) in terms of overall volume of trade with the Central Asian countries and has failed to exploit the vibrant consumer market in that region.

Broadly speaking, India has a distinct geographic disadvantage in Central Asia as compared to China. While China shares borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as Russia, India does not share a land border with any of the Central Asian states.⁸ However, the presence of Pakistan and Afghanistan between India and Central Asia has slowed the progress of Indo-Central Asian cooperation in the economic, transportation and energy spheres.

In contrast, India’s regional rivals China and Russia possess vast economic resources and more efficient state machinery that they can galvanize to project their economic power and access the region’s energy market. Beijing’s capacity to rapidly mobilize resources in developing communication, transport and pipeline infrastructure in Central Asia is unrivalled in scope, scale and speed. It is often said that whereas India spends millions, China spends billions.

However, in some crucial cases, ONGC Videsh (OVL), the Indian public sector company that made the effort, was unable to match up to competition from China.⁹ Some standard international companies, together with Russian and Chinese players, dominated the output of the Kazakh oil and natural gas sector, under the watchful eye of privatized state corporations.

India has made some important strides in the right direction recently. The Third Connect Central Asia Dialogue successfully organized on 10 October 2014 in Dushnbe, Tajikistan, was yet another step towards building a long-term partnership with this region.

The objective behind this regional conference is to have a regular annual dialogue forum among academics, scholars, government officials and business representatives from India and the CARs, with the aim of providing inputs to governments on both sides.

At the First India-Central Asia Dialogue, a Track-II initiative organized on 12-13 June 2012 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, E. Ahmad, the then India’s Minister of State for External Affairs, pronounced India’s new “Connect Central Asia” Policy. He said: “India is now looking intently at the region through the framework of its ‘Connect Central Asia’ policy, which is based on pro-active political, economic and people-to-people engagement with Central Asian countries, both individually and collectively.”¹⁰

The “Connect Central Asia” policy is a broad-based approach, which encompasses political, economic and cultural connections between India and the CARs. To improve connectivity to the region, India is working on the International North- South Transport Corridor (INSTC) among other options.

The greater Central Asia strategy also finds resonance with India because of the potential of realizing Turkmenistan-Afghanistan- Pakistan – India (TAPI) gas pipelines. Linking Central and South Asia are part and parcel of India’s long term strategic perspective. Fructifying of this concept would result in vast economic benefits to all the stake holders leading to a positive outcome for stability and security in the region.

Implementation of TAPI pipeline project is likely to create mutual interdependence and help attenuate India- Pakistan peace process.¹¹ However, there are clear barriers to the fulfillment of this project, including India’s turbulent relationship with Pakistan, with both countries restricting transit across their border.

Then there is the ongoing instability in Afghanistan, which may well worsen following the NATO military pullout in near future, something that would rule out a transit route through its territory.

Despite the political roadblocks that impair Central Asian oil and gas flowing to India via Afghanistan and Pakistan, India still enjoys other optional routes, should it decide to shed political misgivings and join China, Russia and the Central Asian countries in a long term energy strategic policy.

In fact, considering the degree to which India enjoys political good will among these states, New Delhi's initiatives for embarking on new ventures, especially in long-term projects, have been limited, India needs to draw up a long-term strategy, similar to that of China if it is to secure energy supplies to sustain economic growth.

The pipeline route through Xinjiang is potentially the most viable and the shortest route between India and Central Asia. The "Silk Route Extension" (SRE), originating from Xinjiang, could come through the undisputed parts of Sino-Indian border along the Karakoram pass at Daulat Beg-Ulde into Nubra Valley. In the past, British India used the SRE to serve its political and economic interests in the region vis-à-vis tsarist Russia and China.¹²

Although China is developing infrastructure not for profit but rather to provide energy to the country, it does not have enough resources to develop the infrastructure alone. Therefore, China's pipeline development projects fit very well as a viable energy supply route for India to get Central Asian oil. Not only are discovered oil fields located at a very short distance from Ladakh border but also a small land portion of south-west Xinjiang separates the link between Ladakh and the Central Asian republics of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

The current developments in Afghanistan and the proposed Western military pullout in near future raise serious questions on the stability of the region as a whole. No amount of prodding the private sector to participate in India-CAR trade can be possible unless the connectivity issue is resolved. Whether India transcends its risk aversion or not remains to be seen.

However India can play a positive role in the Central Asian environment where regional states are hard put to maintain balance between other major players. Further, in the last decade, India's stature in the international order has risen thanks to its economic growth. India has also been pursuing policies to restore its traditional linkages with the region and to re-integrate itself with the immediate and extended neighbourhood.

However, the Indian establishment, which is used to viewing its engagement with the Central Asian states through the prism of its ties with the erstwhile USSR, will need to become more flexible if it is to master the ever-changing strategic scene.

India can also play a more constructive role in Afghanistan, the second missing piece in the puzzle of India's energy diversification dilemma, which could host a pipeline and land route linking India and Pakistan to the Central Asian energy market. Russia, a key benefactor in Central Asia, and India can develop a complementary rather than a competitive relationship in the region through enhanced security cooperation to stabilize Afghanistan after the NATO pullout.

Already India provides security personnel for relief and construction work in Afghanistan; going forward, both countries could share the burden of development and humanitarian assistance, minimizing the financial risk of such ventures and increasing the volume of aid. They could also consider jointly investing in the region's underdeveloped infrastructure and promote increased growth in trade across the Tajik-Afghan border.

India has already been involved in the building of hydropower dams on Afghan rivers, and has emerged as one of the largest regional donors to the country. This cooperation could amplify its soft power further in the region, building on existing positive Afghan perceptions of its involvement, projecting its influence, and ultimately facilitating access to energy resources in the region.

The domestic political scene in India has now been electrified with the arrival of the "Modi-wave," which swept the Narendra Modi of the Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP) to power as the Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy. As yet, much remains to be known about the direction in which Modi will steer India on the international stage, and his foreign policy posture towards Central Asia remains particularly undefined.

However, the BJP government now has the opportunity to assert India's influence in Central Asia and secure greater access to the region's abundant natural resources. This would mean re-invigorating a diplomatic activism with the CARs, Pakistan and Afghanistan, which never quite got off the ground under the last government.

The omens are promising and it is in such rare windows of opportunity that India can make inroads into Central Asia. However, so long as there is no real progress in advancing intensive cooperation with Pakistan or an improvement in the security situation in Afghanistan, Central Asia will remain an elusive backyard: near but just beyond reach and positioned firmly in the orbit of its powerful neighbours, Russia and China.

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Geopolitics of Russia Wooing Pakistan

Raj Kumar Sharma*

[This article deals with the growing proximity between Moscow and Islamabad, especially in the wake of recent conclusion of agreement on military cooperation between Pakistan and Russia. While delving briefly into the past background of Russian-Pakistani relations, the author ventures to explore regional geopolitics with specific focus on China, Central Asia and Russia's growing disenchantment with the US and the West in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis. The author is of the view that growing friendly relations between Moscow and Islamabad may not undermine India's strategic interests as well as New Delhi's proximity to Moscow. Ed.]

Russia's relations with Pakistan have been witnessing an upward trend in recent years. The two countries signed a military cooperation agreement on 20 November 2014 during Pakistan visit of Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu. He became the first Russian defence minister to visit Pakistan since 1969, when the then Defence Minister of erstwhile Soviet Union, Andrei Grechkhov, visited Islamabad (ITAR-TASS, 20 Nov 2014). Earlier, in June this year, Russia had lifted an embargo on sale of weapons to Pakistan and agreed to sell MI-35 attack helicopters to Islamabad.

Due to close strategic relations with India, Russia's decision has raised some eyebrows in New Delhi. Former Russian President Boris Yeltsin while on his first visit to India in 1993 had assured the Indian establishment that Moscow would not supply arms to Pakistan. This was again reiterated by Vladimir Putin in 2010 during his visit to India. Hence, Russia-Pakistan military cooperation could have been 'shocking' to many but there were indications in the past for such a development.

In 2009, 'Dushanbe-four' was instituted by Moscow, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan stating its official objective to discuss supply of electricity from Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, it also aimed at cooperation for resolving the Afghan situation, economic issues

and drug-trafficking (RIANovosti 3 August 2009). On 22 June 2009, Indrani Bagchi, diplomatic editor of *Times of India*, writing in her blog for the newspaper, had quoted Indian officials saying Putin felt there could be commercial defence relationship with Pakistan.

Former Pakistan PM, Yousuf Raza Gilani had met the then Russian PM Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of 9th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Heads of Government Council meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in November 2010. Gilani had reiterated his interest in purchasing Russian Mi-35 attack gunship helicopters to fight terrorism during that meeting (*The International News*, 26 November 2010).

High level contacts between Russia and Pakistan continued after that. Though the highly publicised visit of Vladimir Putin to Pakistan was called off in 2012, his Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov visited Pakistan the same year. Former Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari and former Pakistan Army Chief, Asfaq Parvez Kayani visited Moscow in 2012.

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Asif, was on a three-day official visit to Russia for attending 3rd Moscow Conference on International Security a week before this deal was announced. He was invited on a special invitation from Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, General Sergei Shoigu (*The Nation*, 23 May 2014).

The high level contacts between Russia and Pakistan had increased in last four years which have

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culminated in signing of military cooperation between them. However, it is a result of combination of many geopolitical factors which go beyond India-Pakistan rivalry.

Geopolitical Perspective

The recent attempts by Russia to woo Pakistan should be seen through the changing geopolitical situation in Afghanistan, Central Asia, Ukraine and India's foreign policy underpinnings.

After staying close to the former Soviet Union during the Cold War, India's growing proximity with the US has been irking the Russians. One of the implications of this came as a severe setback to India in its military efforts in Tajikistan. India had renovated the Ayni airbase in Tajikistan spending around \$ 70 million. Experts believe India wanted to set up a base at Ayni (as Tajikistan shares borders with Afghanistan, China and is very close to Pakistan's border separated by narrow Wakhan corridor).

This would have given India military presence in Central Asia and a much bolder policy in the region would have followed. However, India signed nuclear deal with the US in 2008 raising alarm bells in Moscow. In the same year, Russia conveyed its unhappiness to Tajikistan and consequently, India did not get the base (Ramachandran 2008). It is pertinent here to mention that Russia has been one of the major beneficiaries of the Indo-US nuclear deal.

This was the time when Russia had started looking at Pakistan as a 'part of the solution' rather than viewing it as a problem in solving the Afghan crisis. The events elucidated in the earlier section attest this view. Moscow recognises importance of Pakistan in safeguarding its interests in Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries (Pant 2012).

The future of Afghanistan remains uncertain after the US-NATO withdrawal this year. If Afghanistan falls to Islamic fundamentalists, it will have spillover effects in Central Asian countries which form Russia's 'soft underbelly'. This could further impact southern Russian region where separatist Islamic forces are at work. Hence, safeguarding its 'national

interest', Russia wants to have better relations with Pakistan.

India has been diversifying its sources of defence imports and this has facilitated better Russia-Pakistan relations. Under the previous Congress-led government, competitive bidding was introduced in defence deals. Earlier, government-to-government orders were signed benefitting Russia but this had also resulted in over-dependence on Russia.

According to SIPRI report in 2014, Russia accounted for 75% of India's total arms imports. US is next with 7% and Israel with 6% is third. India moving to other countries for arms deals means Russia's weapon exports to India will decrease. This is clear from media reports in August this year which claimed that the US had overtaken Russia as India's largest arms supplier in last three years.

China, ranking 2nd after India in importing arms from Russia has also started indigenous arms production. This also further shrinks Russian market for arms. The new BJP government at the Centre is already mulling 100% foreign direct investment in the defence sector. This is tailor made for American and Japanese companies to take over the Indian arms market (Bhadrakumar 2014).

This makes Russia edgy, especially after its deteriorating relations with the West following the Ukraine crisis. Pakistan offers a new market to Russian military hardware at such a juncture. Russia also fears losing its supporter Bashar-al-Assad in Syria due to ongoing conflict which will impact its weapons sales as Syria mainly depends on Russia for arms. Opening arms market to Pakistan could hedge against any such loss in future for Russia (Panda 2014).

Speaking to Sergei Strokan of 'Russia Beyond The Headlines' in 2012, Ruslan Pukhov, Russian defense analyst and the director of the Moscow-based think tank Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, had hinted about defence relations with Pakistan. He said: "India remains Moscow's most important partner in the area of MTC, (Military Technical Cooperation) both in terms of

volume and potential. Yet Delhi's attempts to diversify its supplies of new weapons – increasingly from Western countries – are making Russia flinch. Moscow has explained to Delhi, in no uncertain terms, that it can also diversify its military-technical ties by means of a rapprochement with Pakistan," (Strokan 2012).

He also added that Pakistan had huge influence over Afghanistan. If Russia continued to ignore Pakistan in favour of India, it would run contrary to Russian security concerns.

Another important event that took place in recent times was signing of Russia-China gas deal. China will pay \$400 billion to Russia for gas supply over a period of next 30 years. China and Pakistan have cooperated against India in the past and selling arms to Pakistan could be seen as Moscow's attempts to create greater balance in its policy toward this triangular rivalry (Keck 2014).

Some experts have already talked about a 'Pak-China-Russia' axis taking some shape (Pant 2012a, Sharma 2014). It is true that Russia depends on China in the wake of its isolation in international affairs due to Ukraine crisis. But, India had taken almost a pro-Russian stand during the crisis and Russia-China relationship has its own share of latent tensions which could keep Russia away from any overtly anti-India formation.

It is worth mentioning that Russia's oil company, Rosneft, world's top listed oil producer by output could partner with India's Oil and Natural Gas (ONGC) to supply oil to India in the long term (Golubkova 2014). This news came before China-Russia gas deal was announced.

Pakistan's relations with the US have been under strain in recent years and getting close to Russia could be a way to tell Washington that Islamabad can explore for other options too. But, they must be aware of the fact that Russia is no Soviet Union and cannot replace huge aid (economic and military) given by the US.

Even an 'all-weather friend' like China does not provide aid, loans, budgetary support and humanitarian funds like the US and other Western

countries. Instead, it implements major projects that help the recipient but also give major strategic spin-offs to China (Rashid 2012). So, there are huge limitations to Pakistan's potential as an arms market compared to India and Russia would be well aware of that.

Lastly, Putin has been trying to play a positive role in South Asia. He has advocated including India and Pakistan as permanent members in the SCO. Also, he has proposed an energy club within SCO of energy producing countries of Russia, Central Asian Republics and Iran. It will also include three big energy consumers, India, China and Pakistan.

Conclusion

The Russian decision to supply weapons to Pakistan primarily is motivated by its security concerns in Afghanistan after the US-NATO withdrawal this year. India also shares these security concerns with Russia. The decision also comes at a time when India and Pakistan are trying to break the ice in their bilateral relations after the 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and recent tensions on the Line of Control (LoC).

The present military cooperation has not come up as a surprise and it was being discussed for some years now. In all probability, India was kept in the loop by Russia about it. There is no doubt that Pakistan needs help in its fight against terrorism. This is evident from Pakistan Taliban's audacious twin terrorist attacks on Karachi airport in June this year.

Extremists getting dominant in Pakistan will not be in Indian interests. So long as Russia strengthens Pakistan's counter-insurgency abilities, India is unlikely to have an objection. The present status of military cooperation between Russia and Pakistan will not alter strategic balance in South Asia as Pakistan will not get access to sensitive Russian technology. There could be combat training and exchange of military experts coming up between Pakistan and Russia in near future. However, the military technical cooperation is likely to remain insignificant.

India-Russia relations are based on broader understanding on issues like multi-polar world order, terrorism and situation in Afghanistan. Russia has vocally criticized Pakistan's use of non-state actors as a tool for state policy and has also expressed concerns about Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling in the hands of terrorists. Given these realities, it becomes clear that Russia-Pakistan relations have their limitations and India does not need to worry about them.

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India-Russia Relations

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[This article deals with relationship between India and Russia with specific reference to recent visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to India. While briefly dwelling on political, economic and defence ties between the two countries, the article also focuses on future strategy to be adopted by India to cement its relations with Russia for mutual advantage. Ed.]

The recent one-day visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to India has been able to revitalize the already friendly relations between Russia and India. The newly formed NDA government in New Delhi has displayed equal anxiety for cementing India's close relations with Russia. Interestingly, on the eve of visit of Russian President, the Prime Minister of India posted a series of tweets in Russian and one tweet read: "Times have changed, our friendship has not. Now, we want to take this relationship to the next level and this visit is a step in that direction."

India has shown its understanding of the circumstantial geopolitical complexities being faced by Russia in Europe and America, especially in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis and Russia's own declining economy. According India welcomed the visiting Russian President to show that it was least interested in geopolitics and preferred to cultivate India's close relations with Russia.

Focus on Putin's Visit

Since becoming president in 2000, Putin has visited India five times. Even prior to his current visit to India, he had already developed synergy with Prime Minister Modi first on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Brazil this July and then Brisbane (Australia) in November at the meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the BRICS countries and during the G20 summit.

Credit goes to President Putin for having revived and revitalized Indo-Russian relations, especially in the aftermath of the collapse of the former Soviet

Union and at that juncture relations with India were in low profile. Putin showed the way and started the system of annual summits with India when he visited New Delhi in 2000.

The succeeding years witnessed emergence of 'Annual Summit' meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation as the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism under the Strategic Partnership between India and the Russian Federation. So far 14 Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in India and Russia. The last (14th) Annual Summit was held in Moscow on 21 October 2013.

President Putin, on the eve of his visit to India, had said in an interview to media: "I am convinced that the common aspiration to further develop our bilateral relations will help to achieve significant results at the upcoming Indian-Russian Summit. Furthermore, we will exchange views on current international and regional issues and on deepening foreign policy coordination in order to further strengthen security and stability in Eurasia and in the whole world."

At a time when EU and the United States imposed sanctions on Moscow in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, India held back and was reluctant to join a campaign of economic sanctions. As one expert has pointed out, India "would never support sanctions against a country that has been friendly and supportive of us and whom we regard as a strategic partner."

The Joint Statement issued in New Delhi on the evening of 11 December has reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to further concretize

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friendly relations between the two countries. The statement was released at the press conference jointly by the Russian President and the Indian Prime Minister.

The press conference in New Delhi was jointly addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Putin. Modi said: "India's options have increased today but Russia will remain our most important defence partner... I am confident that our bilateral cooperation will acquire new vigour." The Russian President reciprocated by saying, "We had constructive talks on a whole gamut of issues. We are content with how the visit is being conducted and its outcome."

The Joint Statement, released to the media at the press conference, reaffirmed the agreement of the two leaders on a vision for strengthening the India-Russia partnership over the next decade. While recognizing that the special and privileged strategic partnership between India and Russia has been built on the strong foundation of mutual trust, bilateral understanding and unique people-to-people affinities, the Statement stressed that the time has come for a significant broad-basing of bilateral cooperation to carry the friendship between the countries to a qualitatively new level.

20 agreements, including 13 commercial contracts, were concluded between India and Russia during the occasion of President Putin's visit to India. Among the documents inked was the "Strategic Vision for Strengthening Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy" that envisages a roadmap of bilateral cooperation in the civil nuclear energy sector for the next two decades and the roadmap is for Russia building 12 nuclear units in India at sites to be identified.

Another document signed was for providing "Technical data and information nondisclosure in the framework of cooperation in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy". Both sides also inked a "programme of cooperation (PoC)" for cooperation in the field of oil and gas in 2015-16.

According to one report, in money terms all the twenty pacts signed by the two sides covering such

areas as oil exploration, infrastructure, nuclear energy, defence and diamonds amount to a whopping \$100 billion.

Defence Ties

Defence ties have been the cornerstone of the Indo-Russian strategic partnership. India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence. Over the years, military technical cooperation between India and Russia has evolved from a simple buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems. BrahMos Missile System, Joint development of the Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft and the Multi Transport Aircraft, as well as the licensed production in India of SU-30 aircraft and T-90 tanks, are examples of such flagship cooperation. The two countries also hold exchanges and training exercises between their armed forces annually. The Inter Governmental Commission and its Working Groups and Sub-Groups review defence cooperation between the two countries.

The Indo-Russian Declaration on Strategic Partnership was signed during President Putin's visit to India in October 2000 and over the years these joint strategic projects have come to include the construction of new units for Indian nuclear power plants, promotion of Russian Sukhoi Superjet-100 and MS-21 aircraft to the Indian market, building a butyl rubber plant, helicopter manufacturing, organizing assembly of industrial tractors etc.

According to a SIPRI report, during 2008-2013, Russia accounted for 75 percent of India's arms imports, and the United States for only 7 percent. However, the trajectory of Russia's sales is downward, and Indian sources have reportedly complained about cost overruns and equipment malfunctions. One Russian expert has opined that if Russia has an advantage in winning Indian business, it is because of Russian readiness to share extremely sensitive strategic technologies. Though India may be interested in purchases from the United States and Israel, no one from these countries is ready to co-develop nuclear submarines, except Russia.

Economic Relations

Economic relations between India and Russia in terms of trade, investment and economic cooperation have registered growth in recent years. In 2012, volume of bilateral trade increased by 24.5% to reach US\$ 11 billion out of which Indian exports amounted to US\$ 3 billion while Russian exports were valued at US\$ 8 billion. In January-September 2013, bilateral trade amounted to US\$ 6.94 billion. Exports from India to Russia amounted to US\$ 2.33 billion while imports from Russia stood at US\$ 4.61 billion. The two-way investment between the two countries stands at approximately US\$ 8 billion. In 2009, both sides set the target of US \$ 20 bn bilateral trade by 2015. Priority areas for expanding bilateral economic cooperation are pharmaceuticals, IT, steel, diamonds, aviation, fertilizers, infrastructure, heavy engineering and food products.

Many experts feel that the overall economic cooperation between New Delhi and Moscow needs to be put on a new trajectory of growth. It is interesting to note that the Joint Statement envisages the willingness of two countries to step up efforts for enhancing bilateral trade in the coming years and set a target of bilateral trade turnover of goods and services at US\$30 billion by the year 2025. It is expected that the level of mutual investments by then will be over US\$15 billion each way.

Future Prospects

India's engagement with Russia goes much beyond their bilateral relations. The two countries are committed to a multi-polar democratic world order and meet each other in a number of regional and trans-continental multi-faceted groupings. They have a trilateral interaction with China where developmental cooperation as also global and regional affairs is discussed at ministerial levels annually. Russia has been supportive of India's active participation in the China-initiated Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and has been pleading for India's full membership of this organisation. However, China has reservations on this count as it suspects that India's full membership

may thwart China's aspirations to dominate this critical Central Asian grouping.

Both Russia and India are also members of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), a grouping of the emerging dynamic economies. And both of them are also members of the East Asia Summit (EAS) where both support the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the driving seat. Russia has also expressed support for India's membership of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in the hope that it will "further promote and intensify trade and investment cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region". Thus, India needs to reset its relations with Russia for mutual advantage. India's apprehensions about recent Russian sale of military choppers to Pakistan can be sorted out through mutual parleys and at this juncture Russia also needs India.

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US-Cuba Détente

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[Recent announcement by Cuba and USA to swap the prisoners and resume negotiations for normalizing their bilateral relations after a hiatus of over five decades is welcome news which has evoked mixed reactions. However, the euphoria generated in this aftermath should not be allowed to be hijacked by old rivalries or past acrimonies. Both sides need to tread cautiously and translate existing challenges into opportunities. Ed.]

Announcement of American President Barack Obama on 17 December this year that Washington would begin normalizing relations with Cuba has seemingly signaled the end over five decades of the Cold War between the United States and Cuba. Washington and Havana have reportedly agreed to a prisoner swap: Cuba released imprisoned USAID contractor Alan Gross and a US intelligence operative, while the United States released three Cuban intelligence agents arrested in the 1990s while spying on militant Cuban exile groups.

Both the countries will begin negotiations with the objective of opening embassies, Washington will

ease travel and financial restrictions for American citizens, and Cuba will release a group of detainees that the US has designated political prisoners. The US trade embargo remains in place, and requires Congressional action to repeal.

The *New York Times* published the news under the title, "U.S. to Restore Full Relations With Cuba, Erasing a Last Trace of Cold War Hostility." Leading American think-tanks, experts, media, commentators and civil society organizations asserted that the US embargo on Cuba is a 'Cold War relic that has outlived its usefulness'.

Broadly speaking, just after three months of assuming office in 2009, President Obama had brought up Cuba at the Summit of the Americas, when he said: "I know there is a longer journey that

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must be travelled to overcome decades of mistrust, but there are critical steps we can take toward a new day.” However, this summit did not include any representatives from Cuba.

The period since then has witnessed relaxation in long-standing restrictions on travel and trade and rhetoric has continued to focus on improving relations. This week, an American held by Cuba for five years was brought home, and the White House announced plans to open an embassy in Havana.

The process of détente in U.S.-Cuba relations is preceded by the simmering decades of discontent and distrust. The advent of revolutionary regime led by Fidel Castro in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Batista government in 1959 and the progressive policies of the Castro regime in the wake of Cuba’s growing relations with the erstwhile Soviet Union led Washington to snap diplomatic ties with Cuba in January 1961.

Plans were already underway to overthrow Castro regime when President John F. Kennedy took office in late January 1961. In April 1961, came the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, in which more than 1,000 Cuban exiles, trained by the CIA, invaded the country and were quickly defeated by Castro’s far larger army. This development was embarrassing for the White House its resultant impact was exacerbation of the bad feelings between the two nations.

A full-fledged economic embargo in 1962 stopped nearly all trade and travel between the United States and Cuba. In October 1962, the US imposed a naval quarantine of Cuba, on the basis of aerial photographs showing Soviet nuclear missile sites in the island, in an effort to stop further delivery of weapons. The subsequent developments led to occurrence of what came to be known as the Cuban Missile Crisis which was subsequently resolved without any mishap.

Successive years of the Cold War witnessed waxing and waning of restrictions and diplomatic attempts without culminating in any sort of serious changes in

the two countries’ formal relationship. In 1982, the State Department put Cuba on the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

The emergence of Cuban diaspora in the US in the form of Cuban American voters as a reckonable factor at the outset of the 1990s was bound to attract the attention of leading political parties during the presidential elections. Accordingly, during the 1992 presidential election, conservative Cuban American voters mostly approved of continuing the US policy of embargo toward Cuba.

As a reaction to an attack on two American civilian planes that left four Americans dead, the Clinton Administration in March 1996 signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, which further tightened the existing embargo.

The administration of President George W. Bush continued many of the same policies of his predecessor. In a 2002 speech, President Bush reiterated American desire to see more democracy in Cuba, but declined to opening up trade with that country because that could ruin all hope of that happening. On 20 May 2002, President Bush said: “It’s important for Americans to understand, without political reform, without economic reform, trade with Cuba will merely enrich Fidel Castro and his cronies.”

Reiterating similar stance, President Bush said on 25 October 2007: “As long as the regime maintains its monopoly over the political and economic life of the Cuban people, the United States will keep the embargo in place.”

Raul Castro, who had taken over for his aging brother, published an essay called “Bush, Hunger and Death” soon after Bush’s affirmation of existing foreign policy was announced. Castro wrote on 24 October 2007 that Bush was “threatening humanity with World War III, this time with atomic weapons.”

The Obama’s administration has featured an incremental thaw in the decades of tension with Cuba. In the spring of 2009, Washington made it possible for Americans to send remittances to Cuba,

or visit family members there. President Obama justified the move by saying that the proposed measure was designed to promote democracy in the region.

The arrest of American USAID contractor Alan Gross in December 2009 by the Cuban authorities on the charges of being a U.S. enhanced the bargaining power of the Cuban government vis-à-vis the US and Havana declared that it would only release Gross if Washington agreed to release five Cuban spies caught in Florida. The push for stopping the embargo and renewing diplomatic relations continued.

Hillary Clinton, former US secretary of state in the Obama administration, in her recently published book, *Hard Choices* writes: “Near the end of my tenure I recommended to President Obama that he take another look at our embargo. It wasn’t achieving its goals and it was holding back our broader agenda across Latin America. After twenty years of observing and dealing with the U.S.-Cuba relationship, I thought we should shift the onus onto the Castros to explain why they remained undemocratic and abusive.”

In 2013, when U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro awkwardly shook hands at Nelson Mandela’s memorial service, social media erupted with speculation about what the gesture might mean. Most Cuba watchers were skeptical, and they cautioned against reading too much into the encounter. Many elected officials, especially Republicans, saw the shake as a mistake. Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain is reported to have said: “Why should you shake hands with someone who’s keeping Americans in prison?”

A change of mood was becoming discernible among Cuban Americans in Florida, who were once a reliable Republican voting bloc, were now turning in favour of Democratic Party and recently voted for Democrats. Public support for renewing diplomatic relations with Cuba has been gaining momentum.

In early December 2014, former US president Bill Clinton had said: “I think we would be well on our way to doing it [ending the blockade] if they released Alan Gross. It is really foolish to allow what is clearly a questionable incarceration to imperil the whole future of U.S.-Cuban relations, but that’s not my call to make.”

While making an announcement on 17 December 2014 that Cuba relations were finally about to change in a big way, President Obama said in a televised address: “We can’t keep doing the same thing over five decades and expect a different result.” It is worth mentioning here that almost over the past 18 months, U.S. and Cuban officials had been conducting secret high-level dialogues that were hosted by Canada and the Vatican and these efforts bore fruits in the early second half of December 2014.

The road from *détente* to *entente cordiale* between the US and Cuba is a long one. The existing state of *détente* has given rise to debate on both sides and on both sides of the debate are people who claim their goal is to bring about a peaceful transition to a democratic, market-oriented Cuba.

The ball is now in the courts of Cuba as well as the US and both have to tread cautiously to translate the newly gained *détente* into a permanent peace and lasting friendship. The leadership in Cuba should show statesmanship in availing this opportunity to end its so-called isolation and join the international mainstream.

It is worth recalling here the statement made by the then US President Eisenhower on 3 January 1961, while announcing the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Cuba: “It is my hope and my conviction that in the not-too-distant future it will be possible for the historic friendship between us once again to find its reflection in normal relations of every sort.” Let’s hope that the big step taken by both sides on 17 December 2014 ripens into fruition soon.

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India and the Asia-Pacific Region

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The Asia-Pacific region is one of the largest dynamic regions in the world not only in context of its large size as it stretches from the Indian Ocean to the shores of Americas, but also from the point that the region is very productive and promising in terms of trade, resources, navigation etc. The Asia-Pacific region is highly debatable in the domain of international politics particularly after the announcement of the 'Asia Pivot' by the United States in 2011, by the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.¹

The broader contours of the pivot are about "strategic rebalance" and "Asia focus" *vis-à-vis* United States' policies in the 21st century. Some analysts interpret the 'pivot' as a hedge towards the assertive China and its growing militarism in the region.²

In recent times, some accentuated developments in the Asia-Pacific region have exacerbated the tensions

over claims and counter-claims of sovereignty over some islands and exploitation of 'Sea Resources'. The developments like the ongoing dispute between China and Japan over the islands of Diaoyu/Senkaku in the East China Sea, the Chinese 'indisputable claims' in the South China Sea and the recent India-Vietnam understanding over the explorations in the South China Sea and the dragging of USA by the feeling of insecurity by certain countries in the region such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan etc., have made the region more volatile and complicated in the spheres of geopolitics and geo-economics of the region.³

The involvement of the United States and its containment policy towards China has given birth to new paradigms and power equations in the region. On one side, the US is trying to get quadrilateral approach, comprising US, Japan, India and Australia, in the form of a group to be maneuvered towards a growing threat of Chinese designs in the region; on the other side, USA has also contemplations on the G2 formula (USA and

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China) which is unlikely to get harnessed, keeping in view the traditional alliance of USA with some countries in the region such as Japan, the Philippines, South Korea etc. and their traditional wedge with the China.

The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his book, *Discovery of India*, had also dealt with the Asia-Pacific and the significance of the region for future independent India and he was probably the first one who did talk about the sort of 'pivot'.⁴ There are three power equations which have emerged in the post-Second World War period *vis-à-vis* geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region.

The first equation was created by Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, by trying to break the Communist bloc by patronizing China in the early 1970s during the Cold War era. This was a triangular bloc consisting of USA, Japan and China and the premise of this power equation was to contain the former Soviet Union. At that juncture, the US played China card against India as India was inclined towards the former Soviet Union.⁵

There is second power equation in the Asia-Pacific region that encompasses USA, Japan and India which the US wants to maneuver against the rising China and its associated challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

The third equation is a triangle consisting of India, Japan and China, which is unlikely to get matured keeping in view the historical rift in their bilateral relations. A deep analysis of these triangular power equations reflects the US-centered policy which they use for their own national interests. They used China against the erstwhile Soviet Union and now they trying to use India against the so-called China's rising threat.

In 2012, the Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to the United States introduced the idea of a 'new power of great power relationship' in the domain of US-Sino bilateral relationship. There are some experts who believe that rising China would create what some have referred to as "the Thucydides trap", a situation when power shifts

from emerged power to an emerging one as had happened during the rise of ancient Athens and the fear it created among the Spartans in the 5th century BC.⁶

The rising China poses a 'big power dilemma' for the US and its European allies; therefore, there is an expected counter approach to the 'Chinese rise' from US and its partners in Europe and Asia.

Delhi-Tokyo Chemistry

The recently concluded visit of Japan by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a new dimension in the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region. The visit has commenced 'a new start' in the form of "special strategic and global partnership" in the Delhi-Tokyo bilateral relationship, which *per se* is a recalibration of earlier concluded "strategic and global partnership". The visit is successful in some areas as Japan has promised to invest US \$35.5 billion in infrastructure development, energy sector and for the skill development in India.⁷

The broader aspect of the visit was to concede a big breakthrough on Indo-Japan civil nuclear agreement but, no such breakthrough was achieved on this front as Japan has certain reservations *vis-à-vis* India's stand on Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The issue of Indo-Japan civil nuclear cooperation is lingering on since the signing of Indo-US nuclear agreement in 2008, because India is a non-signatory to the NPT while Japan is an adherent to it.

Nevertheless, Japan has promised India to support the latter for its membership into the Multilateral Export Control Regime (MECR), an international body to use the national export control system such as- Wassenaar Arrangements, Nuclear Suppliers Group, Australia Group and Missile Technology Control Regime (MCTR). Attainment of this membership will be a huge bonus for India's nuclear programme and also it will substantiate India's global power dream.⁸

The visit to Japan by Indian Prime Minister brings scant comfort to the Asian Dragon (China) as an editorial of the *Global Times*, one of the leading newspapers in China, quoted "Modi-Abe intimacy

brings scant comfort” to Beijing during the Modi’s recent visit to Japan.⁹ When Dr. Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, visited Japan in October 2008, he had said that India’s economic and security relations with Tokyo would not be “at the cost of any third country, least of all China”.

This time the Indian Prime Minister Modi while interacting with the business leaders in Tokyo did talk about the deepening of strategic and security cooperation between New Delhi and Tokyo which would bring ‘prosperity and peace’ in Asia, but at the same time he also talked about ‘countering an expansionist mindset’. He was also quoted by the *Global Times* on his saying that “everywhere around us, we see an 18th century expansionist mind set: encroaching on another country, intruding in others waters, invading other countries and capturing territory”.¹⁰

This was an explicit reference of China’s recent policies in the Asia-Pacific. Therefore, one would expect a serious reaction from Beijing to the Modi-Abe intimacy. Modi’s succinct reference of China in Japan had not been welcomed in the circles of Chinese strategists and may probably spur the dragon to take extra measures to counter India-Japan security cooperation.

Undoubtedly, Prime Minister Modi emphasized on the Chinese expansionist policies in Japan; nevertheless, the question arises as to whether countering China directly would benefit India strategically or not. China is India’s indispensable neighbor and economically there are colossal opportunities in the peaceful bilateral relations. India and China signed “shared vision on the 21st century” during the visit of Dr. Manmohan Singh to Beijing at the beginning of 2009. There is a prospective growth in the bilateral economic and trade cooperation worth of about US\$ 65 billion, which has ability to reach a benchmark of US\$ 100 billion.

India and the Dragon factor

The policies of China in the Asia-Pacific region are sending alarming signals to its neighboring countries. The announcement of ADIZ (Air Defense Identification Zone) in November 2013 in the East

China Sea had been instrumental in generating a sense of insecurity in many countries such as Japan, Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan etc.¹¹ The larger picture of the ADIZ is about the fact that it does also include the much disputed islands of Diaoyu/Senkaku which are claimed by both China and Japan.

Japan believes that declaring ADIZ along these Islands in the East China Sea is an attack on the sovereignty of Japan; therefore, it won’t be acceptable to it. Nonetheless, China has different argument as it believes that the Islands were subjugated during the Japanese imperial rule.

The situation gets more complicated with the US involvement in the affairs of Asia-Pacific region. The US had its own ADIZ created in the aftermath of the Second World War and the same was transferred to Japan in 1969. Some analysts believe that the recent agreement between Japan and India on flying uninterrupted civil aircraft between the two countries is a counter measure to the Chinese ADIZ.

India is involved in the exploration exercises in the region, as has been agreed to with the government of Vietnam during the recent visit of Indian foreign minister, Sushma Swaraj. Some experts believe that India has accelerated its policy of ‘fishing in the troubled waters’ of the Asia-Pacific region.¹²

Undoubtedly, India is an Asia-Pacific country and it has every right to deal with the region as per its national interests; nevertheless, at the same time India needs to be extra vigilant about its involvement in the designs created by the USA and Japan *vis-à-vis* China. Since it is imperative on the part of Indian government, from both political as well as strategic perspectives, to substantiate its interests and engagements in the Asia-Pacific region, it is equally important for India that it should not get trapped in any sort of power bloc politics because such an eventuality could be detrimental for India in the long run.

In the recent survey conducted by the US-based Pew Research Centre, it has been identified that many Asian countries are of the view that Chinese “indisputable sovereignty” claim over the South

China Sea and its dispute with Japan over the islands of Diaoyu/Senkaku would create a dangerous situation which may lead towards an inter-state war in the region.

The growing Chinese manoeuvres into Vietnam's Exclusive Economic Zone have made Vietnam much insecure. This factor coupled with other developments in the region brings the US in the fray, as most of East and South Asian countries believe USA as a credible hedge in order to check the growing assertive China.¹³ The counter-measures initiated by the US along with its alliance partners in order to check the assertive China has put India in a sticky situation.

In some ways, India and China can be said to be natural partners on account of geographic proximity that necessitates sharing of a long land boundary. Both the countries have been interacting with each other peacefully and normally in the fields of culture, religion and trade for more than 5,000 years, except for a relatively brief period of 20 years from 1958 to 1978. India was among the first countries that recognized China as a Communist state in 1949. India and China signed the Panchsheel agreement in 1954 which underlines the principles which form the basis of peaceful and friendly bilateral relations.¹⁴

India and China together account for one-third of the world's population and are seen to be emerging 21st century powers as well as potential strategic rivals. The two countries fought a brief but intense border war in 1962 that left China in control of large swaths of territory which is still claimed by India. The clash ended previous friendly relationship between the two countries.

Although Sino-Indian relations have warmed considerably in recent years, the two countries have yet to reach a final boundary agreement. Adding to New Delhi's sense of insecurity have been suspicions regarding Chinese long term nuclear weapons capabilities and strategic intentions in South and Southeast Asia.¹⁵ Beijing's military and economic support of Pakistan is a major ongoing source of friction.

New Delhi also has taken note of Beijing's security relations with neighboring Myanmar and the

construction of military facilities in the Indian Ocean. The two countries also have competed for energy resources to feed their rapidly growing economies.

The recent visit of the Chinese President Xi Jinping to India has started a 'new milestone' in the bilateral engagements. The two sides have decided to set up two industrial parks in India and China has promised to make investment in India equivalent to US\$ 20 billion in the next five years. The two countries have committed to resolve all the sticky issues persisting between them, particularly the dispute over un-demarcated boundary, issuing of stapled visas by China, trade imbalances etc.

China and India share almost similar concerns *vis-à-vis* some tricky international issues, particularly on climate and international trade. Both the countries have closely coordinated in the negotiations pertaining to climate change, Doha Round talks under the aegis of World Trade Organization, energy and food cooperation and restructuring of international organizations particularly financial ones such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The recent development in the Sino-Indian bilateral relations is their cooperation in the BRICS's (grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) recent Fortaleza Summit at Brazil wherein a New Development Bank of BRICS has been unveiled whose headquarters would be in China whereas its first president would be from India.¹⁶

The biggest irritants in the Sino-Indian engagements are unresolved border issue and Chinese attritions along the India-China border. The unresolved border cannot be a pretext for any sort of war mongering and should not be made a hostage in the larger context of bilateral relations. It is well known fact that the 21st century is Asian century and the two biggest giants of the Asia are none other than India and China.

There is already a debate about the Western backlash against the new trend in geopolitics and geo-economics of the globe whose pendulum is inclined towards the two giants of Asia and not USA or Great Britain. The driving seat of the globe is

likely to shift from Atlantic to Asia-Pacific and the drivers would be India and China.

Deng Xiaoping in 1988 had told the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that “the Asian Age could only come when China and India become developed”.¹⁷ Kishore Mahbubani, in his book, *The New Asian Hemisphere: the Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*, has provided a deep analysis about the rise of Asia and the hypocritical attitude of the West about the new reality. He further asserts that “end of era of Western domination” has culminated and West is not recognizing the fact that the tectonic plates of political landscape of the globe have shifted towards East. He has warned that there is “greater danger” if the West did not accept this new reality.¹⁸

The West is playing dual game *vis-à-vis* their policies towards China and India. On the one side, they project democracy and liberal values of freedom of speech and expression and the free opinion a benchmark for any Western engagements and it is on these premises that India is differentiated from China. But on the other side, the ‘undemocratic’ China is welcome as it is inevitable for the West to ignore it simply because of the reason that the China is very close to become world’s largest economy.

If India and China come close, it will pose a huge challenge to the West to reckon with. There are already some visible signs about the fact that how tough it would be for the West to deal with a situation if Hindi-Chini become real bhai-bhai. The Sino-India mutual cooperation in the climate negotiations, WTO etc are posing a huge challenge to the Western dominance.

India should not indulge in any such activity hosted by the Western countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, which would derail the prospects of better Sino-India bilateral relations. India cannot trust the Western policies *vis-à-vis* China as they are habitual to change their stance as per their national interests.

There have been some unnecessary activities in the recent past on the part of India which might have sounded certain negative signals in Beijing. In the

2007 Malabar Naval exercises at sea involving ships from India, Japan, Australia, USA and Singapore,¹⁹ not only China, even Russia also had shown certain reservations about such exercises.

The quadrilateral dialogue involving India, USA, Japan and Australia is also not welcome in Beijing. India will gain more if it gets involved with China and the war-mongers on both sides won’t be able to highjack the peaceful and cooperative bilateral relations for their pretty interests since the fact is that no country would be so desperate and crazy to think about a war if that is at the cost of US \$ billions.

The US designs are to build up India as a counterweight in conventional forces and to some extent nuclear stalemate *vis-à-vis* China, without permitting a future rising economically powerful India to become a challenging nuclear power like Russia or China. Thus, it wants to limit India’s fissile material stockpile and slow its ICBM (Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles) and nuclear submarine capabilities by putting as many of India’s nuclear facilities as possible, under IAEA safeguards.

The instant benefit to the United States appears to be its assessment that India could be a counterweight to a “rising China” in the region. However, this is not the view of some Indian policymakers who believe that a constructive engagement with China is more beneficial and not linked to any military or strategic relationship with the United States. “US policymakers of both political parties had long been concerned about a rising China, and by strengthening relations with China’s next-door neighbor, the administration saw the potential for a strategic hedge,” observe Michael A. Levi and Charles D. Ferguson.²⁰

India is “a potential hedge against a rising China”, notes Ashley Tellis in his Carnegie report, weaving together the threads of worry running through Washington. The US leaders are concerned about the growth of the Chinese military, its monetary policy, its vicious attacks on Japan and its increasing power projection capabilities.²¹

Ashley J Tellis, a senior State Department official and a key architect of the new strategic policy on

India, has argued that a build-up of India's nuclear arsenal is not only in New Delhi's interest, but Washington's too. It will cause Beijing to worry more about India and less about United States, Tellis says.²² "This is an effort to counterbalance the rise of China, but I would not go so far as to say to contain China or to be antagonistic towards it" said L. Gordon Flake, executive director of the Mansfield foundations in Washington. He further said that, "We obviously have an interest in a large, democratic, multiethnic society as counterbalance to the Chinese in the region".²³

Other than some geopolitical rivalry, India should focus more on substantiating its soft power in the region which *per se* is possible only if India does not indulge in bloc or alliance politics in the region. Soft power is a relevant weapon than hard power weaponry in the 21st century in realms of a geopolitics and geo-strategy.

The soft power has three broad dimensions: culture, political values and foreign policy with moral authority as has been conceptualized by Harvard Professor Joseph Nye (it was the Nye who coined the term soft power). In his book *The Paradox of American Power*, Nye argued that key to the successful foreign policy in the 21st century lies in the soft power which *per se* is based on one's culture, multiple channels of communication and domestic and international performances.²⁴

India has a huge bonus *vis-à-vis* soft power keeping in view its legacy of rich civilization, birth place of many religions and cultures, India's huge Diaspora, a rich traditional practice of Yoga and Ayurveda, software technology, Bollywood etc. Sunil Khilnani has argued that the greatest dimension of India's soft power is its "accumulated political legitimacy" rather than real accumulation of power.²⁵ Therefore, India should more focus on harnessing these opportunities provided in its soft power domain rather than indulging in the power politics.

Moreover, India being an emerging Asia-Pacific power should be highly vigilant towards the new emerging power equations in the region. Its approach should be more from the prism of its traditional legacy of NAM (Non-Aligned

Movement) rather than from any polarity or alliance system.

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Human Rights and Violence against Women

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[This articles rummages through various leading declarations on human rights with specific emphasis on violation of human rights of women through perpetration of violence in various manifestations. While taking a universal perspective on human rights vis-à-vis violence against women, this article attempts to focus on devising remedial measures at national and local levels to curb violence in against women the light of international covenants. Ed.]

There exists a plethora of literature on human rights in the form of reports of human rights committees, resolutions, programmes and instruments. There are ones to declare human rights 'in general', including all major human rights issues. They can also include articles about the elimination of discrimination or violence against women. And there are human rights committees, declarations, etc. about violence against women respectively ending violence against women separately. This paper endeavours to focus on major human rights

declarations to analyze how the integration of women's rights changed in the declarations.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, envisages equal rights for everyone regardless to one's sex, origin, ethnicity, class, colour, religion or political opinion (UN 1948: Art.2).

Before the UDHR, in 1946, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established by the UN. Thereof, in the same year, a functional commission has been established to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women: The Commission on the Status of Women

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(CSW). The CSW is in charge of “(...) promoting women’s rights, documenting the reality of women’s lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.” (UN Women n.y.a)

In 1966 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) stated in the direction to prohibit violence against women with the statement that prohibits “(...) discrimination on the basis of sex (...)” and guarantees “(...) the equal right for men and women to the enjoyment of all rights set forth in the Covenant (...)” (Benninger-Budel; Lacroix 1999: 22f.) and the prohibition of violence against women in the workplace.

These Covenants as well as The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination are grounded in the UDHR and incorporate women’s specific rights only at a glance. In 1989 the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” is one of the rare “mainstream” instruments, which uses both feminine and masculine pronouns and shows explicitly that the rights refer equally to men and women, also including protection of children from sexual violence (Ibid.).

Gender-based violence against women as a violation of human rights became well known as part of the UN Decade for Women 1975-85. Containing the first resolution on violence against women and establishing the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, worked on by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which was a significant gender-specific instrument.

Article 1 of the Convention says that: “(...) the term ‘discrimination against women’ shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of

human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” (UN 1979: Art.1).

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women stated in the general recommendations 12 and 19 issues regarding to define gender-based violence and violence against women as a form of discrimination (UN 1986-1999: Art.12, Art.19). It could be seen as the precursor of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993.

A major breakthrough in the women’s movement was the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the governments participating in the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993. In Vienna the first time women’s rights were discussed independently. In the Declaration it was stated, that gender-based violence should be eliminated in private and public sphere, on a national and international level through legal measures (UN 1993: 1).

“Gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, including those resulting from cultural prejudice and international trafficking, are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and must be eliminated” (UN 1993:1).

To extend this important issue in the need to fulfill global expectations to eliminate violence against women, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the concern that violence against women is a barrier to achieve peace, development and equality. In this declaration, violence against women is defined and stated as a result of (historical) unequal power relations between men and women (UN 1993a: 1).

The Programme of Action includes the participation of states to be active in carrying through human rights of women. Within the Conference, it was made clear that the equal status of women should be included in mainstream UN mechanisms. That was a major step as the UN bodies were obliged to ensure human rights activities address the human

rights of women – violation and gender-specific abuse (Benninger-Budel; Lacroix 1999: 50f.).

The definitions of violence against women were already determined in the Declaration on the Elimination on Human Rights as this was adopted within the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Within the Platform for Action many issues regarding the life and situation of women have been discussed like women and poverty, health, education, women in media, environment, armed conflict, etc.

Violence against women is defined as: “(...) any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (UN 1996: 48).

Chapter D., Articles 112. to 130, include the definition of violence against women as well as a description of what kind of acts include violence against women and the target group. It says that violence against women is rooted in historically manifested unequal power relations and illustrates the need of an approach to eliminate violence against women and the need for data. It is an appeal to the participating governments to recall data and adopt and prioritize violence against women in their policies. Actions to be taken by the governments are listed (UN 1996: 48-56).

Through the Platform of Action it is pointed out that violence against women effects women before they are being born until they die. It concerns the whole “life cycle” beginning as a fetus with female infanticide because a boy is expected, continuing with girls who are being mutilated or married at a young age and forced to consummate the marriage with a way older man. Many women who are not married are getting raped, sometimes forced to marry the rapist. As adults women are also vulnerable to experience violence in public and private sphere. Also within marriage and as elderly women they are in danger suffering from violence all over the world (Benninger-Budel; Lacroix 1999:15f).

Associated with these development on an international level there has been set off an avalanche of resolutions, conventions and studies. To mention particularly the In-Depth Study on all forms of violence against women in 2006 by the Secretary-General highlighting all forms of violence and the unacceptability of those. In 2008 the global campaign “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women” initiated by the same. The campaign should raise awareness and lead to increase political will to change the situation and end violence against women all over the world (UN n.y.).

Although the human rights instruments and laws experienced a major development regarding to VAW and discrimination of women, it is generally reflected on men’s position in society. Through history human rights have had an important meaning, but the question if human rights can be universal has been discussed in a lot of scientific disciplines.

The described women’s rights to live in a world without discrimination are important and a lot of people want to live in a world where these rights are not only theoretically but also practically viable. Human rights are supposed to be rights for human beings.

The fact that women do not have the same rights as men is a pervasive reality. This reality, indeed, is not highly reflected in the universal human rights. Despite the fact that many people do not know that they have rights, the implementation of a right of a women in a rural settlement could be something that is not tangible.

Human rights are “(...) supposed to be gender-neutral, it generally reflects a male perspective and has an unequal impact on women”. (Benninger-Budel; Lacroix 1999: 30) A high number of human rights’ violation against women takes mostly place in private sphere, in households or in families. Women experience their husbands, family members, or community members as perpetrators. Those are mostly present in public sphere. The international human rights laws and instruments are dedicated to political sphere which occurs as the public sphere. Many women who are victims of violence, do not have access to the public sphere. This vicious cycle

leads to the fact that male dominance in societies is maintained (Ibid.).

The UN follow three discourses in the matter of gender-based violence. On the one hand there is violence against women and girls as a matter of equality between men and women. On the other hand the increasing forms of discrimination increase the risk of women being victims of violence. Thirdly, the interdependence of human rights is reflected in efforts to find out the causes of violence against women.

It is argued that the global discourse on violence against women has an inter-gender focus, which means that it is about a level of equality and non-discrimination between men and women. The elimination of violence against women has to follow an approach which is based on an inter- and intra-gender level (Manjoo 2011: 7).

UN human rights have a vast demand covering all issues of human life and despite to this they are seen critically and can be seen as “(...) intellectually frail – lacking in foundation and perhaps even in coherence and cogency (...)” (Sen 2005: 151). Sen argues that human rights and capabilities have a common motivation, but simultaneously differ.

Amartya Sen’s capability approach is central for the UNDP and Human Development Report. He argues that every human being should equally have a basis of capabilities and that the important issue to reach a person’s well-being is not only what a person earns for an income but what a person is able to do or to be within his or her environment. Issues like income should not be the main focus in making out a persons’ well-being but is what Sen calls an important “functioning”.

The total of the ‘functionings’ are concluded in the capability set. The focus is therefore not on the money but on the capabilities. If a person has something to eat but fasts then he or she has the capability to buy food and even when he or she is not well nourished, there might be an inner freedom and well-being (Sen 1980 in Hicks 2002: 137-140).

Sen sees human rights as “rights to certain specific freedoms” and capabilities as “freedoms of particular

kinds” and establishes a connection between the two concepts. “The idea of ‘capability’ (...) can be very helpful in understanding the opportunity aspect of freedom and human rights” (Sen 2005: 153).

Two persons can have different opportunities even in the same set of means. There is for example the person who is able to be well nourished but fasts or a person who does not have the opportunity to be well nourished because of lack of ‘functionings’ like regular income. The person who is actually well-nourished does not have to live in freedom but has the capability to choose levels of functioning, different to a person who does not have the opportunity to be well-nourished. A person who fasts and a person who is starving out of lack of opportunity is quite different even when the functionings do not differ (Sen 2005: 154f.).

Human rights, as universal formulations to reach freedom, are dependent on their ability to survive and win through. For that the role of public reasoning is very important to understand, in politically repressive regimes which do not allow public discussions, many human rights are not asserting themselves (Sen 2005: 163). “The viability and universality of human rights and of an acceptable specification of capabilities are dependent on their ability to survive critical scrutiny in public reasoning” (Ibid.).

Linked to gender-specific or gender-sensitive aspects the capabilities or the opportunity “to be and to do” can ensure that gender-related issues in development would be treated with the same significance than those issues related to both men and women. Regarding to the capability approach, women, as disadvantaged, suffer from a wider range of environmental deprivation as they have a greater reliance on subsistence agriculture and as a fact according to UN Women, environmental sustainability affects the well-being of people majorly.

Women could play an important role in finding solutions to environmental degradation through participation in decision-making processes on all levels. That would be another argument why the well-being or freedom of women is significant in development issues (UN Women 2013: 25).

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The Editor & The Staff of the
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wish you all
A Very Happy & Prosperous
New Years

SAARC, EU and Regional Integration

Susanta Kumar Parida*

[The growth of regional/international blocs or organisations has been one of the major developments in international relations in recent years. It is so universal that each country in the world must have been a member of at least one of such blocs. The reasons behind this phenomenon could be attributed to the growing interdependence among states in an era of globalization due to the tremendous economic and technological developments in the twentieth century especially advances in communications and transportation.]

There are several common grounds, issues and necessities which have necessitated such a 'coming-together' trend across the globe. Futilities of waging war, huge costs involved in balancing or excelling one's enemy and reaping mutual economic benefits through collaboration etc. could be such overriding considerations.

This urge, however, has not been confined to bringing together the sovereign states into the fold of an international organization in that region but also one finds sometimes an undercurrent among the sovereign members to integrate them into that body. This has been an experience of a new kind as to how sovereign states wish to cede their sovereignty in favour of a union similar to a federal state. The European Union has been a bright example in this regard.

Regional integration has gained momentum since the 1980s and throughout the world. Regional integration refers to a voluntary collective action among states within a geographical proximity to economically and politically harmonise policies, production, and trade issues with a view of optimising efforts in addressing national and regional challenges, the end result being an economic and political community.

This process of integration has been conceptualized. Several theories have been developed to justify the process. Nevertheless, Heywood (2013) says, there is a further range of debates about the motivations and processes through which integration and

institution building at an international level has been brought about.

Three main theories have been advanced: federalism, functionalism and neo-functionalism. Federalism refers to a territorial distribution of power through which sovereignty is shared between central (national or international) bodies and peripheral ones. From the federalist perspective, international organizations are a product of conscious decision-making by the political elites, usually seeking to find a solution to the endemic problems of the state-system, and especially the problem of war.

If war is caused by sovereign states pursuing self-interest in a context of anarchy, peace will only be achieved if states transfer at least a measure of their sovereignty to a higher, federal body. Functionalism, by contrast, views the formation of international organizations as an incremental process that stems from the fact that a growing range of government functions can be performed more effectively through collective action than by individual states.

Integration is thus largely determined by recognition of growing interdependence in economic and other areas. As David Mitrany (1966) puts it, 'form follows functions', in which 'form' represents institutional structures and 'functions' denotes the key activities of government. Such thinking was, in due course, revised by the idea of neo-functionalism, which sought to explain how international cooperation tends to broaden and deepen through a process of spillover.

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These theories of institution building have largely been developed as a means of explaining the process of regional integration, and sometimes specifically European integration.

Justifying even the integration of the whole world on the basis of the Functionalist theory, David Mitrany argues that, “the problem of war could be solved and the war-prone system of nation-states escaped through international agreements in such specific functional or technical areas as health, postal services, and communications... Political integration of the world would thus result from economic and other forms of international cooperation” (Gilpin, 2001).

Deriving inspiration from the EU experiment, the study makes a comparative study of the integrative efforts and experience in the region of Europe and South Asia. It is understood that the European regionalism is far more successful, mainly for three important reasons. One is the commonly perceived threat of the former USSR; the second is the common urge for recovery from the losses of the Second World War. The third, but not the least, important reason is that the ‘regional concepts’ of France and West Germany, the two biggest European states, while being different in substance, complemented each other very well.

Regional experience in South Asia differs much from Europe in all these areas. First, there is an absence of a common extra-regional threat. Indeed, smaller South Asian states perceive India, the biggest regional state, as a threat to themselves. The second problem is that South Asian states continue to emphasize on bilateralism despite the formation of a regional organization.

The theory of ‘New Regionalism’ offers another explanation on regional experiences. Europe is a ‘core’ region, characterized by political stability and economic dynamism. South Asia, on the other hand, is a ‘peripheral’ region, affected by political instability and the regional Cold War.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) came into existence on 8 December 1985 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with a

number of objectives aimed to improve and develop the region as a whole. However, SAARC over the last 29 years has achieved very little and has been relegated as an organization of little value, both within and outside the region.

As is well known, SAARC has not achieved a desired progress as a regional grouping as the progress has been very slow which raises some pertinent questions such as “is ‘SAARC’ that platform which would bring all the required changes envisioned by Mitrany?”. It is a disappointing fact that after three decades of its origin, SAARC remains far away from its objectives.

One of the major drawbacks has been that the member states of SAARC are not using this forum for collective good of the region, but for their respective individual interests. In the case of political environment, “War on Terror” is the hottest issue in SAARC region. It creates mistrust among SAARC members and is a big stumbling block between the development of economic and political relations. However, mistrust among the member nations; unpleasant Indo-Pakistan relations and the self-centred attitude of member states are the major barriers to the SAARC’s progress.

Mostly people compare EU and SAARC but that comparison is not justified because there is a huge difference between the environments of EU and SAARC. In EU the people well understand the importance of such organization. Besides, most of the member countries of the EU are well developed and they usually solve their problems via mutual discussions.

On the other hand, SAARC nations lack all these qualities. “There are a lot of lessons for SAARC to move fast as a South Asian community. It has to learn from Europe of how countries within that continent with a history of several large including two world wars, who were even close to a nuclear holocaust, have come together under one currency for development” (The New Indian Express, 22, November, 2010).

However, the miraculous success of the European Union in achieving both economic growth and

political stability through regional integration has prompted many to contemplate whether the EU model is replicable in South Asia.

Conclusion

The need for member states to work for a relevant role for the SAARC in the development of South Asia is beyond debate. Resolving contentious issues amongst member states will help remove mistrust and create an environment conducive to growth. All member states must shun a bilateral approach in favour of a regional outlook to maximise gains.

However, South Asia has a lot to learn from the European experience. One can hope that the coming decades will witness meaningful cooperation between the two largest configurations of democratic states in the continents of Europe and Asia in order to build a better world.

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Problems of Female Education

Mrs. Dharjya J. Patowari* & Mrs. Hiranya Gogoi**

[Education is a dynamic and powerful tool for all-round development of the society. But yet, despite the efforts of many decades of independence, a vast majority of population in India has remained outside the education system. The presence of acute social hierarchy, gender and group discrimination has affected the progress of education at the social level. The range of spreading education has largely been confined to a selected set of population in urban and developed rural area. The vast female population of India, especially in the rural areas, has not received adequate educational facilities.]

As per 2011 census, India's total literacy rate is 74.04%, of which male literacy rate is 82.14% and the female literacy rate is 65.46%. However, in Assam the total literacy rate is 72.19%, of which male literacy rate is 77.85% and female literacy rate is 63.00%. In Dhemaji district the total population is 688,077 and the total literacy rate is 69.07%; where male and female literacy rates are 75.66% and 62.13% respectively.

If this percentage is compared to the male literacy percentage, it shows that the female population is far behind. In Dhemaji, especially in its rural and tribal areas, the literacy rate is much less than the urban areas which is one of the indications of slow development of education among the women.

Need of the Study

The review of earlier studies has revealed that several studies have been conducted by many scholars on the problems and status of women in general and their educational problems in particular and some of these are related to the educational and other problems of women in Assam. Undoubtedly, a few studies have been conducted in Assam; nevertheless, the rural areas like Dhemaji district seem to have escaped the attention of the researchers. Even the available few studies portray a gloomy picture of the status of female education.

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Dhemaji district is a flood-affected area in which there are multiple problems pertaining to communication, power supply, food, drinking water, primary healthcare, trade and commerce etc. and the condition of specific Panchayat area of Moridhal is more pathetic than the other areas of the district. There are many disadvantages of spatial, socio-economic and communication constraints with regard to overall development including education.

These constraints coupled with other factors have made the objective of achieving education for all more cumbersome. In order to overcome these constraints and to avoid other types of disparities, there is need for uplifting all sections of the society, especially the backward groups like Tiwa women. The Government of India and the State Government also have launched many projects and schemes for women under the Five-year plans on the suggestions of many commissions and committees.

Along with these schemes, many other programmes like the total literary mission, non-formal and adult education programme, Gyan Bigyan Yatra, Sarba Shikshya Abhiyan etc. have been launched by the Government and other agencies, especially for uplifting education system in Dhemaji district. Despite these schemes and the efforts of various voluntary agencies, the women in the district, especially in rural areas like Moridhal Gaon Panchayat, have remained undeveloped in the field of education. Broadly speaking, the major portion of illiterates in Dhemaji district is rural women.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are-

- (a) To find out the problems of slow progress of education of Tiwa women.
- (b) To find out and assess the educational and related problems of the area and make generalization and suggest measures to overcome these problems in time to get rid of literary disparity between the males and females and help them play constructive role in the process of development.

Methodology

Collection of Data

The female head of every family was asked to answer the given questions with a view to collect quantitative data as well as get information of qualitative nature. Secondary data were collected from village Panchayats, government offices and interviews were taken and discussions were conducted. Random sampling method was used for data collection.

Period of data collection

The data of the study was collected from October 2012 to March 2013.

Historical Background of the Areas

The Kothalguri village is situated at Moridhal Gaon Panchayat in the district of Dhemaji, Assam. It is one of the oldest villages of the district and people inhabiting here came to this place before the advent of the Burmese to Assam. Initially, both the Hindu and Muslims lived together here but subsequently the Muslims of this area migrated to Sissiborgaon about 20km. away from the village.

Most of the Hindu people of this village are of Tiwa (Lalung) Caste, but before 1942 a group of Kachari people came from the district of Goalpara, Assam and settled here, thereby initiating a process of assimilation with the Tiwas.

The village is not far from Arunachal Pradesh and ABORS (a class of hill tribals originally living in

Arunachal Pradesh which settled here) for the purpose of attacking the village. It necessitated the British Government to establish a police outpost in 1858 near the village to save the people of Kothalguri from the assault of the Abors.

Kothalguri is situated about seven hundred meters from the NH-52 and 100 meters from the NF Railways running between Guwahati to Murkongselek via Dhemaji. The boundaries of the village are NF Railway line in the east, Baligaon in the west, Hanchowa village in the north and Khagariguri and Ratanpur village in the south.

The village of Kapahtoli Lalung is situated at a distance of 3 km from Moridhal Chariali. This village is located about three hundred meters from the NH-52. The boundaries of the village are Gainodi in the east, NF Railway in the west, Kapahtoli Deori village in the north and Lalung Tiniali in the south. This village is situated in the vicinity of Moridhal River under Moridhal Gaon Panchayat.

The inhabitants of the village are schedule tribe (Tiwa community). The Sissi-borkhel village is situated along the Kanibil River. The inhabitants of this village belong to Tiwa Lalung tribe. There is one high school and one L.P. school in Sissiborkhel village. The village is surrounded by River Gainodi in the east, Kanibil River in the west, Kapahtoli village in the north and Bishnupur Baligaon in the south.

Economy and occupational pattern

In Kothalguri village most of the people earn their livelihood through agriculture, daily wage earnings and small business. There are only 29 people who are service-holder. Most of the male people are used to drinking 'Ju' (one type of home-made alcohol produced from rice). So, they waste their money in such work. Their occupational pattern is also not satisfactory. They are also struggling for their livelihood.

The economic condition of the people is very poor. Although agriculture is the main occupation of the people in this area, yet due to shortage of cultivable land and increasing population they cannot meet their needs at present through cultivation. Many people live below poverty line (BPL) and others are daily

wagers. But a few people are engaged in teaching professions of this particular village.

The village Kapahtoli is surrounded by fertile land. The main occupation of the village is cultivation. Most of the families possess small plots of land and the agricultural produce can hardly meet their annual food requirements. Most of the people go for daily wage earnings in off seasons.

Women of the villages are engaged in weaving their garments like Mekhala Chaddar (a type of women dress), Swals, Gamucha (weaved towels) etc. In Sissiborkhel also majority of people live under hardship and poverty. People of this village rear pig poultry and cattle for sale as well as household use. Only a small portion of people are service holders.

Educational Environment

In Kothalguri village there are two L.P. Schools. The distance of the college from the village is about 1.5 kilometer. In this village most of the people are engaged in agriculture and some people did not have any concept about education. Almost every family has 5 to 10 children and they even cannot control and manage their children. They spend their leisure time without any purpose.

There is one primary school in the village which was established in 1946. However, the native people seem to be reluctant toward education. In Kapahtoli Lalung village there a L.P. School and a M.E. School and in Sissiborkhel village there is only one high school & one L.P. School. The educational scenario of these villages is not so good.

Actually, the existing educational environment in these villages is unable to cope up with the needs of modern society. Only a few numbers of graduates is found in these villages. Of course, recently Anganwadi centres have been introduced where primary training of all-round development of children is being provided under the ICDS programme of Assam Government.

Findings of the Study

The tabulated data was processed and interpreted. The casual relation between dependent and independent variables was examined and

interpreted, thereby, culminating in the emergence of the following trends:

- The areas under study are flood-affected and poverty-ridden and lack of awareness is the main cause of slow progress of education;
- Tiwa women of these areas are not interested to do any other work except cultivation;
- Early marriage is another problem of these particular areas;
- Distribution of cultivated land among the members of break-up families;
- Lack of consciousness among Tiwa women about small savings;
- Failure of governmental schemes and policies owing to apathy of political leadership;
- Lack of awareness about education.

In all these areas, there are many problems like the problem of communication, power supply, food, drinking water, primary healthcare, trade and commerce etc. The main problem is the poor economic and infrastructural conditions in this area which are caused by floods. Every year floods cause a lot of problems incurring great loss to the people of this area. So the people of this area cannot improve their economic condition.

Another main cause is that in this area people are not interested to do other work except cultivation. Furthermore, a major problem of this area is that the ancestral land is being divided among the family members after their break-up. In addition to it, lack of consciousness among women about small savings is another problem.

The trends emerging this study show that women are less educated than men in these areas. Generally, women are mostly uneducated. They are busy with their family life. Literacy rate among them is too less as most of the female children cannot complete their primary education due to various personal/family problems. Some are not interested towards education while in most of the cases the parents do not emphasize on the education for their girl child.

The Tiwa women are highly involved in day-long physical labour and so they cannot find enough time for receiving education. Above all, the major problem of female education is financial condition of the people. Many female children have to leave their education midway as they are married at a young age. Some guardians do not support co-education and there is no facility of separate schools for boys and girls in these areas. Hence, they don't encourage their female children for co-education.

Suggestions and Conclusion

After making thorough analysis of the findings, we can conclude that there is need of specifically trained women for the development of female education. There is a need for large number of women teachers for primary and secondary schools. Hence, steps should be taken to opening more colleges to train up teachers. More seats for women should be reserved in such training colleges. Reservation of more seats in favour of girls will facilitate the growth of women education in various areas.

The trained women workers being sent to work in rural areas should be given higher salaries and immediate facilities of accommodation and other minimum amenities for obvious reasons. Female education should be encouraged at all the stages of education. Primary education is the base for development of secondary and higher education. So, its development will ultimately affect the onward stages of education.

It has been estimated that only 40% of the girls of primary school reach up-to some class V or VI,

they drop out earlier for one or the other reasons. The government has a special responsibility for enforcing compulsory education for girls' up-to the secondary stage.

Voluntary agencies can play an important role in creating the right kind of public opinion and awareness in favour of women education; therefore, they should be encouraged. The Central and State Government should join hand and seek the cooperation of all voluntary organizations to spread education for girls' in every nook and corner in these areas.

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The Sonowal Kacharis of Assam

Ramen Changmai* Purnima Bailung**

[India is a multi-ethnic country. Various ethnic and tribal groups have been living in this country since time immemorial. They have their own traditions, social, cultural and physical features which are different from the other tribal and ethnic groups. North East region of India, including the state of Assam, is the habitation of various tribes with their distinct physical, social and cultural features and with diverse ethnic origins.]

Many tribes and non-tribes are settled together in Assam. Under the amendment act of 1976, there are recognized nine Scheduled Tribes of plains and fourteen Scheduled Tribes of hills. The Scheduled Tribes of plains are mostly found in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. The plain tribes, *inter alia*, include – Barmans of Cachar, Bodo Kachari, Deori, Hojai, Lalung, Mech, Mishing, Rabha and Sonowal Kachari.

On the other hand the Scheduled Tribes of hills are mostly found in the two district of Assam- Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. These hilly tribes are – Chakma, Dimasa Kachari, Garo, Hajong, Hmar, Khasi, Kuki, Lakher, Man, Mizolusai, karbi, Naga, Pawi, Synteng.

The Sonowal Kacharis of Assam

Sonowal Kacharis are one the scheduled tribes of the plains districts of Assam. They are one of the branches of Bodo Kacharis of Assam. Sonowal Kacharis are mostly concentrated in the districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur of Assam and neighbouring states in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Demographically the Sonowal Kacharis form the third largest plains tribal group of Assam. The population of Sonowal Kacharis is estimated around half a million.

The Sonowal Kacharis have their own history, tradition, social and cultural systems, though they

have been living with the other ethnic groups but they are still maintaining their own cultures and traditions.

Review of Literature

Assam is the meeting place of numerous ethnic and tribal groups having their own cultures, traditions, languages, dialects, religious beliefs and practices, etc. Only a few studies have been made on the Sonowal Kacharis, who claim to be one of the branch of broad Kachari group of Assam. There are a few ethnographic studies in the form of monographs and articles that have been made on this particular tribal group.

A British ethnographer Endle (1911), who prepared a monograph on Kacharis, noted that Kacharis are the Mongolian types and they appear to be the original settlers of Assam.

Another British ethnographer Waddell (1901), in his work explained that Kacharis are semi Hinduised Mongoloid tribe and they are found chiefly in the central Brahmaputra valley. According to Waddell, “Sonowal or Sadiola are mostly gold washer in the Lakhimpur district in upper Assam.”

Sonowal (1995) in his doctoral thesis studied about the gender relationship among the Sonowal Kacharis of Dibrugarh district. In his another article “Indian Tribes and Issues of Social Inclusion and Exclusion” (2008), he has stated that “culture and society change over time due to several facts – exposure, invention, experimentation and change in

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surrounding environment. The tribal societies are also no exception.”

He has also noted that social status and cultural component of tribal societies in our country are in different stage of transition. They are in different stage picking up or imbibing components of modern world like – education, economic activities, dress and recreation, food habit, health seeking behavior etc.

Barooah (1988), in her work has explained the origin of Sonowal Kacharis, their economy, agricultural and household activities, village life and social structure, marriage and marital rites, birth and death rites, festivals, religious rites, rituals and deities, folklores and folk songs and the status of men and women of Sonowal Kacharis.

She has stated that like all other communities, some remarkable changes have taken place in the Sonowal Kachari society and these changes are generally seen in the fields of social, economic, political and socio-cultural systems. Barooah has noted that after independence, community development and tribal welfare programmes which have been undertaken by the government have made rapid change in their lives.

Sen (1999), in her book provides a description on the Sonowal Kacharis along with all other tribes and castes of Assam. She has stated that Sonowal Kacharis belong to the Bodo group and have a close relationship with the Barmans of Cachar district, Boro Kachari of lower Assam district and Dimasa of North Cachar Hill district. She has also mentioned about the physical character, history, social system, family system, religion beliefs, and practices etc. of Sonowal Kachari. According to her, Hindu Sonowals use non-tribal titles like Hazarika, Saikia, Bora etc. and now they prefer to use only the ‘Sonowal’ title.

Sengupta (2003) has written an article on “Sonowal Kacharis”, wherein he has stated that traditionally the Sonowals were gold washers during the Ahom

rule, but now-a-days they have completely abandoned the traditional occupation. Now they can opt for any occupation of choice and aptitude. Sengupta has also explained that at present though the Sonowals are essentially a rural population, improved contact and spread of education is reflected clearly in an increasing range of personal contact of the people.

Now-a-days they are in close touch with the urban settings and also engaged in exchange in a socio-economic sphere with various neighbouring communities including caste and cognate tribe. She has further stated that due to the recent spread of formal education, it has been observed that some remarkable changes have taken place among them. Some of them hold good positions in modern occupations.

History of Sonowal Kacharis

The Sonowal Kacharis believe that they were the descendants of the great Bhaskar Barman, Norakasur, Ban, Bhagadutta, Ghotokacha, Prahlada and Bali (Barooah, 1998:2). Sonowal Kacharis had established their kingdom at Halali of Sadiya along the bank of the river “Subansiri”. There are some common beliefs about the origin and history of Sonowal Kacharis and one common belief among them is that the people who were engaged in washing gold particles from the sand of the river ‘Subansiri’ during the Ahom rule, they are known as ‘Sonowal Kacharis’ (Ibid.).

It also can be assumed that the king of Bana of Sonitpur or one of his descendants had four sons- Dimasa, Garo, Bhalukbir and Hogra. The last son Hogra came to Lakhimpur with one thousand Kacharis and established the kingdom at Halali near Sadiya. These descendents were later on known as ‘Sonowal Kacharis’ (Gohain, 2009: 239)

Clan System

The Sonowal Kacharis have seven exogamous clans, called ‘Khel’, namely Ujani Kuchiya, Namoni

Kuchiya, Amarabamiya, Tipamiya, Dhuliah, Chiripuria and Balikhitiari. Again there have been fourteen 'Bangshas' among the Sonowal Kacharis, namely – Madam, Manikiyal, Hagraal, Muktal, Ahmal, Formal, Bor Hojowal, Saru Hajowal, lathial, Chetial, Kumral, Dhehial, Dingial and Dangral. These bangshas are again sub-divided into small sub-class called 'Hanch' or 'Parial' such as – Dekari, Tepari, Baglari, Balungiri, Bithori, Lakhnari, Lалуwari, Nakori etc.

Family Structure

The traditional family structure of Sonowal Kacharis is basically 'joint-family' in nature. But now due to the changing social structure, nuclear family system is becoming prominently prevalent among the Sonowal Kacharis. The family system of Sonowal Kacharis is patriarchal and patrilineal. The eldest male member of a family runs the house and also owner of the land and other properties. After the death of the father the land and all other properties are equally divided among the sons.

Marriage System

Marriage is a social institution for Sonowal Kacharis. They follow monogamy but acquiring more than one wife is possible if the first wife is dead or if the first wife gives permission due to some reasons.

The Sonowal Kacharis follow strictly clan exogamy; hence, marriage among same clan or Bangsha is prohibited. The practice of inter-caste marriage is also found among the Sonowal Kacharis. Though this system of marriage is generally not supported by parents but there is not any hard and fast rule regarding this matter. In special cases divorce and widow remarriage are also permissible.

Presently, five types of marriage are mainly performed by the Sonowal Kacharis namely –

a) Shanti Biya - The attaining of puberty period of a girl, Shanti biya is celebrated and only women are allowed to take part in this marriage.

b) Nowa Dhowa or Bor Biya – This system of marriage among the Sonowal Kacharis is usually arranged by the parents of respective couple. Bhakats hold Namakritana in Namadharma way to shower blessings, wishing them a happy conjugal life and finally they are socially recognized as husband and wife.

c) Hom Diya Biya – This system of marriage is also known as Prajapatya Marriage. This type of traditional Hindu marriage is performed by employing the Brahmin priest. This is very expensive type of marriage, so this marriage is very rarely seen among Sonowal Kacharis.

d) Gandharba Biya – Traditionally Sonowal Kachari marriages are held under this system. It is love marriage, when couple take the initiative without parents' consent and after three days, information is sent to parent of the girls.

e) Churchuria and Rabha Sarakai Diya Biya – This system of marriage is also popular among the Sonowal Kacharis. In this marriage runaway couple formally recognized a marriage couple with an unceremonious feast is given to some village elders.

Economy and Occupation

Agriculture is the main occupation of Sonowal Kacharis. They are mostly the cultivators. They cultivate both Ahu and Sali paddy. Both men and women work in the paddy fields. Besides paddy, they also grow mustard seeds, pulses, potatoes, ginger, sweet potatoes, pumpkins etc. However, besides agriculture some of the people of Sonowal Kacharis are now engaged in service sector and different kinds of business.

The economic status of the Sonowal Kacharis is not much better, but some people of them are able to enhance and develop their economic status, because of agriculture advancement, occupational change and by attaining the certain level of education suiting to enter into a service or to do business

Religious Practices and Festivals

The traditional religion of Sonowal Kacharis is animalistic. Now, the people of this community follow two contrasting religious faiths – one is ‘Mahapurushia Vaishnava Dahrma.’ As devout followers of Vaishnava Dharma the Sonowals are the disciples of ‘Auniati Satra’. The other one is the traditional animistic notion with animal sacrifices, which is still continuing to hold sacrificial worship to their traditional deities.

The traditional gods of Sonowal Kacharis are different from the Hindu gods and goddesses. The supreme god of Sonowal Kacharis is ‘Khring Raja’ or ‘Bathow’. To propitiate their god, they perform ‘Bathow Puja, Interestingly ‘Haidang Geet’ is the oldest and first folk song of the Sonowal Kacharis and this ‘Haidang Geet’ is sung by the people during the time of ‘Bathow Puja’ and ‘Bohag Bihu’.

There are two kinds of worship among the Sonowal Kacharis – community worship and household worship. To maintain peace in their family they worship, household, deities. Some of the household deities worshiped by the Sonowals are – Ancestors’ worship (pirdiya, marak diya), Apeswara Sabha, Swaragdeo Puja, Dangoria Sakam, Aai Sakam, Garakhiya Sabha, etc.

On the other hand, Sonowal Kacharis hold the community worship for the welfare of their own society. Some of the community worships are – Bathow puja (as stated earliest) Gojai Puja, Bator Sabha, Gyati Guri Sabha, Lakhimi Tola Sabha, Khyatreya Puja, Baghdeo Puja etc.

The Sonowal Kacharis celebrate their own pujas and festivals with extreme devotion. The main folk festival of Sonowal Kacharis is Bihu. All the three Bihu - Bohag, Kati and Magh – are celebrated by them and these ‘Bihus’ play an important role both in their social as well as religious life.

‘Bahuwa Nitya’ is another traditional dance festival of Sonowal Kacharis. Apart from these, Sonowal

Kacharis perform certain rites and rituals at the birth of a child, such as Bajuliwa and Sudhi Sabha and perform certain death rites, such as Tiloni, Dohdunia, Daha, Kaaj etc.

Social Structure

The ‘Gaon Bura’ or ‘village headman’ is the key of the Sonowal Kacharis’ village administration. The Gaon Bura and village elders constitute the village council and they try to settle disputes like quarrel, theft etc. The ‘Namghar’ is also one of the centres of solving the disputes of the villagers.

Besides the Gaon Bura, there are some other office bearers, who perform important role in a village of Sonowal Kacharis namely Barik (in-charge of Namghar), Pathak (reading of religious script in public), Asirbaddiya Bura (Blessings giver), Gitghai (expert in song especially Hunsori), Medhi (Chief in all religious functions), Tamuli (supplier of betel nut to the audience), Randhani (Cook) etc.

Conclusion

The Sonowal Kacharis have district traditions and socio-cultural system which are different from the other groups. Though they have been living with the other ethnic groups but they are still maintaining their own cultures and traditions.

Under the impact of the community development programmes and welfare programmes which have been undertaken by the government, the transition and change have occurred from traditional to modern stage in the socio-cultural life of the Sonowal Kacharis. This social transformation and change has been seen in their education, economy, family marriage, religion, polity, dress pattern etc.

Due to the assimilation process and development of road and communication, interaction and cultural contact are taking place among the Sonowal Kacharis with other tribal and non-tribal groups. Due to this assimilation process with the Assamese speaking people, at present the Sonowal Kacharis speak the Assamese language. However, the

intonation and accent of language spoken by them is somewhat different.

Now-a-days, the system of family planning is common among them. So the traditional joint family system is gradually being transformed into the nuclear family. In the sphere of religion also transition has been noticed. During the Vaishnavite movement they have accepted the 'Mahapurusha Vaishnava Dharma'. At the same time they also continue their traditional religion. As a result, the Sonowal Kacharis have developed the dual system of religion.

In case of marriage system, many new procedures have emerged among the Sonowal Kacharis. In the earlier days spouses were selected mostly from within the villager, but now-a-days marriage partners are also selected from distant places and a few inter-community marriages with the neighbouring ethnic groups have also taken place.

In the field of economy, though their traditional economic dependence is still on agriculture, but now some of the people of this community have adopted the new methods of cultivations for good production of crops. As of now, many of them are going for various trade business and other professions. In the field of polity, many of the Sonowal Kacharis are joining the main stream of national political system. They have set up their own autonomous council, called 'Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council'.

In the sphere of education also, the Sonowal Kacharis are making progress. Due to the recent spread of formal education, some remarkable changes have been observed among them. Though their educational status is not much better than some other groups, but now many of the Sonowal Kachari students are passing out the secondary level of education. Not only that, many of them are now studying in different colleges and universities and some are also receiving advanced professional education in disciplines like – engineering, medical, law etc.

Currently, due to the spread of education the life style and status of women among Sonowal Kacharis

have changed. They don't like to keep themselves busy in household chores; rather they also prefer to go outside the home to engage themselves in different activities. Thus in the contemporary period, transition and change have occurred among the Sonowal Kacharis in their all aspects of socio-cultural life.

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Implementing Rural Development Schemes

Mahadev* and Dr. D.J.Shashikala**

[Rural development, in one or the other form has been considered as one of the important objectives of development plans of India since the beginning of Independence. Rural development has received special attention at the hands of the planners, policy makers, government administrators and the elite of the society; therefore, the present study is focused mainly on the programmes or schemes related to rural development introduced in Gulbarga district timely.]

Historically, the rural-urban dimension in India has always remained favorable to cities and towns. The rural areas have remained almost entirely without civic amenities and comforts. Medical and educational facilities transport and civic amenities are the concerns of all people regardless of whether, they live in villages and cities. At present, the infrastructural facilities are mostly concentrated in bigger cities, while the rural areas are deprived of them. As a result, the people from villages are migrating in large numbers to the cities in search of better life.

India is a land of villages and, therefore, the overall development of the country is possible only through the development of its villages. Fifty percent of the villagers are living below the poverty line and 76 percent of the population is living in rural India. Most villages of the Gulbarga district are found short of sanitation facilities as a result many villagers have suffered from water-borne diseases like cholera, jaundice, malaria, skin diseases, blood cancer and filaria etc. (Krishna, 2002).

The Concept

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Rural development has assumed considerable significance, especially after the seventies. It is a strategy designed to improve the socio-economic status of rural people with special emphasis on rural poor. It covers employment, health, education, transport, commerce and power supply, with particular emphasis on political and social awakening amongst the people. It has, therefore, been accorded top priority in recent plans.

Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the socioeconomic status of rural people with special emphasis on rural poor. It also emphasizes on the development of agriculture and allied activities like rural industries and crafts. At a symposium on Social Policy and Planning organized by the United National in 1970, the following working definition of development was given:

“Development can be defined as a process of improving the capability of country’s institutions and value system to meet increasing and different demands of a social, cultural, political as well as an economic character”(Lawania, 1992).

World Bank in its publication defined Rural Development as “the process of development with

the purpose of improving the status of those rural residents whose economic standard is very low”

Objectives

Following are the main objectives of the study:

1. To explore whether the target groups have been benefited by the developmental programmes.
2. To know whether the anganwadis are helping rural children and women.
3. To assesses the role of voluntary agencies and NGOs in promoting rural development.

Review of Literature

There are some studies related to the rural development and the role of NGOs. Some related studies are mentioned here. Mohsin Nadeem’s book (1985), *Rural Development through Government Programmes* is based on a sample of nine villages from three selected districts of Bihar and it shows that rural development programmes have not been able to make a serious dent in the state. The author has documented that the programmes had led to lopsided development. His data showed that a greater proportion of the financial

assistance is very tactfully poured into the pockets of the upper echelons of the rural folk. As a result of this tragic and unfortunate event, the poor and deserving have remained merely as mute spectators.

Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data to fulfill the purpose of various objectives of the study. In order to collect the required primary data, pilot method of about 50 respondents has been adopted. Information gathered from these respondents has been gleaned and analyzed. Qualitative research techniques have also been used and lastly, necessary multiple statistical tools have been applied with the help of computer to analyze the data in a better manner. Previous studies, books, journals, e-journals, e-books, print media have been used as the secondary sources of data.

One of the essential and basic needs of the people is the sufficient supply of water for day-to-day life. Now-a-days, villagers are fetching water from KIRWS and ES scheme, although they have continued to depend on old resources of water.

Table No.1

Respondents opinion on various sources of Water

Respondents fetching water from the following	Frequency	Percentage
Piped water supply	115	57.50
Mini water supply	20	10.00
Hand pump	65	32.50
Total	200	100.00

The above statistical data show the situation of water supply schemes and its functional approach. The above data reveal that a majority of 57.5% of the respondents are fetching water from the new scheme of KIRWS and ES project, while 10 per

cent of the respondents were drawing water from the mini-water supply. It is important to observe that 32.5 percent of the respondents are drawing drinking water from hand pump. But these hand pumps become dry many a times. As a result, people depend on open wells and other sources of water.

Table No.2

Quality of water from KIRWS and ES project

Quality of water from KIRWS and ES Scheme	Frequency	Percentage
Good	25	12.50
Better than before	139	69.50
Same as before	36	18.00
	200	100.00

The above table reveals that 12.50% per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that the quality of drinking water from KIRWS and ES scheme is good, while 69.50% of the beneficiaries opined that the quality of drinking water from the scheme is better than before, and very few 18% of beneficiaries opined that the quality of the water from the new scheme is the same as before.

Conclusion

Water is life and sanitation is a way of life. Both are critical for leading a quality life. A colossal 80 per cent of the diseases stem from consumption of unsafe water or poor sanitary conditions in rural areas. The Karnataka Integrated Rural Water Supply and Environment Sanitation Scheme was initiated in 1996 and implemented in 1111 (One thousand one hundred eleven) villages of selected 12 districts of Karnataka. The main aim of the project was to improve the health and productivity of rural people. An attempt was made to examine to what extent the scheme has been planned and implemented in the four sample villages.

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Globalization, Education and Unemployment

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[Close nexus between globalization, education and employment has been cogently narrated in this article which takes into account the importance of human capital development through education and skill development especially for the developing countries. The corresponding emphasis on the urgency for education development along with the imparting of skills is timely for the developing countries to reap the dividends of globalization and attract foreign direct investment or FDI. Ed.]

Global markets offer the benefits of increased efficiency in terms of better access to capital flows, technology, cheaper imports and larger export markets (IMF, 2000). Both sides of the income divide can benefit from globalization. Developed countries can tap larger markets for innovations. Developing economies can gain access to these technical advances while sharing in global production *via* multinational enterprises (Sachs, 1998). However, it is not necessary that the benefits of increased efficiency are shared by all. Globalization has exacerbated differences in the relative advantages of countries (ILO, 2000a: para.2).

Globalization has made it easier for businesses to choose low-skilled workers at lower pay in most parts of the world, leading to lay-offs and economic hardship. The perception is widespread that workers in some countries and industries lose their jobs, the unskilled see their earnings fall and households face higher economic instability as a result of change in terms of trade, global competition and the introduction of new technologies (Rama, 2003: 26).

For some workers, globalization has meant improved career opportunities, living standards and prosperity, while for other workers it has resulted in job insecurity or unemployment, declining living standards and poverty (ILO, 2000a: para).

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Globalization, Education and Skill Enhancement

Countries, enterprises and persons all perceive skills development as strategic, and consequently seek to step up investments in skills. Equipping the workforce with the skills required for the jobs of today and those of tomorrow is a strategic concern in the national growth and development. Employment of skilled workers has been on the rise in both developed and developing countries.

The rate of growth of employment in advanced countries has usually been highest for professionals and technicians, while declining for production workers. In developing countries, professionals and technicians have also seen high growth rates (ILO, 1999: 33).

The economic literature, as reviewed by O'Conner and Lunati (1999), suggests that a more educated labour force can raise the returns on investment in physical capital, or in other words that skills and capital are complementary. It can be argued that globalization raises capital flows from developed to developing countries. This means that, even without technology imports, capital output ratios in developing countries would increase and, given the complementarity between capital and skills, this would raise the relative demand for skilled labour (Mayer, 2000: 25).

The globalization of markets is accelerating the diffusion of technology and the pace of innovation. Within each sector, required skills and competencies are evolving, as the knowledge content of production

processes and services is rising. Technological change has shifted the relative demand towards skills in the labour force (World Bank, 2002a: 78).

New technologies are knowledge and skill intensive and there is a need to train people to work with these technologies (IMF, 2001: 3). As with capital-skill complementarity, there is also complementarity between technology and skills. The stock of human capital appears to be positively correlated with technological dynamism.

The introduction of new technologies in lower income countries implies a reallocation of labour from low to high productivity activities, which are generally both more capital and skill intensive. This means that increased technology imports are likely to be accompanied by a rising ratio of capital to labour, and an increase in the demand for skilled labour (Mayer, 2000: 23).

Endogenous growth theory considers that the main reasons for poverty are gaps in the endowment of knowledge and in the limited capability of developing countries to absorb new knowledge. The latter implies that development policy should concentrate on the interaction between technology and skills with a view to facilitating a reduction in the knowledge gap (Mayer, 2000: 1).

Globalization can ignite a “virtuous circle” of technology upgrading and skill accumulation in technological latecomers. “The realization of technological improvements in backward countries is closely interrelated with their educational attainment: their skill supply influences the amount and degree of sophistication of technology which can be adopted and efficiently used, while in turn the amount and sophistication of newly introduced technology impacts on the demand for skills.” (Mayer, 2000: 2)

One growing aspect of technology, the information and communication technology (ICT) revolution, is perhaps the most important of any technological revolution over the past two centuries. The new technologies have led to the introduction of a wide range of new products, sharp declines in transaction costs and vastly improved economic efficiency.

Surveys of the introduction of new ICT have found a strong association between the use of new technologies and the rise in skill and educational requirements (ILO, 1999: 37-38; ILO, 2000a: para. 14).

As noted in an ILO report on the social impact of globalization, the progressive adoption of new work organization techniques is among the key factors behind globalization (ILO, 2000b: 15). The changes in organization and work practices in high-performance enterprises have profound implications on the skills required from employees (that is, skills are a derived demand, based on the way in which work is organized).

High-performance work organizations typically use self-managed work teams, multi-skilling, job rotation, cross training and the devolution of decision-making. These methods confer greater flexibility on the organization, but can only work if employees acquire technical skills in addition to those normally required in a traditional organization (Ashton and Sung, 2002: 83).

Designing work in this way inevitably demands higher levels of skills from employees. In the high-performance workplace, workers must possess the cognitive and diagnostic skills necessary to perform a broad range of frequently changing tasks (Howell, 1994: 6). For workers, it means they must acquire the social and problem-solving skills needed for the management of production, in addition to the technical skills required.

This generates the demand for learning to become a continuous process (Ashton and Sung, 2002: 73). For example, the introduction of job rotation and multi-skilling increases the range of tasks and the technical skills required by employees. The use of team working and self-managed work teams means that workers develop better communication and decision-making skills

Several authorities agree that globalization places a premium on skills. With globalization, the competitiveness of regions is determined by skills rather than their resource base (Shankar and Shah, 2001: 1). Openness causes a demand shift in skills

through induced capital deepening or technological change. Globalization raises capital flows which, in turn, raise the demand for skilled labour (Mayer, 2000: 23).

Benhabib and Spiegel (1994), together with Lucas (1990), suggest that the stock of human capital serves to attract investment in physical capital, notably through foreign direct investment. Skills constitute a pull factor for foreign direct investment (Nunnemkamp, 2002: 35). Education and training are likely to attract investment in manufacturing (Velde and Morrissey, 2003: 19).

Thus, a well-organized education system and a better educated labour force can have the effect of attracting globalized financial capital. In contrast, it can be argued that lack of human capital may deter foreign investment from a country, since physical capital tends to go to areas where human capital is abundant (Lucas 1990). Openness does seem to stimulate investment in physical capital. If human capital and physical capital are complements, the higher investment-to-GDP ratio in open economies would tend to increase their demand for skilled labour without a corresponding increase in supply.

This could explain the tendency for the relative wages of skilled workers to rise with economic opening. Given capital-skill and technology-skill complementarity, this suggests that more open economies should experience a more rapid growth in demand for skilled workers than closed ones (O'Conner and Lunati, 1999: 28-29).

The current extreme gap between wages for skilled personnel between advanced and developing economies provides a powerful magnet for migration from poor to rich countries. The one market, where the poor nations have something in abundance to sell, namely labour, has remained relatively untouched by international liberalizing trends (Rodrik, 2002: 5).

The exceptions are for highly skilled workers, especially in information and computer technology. The United States and the United Kingdom, as well as other countries, have relaxed rules to allow the immigration of specific categories of skilled or

“knowledge” workers. It has been reported that 38 per cent of the professional workforce in Silicon Valley is of Indian origin (Yusuf, 2001: 22).

Migration has distinct benefits. The option to migrate further augments the worth of skills and investment in their creation in developing countries (Yusuf, 2001: 39). It may act as a pressure valve to relieve unemployment among professionals and technicians in economies that have not grown. Emigrants tend to return sizeable amounts of foreign exchange in remittances.

Moreover, the diaspora can become a force for development in home countries through investment and the skills brought by returning migrants, which can be invested in local enterprises. This has happened particularly in the Republic of Korea, Taiwan (China) and China (Yusuf, 2001: 22; IMF, 2000).

One region, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, has suffered a considerable brain drain and has been able to draw less on its human resources employed in industrialized countries. The region has reportedly contributed 30,000 PhDs and 250,000 people with advanced technical qualifications to the North (Yusuf, 2001: 23; Ajayi, 2001: 4; World Bank, 2002b: 18). This reflects the inability of many African economies to provide the wages, research and development that would keep highly educated and skilled workers in the region.

The brain drain occurs between continents, generally from South to North and in particular from South Africa to Europe. It also happens within Africa. For example, South Africa is able to attract large numbers of the best educated and skilled workers from neighboring countries. This can drain human resources from poorer countries.

Not only do the sending countries lose their investment in the education and skills of those who emigrate, but they are also deprived of their contribution to economic productivity. However, over time semi-skilled and skilled jobs should be transferred from advanced countries to less developed countries, and this could help minimize the wage gaps that currently act as a stimulus for migration.

Conclusion

Globalization brought in its fold many opportunities especially for the developing countries, yet these countries have failed to reap the benefits fully. Youth in such countries although educated find themselves unfit for the emerging job market on account of lack of required skills. Such countries have failed to tune their educational system to the demands of the newly emerging globalized world. What is required is imparting of skills to these Youth so that they become acceptable in the job market. Enhancement of skills like communication skills, technical skills, Rapport Building skills, Selling & Marketing skills and analytical skills etc. is the need of the hour and it is only through this system that the developing countries can actualize the potential and contribute to the well-being of their human capital.

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Religious Peace Discourse in International Relations

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[This article is based on the material used primarily from the Persian sources and sources available in English language have also been used. The translation from the Persian into English for the present paper is the author's responsibility with regard to exact terminology conveying the correct meaning etc. Our editorial team has made corrections only from the language point of view in order to retain the thematic unity of the thoughts expressed therein and the basic ideas have been retained. However, some part of essay has been deleted for want of space and caution has been taken to retain the main theme. Ed.]

Issues studied by international researchers in different time periods have usually been distinct depending on the quality of relations and the number of international entities and governments.

Increase in the number of governments in international arena and more complicated relations in economic, political, military and cultural realms

as well as emerging international organizations have all led to the emergence of new issues in the domain of international relations.

Significant international developments, including political risks, the experiences/ideas of diplomats and militarists, especially in strategic theories and international law, occurring in the 18th and 19th centuries have immensely influenced and shaped the

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content of contemporary international relation (Behead, 1973:20).

The main issues that attracted the attention of the international community and strategic thinkers alike in the early 20th century and post-First World War period, *inter alia*, included: international organizations, nations and communities, disarmament, war laws, neutrality, international law, international ethics and values (Ibid).

The developments taking place in the pre-and-post Second World War periods have proved as milestones in contemporary international relations. On the one hand, the mechanisms to maintain peace at global level, especially through Nations' Community, were not able to achieve humanity's great idea of international peace and security.

On the other hand, new phenomena such as competition between Capitalism and Communism, Cold War, proliferation of nuclear weapons and emergence of newly independent countries from colonialism etc led to the emergence of more complicated issues in international relations (Amery, 1999: 30).

These and other related developments in international relations led to the emergence of two schools of thought – idealist school and realist school. The Idealists, who were the proponents of idealistic thoughts in international relations, were interested in such affairs as collective interest, international entities, global public opinion court, international law and ethical values at international community level and they believed that collective security is the only solution to keep international peace.

On the contrary, the Realists believed that the most important discussions in international relations are: national governance, military power, secret diplomacy and power equilibrium. This thinking style recommends more military power to keep national security which would lead to international peace and security through power equilibrium system rather than looking for a mechanism to keep the peace through general disarmament and public common interests (Bruce & Harry, 1992: 41).

Discourse transformations have created new issues for international relations. The role of religion in the arena of international relations has been addressed by different theories and ideas of political science and international relations from different perspectives.

The main question is as to what is the role of religion in peace discourse in international relations. Does religion enhance and stabilize peace discourse in the world or is religion the factor of tensions and even terrorism in the world? With which theories in international relation can we clarify the role and status of religion? The present paper tries to answer above questions.

Peace Discourses in International Relations

Like war, peace is a social phenomenon which is the result of mutual relations based on the cooperation of international community members. By reversing war definition, some people have tried to define peace. "Peace state is a mood in which a nation is not in war." The medieval age political philosopher, Saint Augustine has defined peace as: "peace means tranquility of order," and such definitions served as a millstone for subsequent theorists (Bout, 1992: 35).

Gaston Bout provides another definition on war and peace which is more objective and also involves social aspects: "Peace is the state of a human group dominating over their fate (in other word, they are politically independent) which its collective death does not involve conducted and organized terrors" (Behead, 1973: 178).

There are various theories on establishing peace and these differ from each other in form and nature. Some of these theories, *inter alia*, include: international organization and collective security, global governance, disarmament, balance of power, constructivist theory and discourse theory. For the purpose of this paper, we briefly examine the discourse theory with specific emphasis on religious peace discourse.

Discourse theory

In discourse theory, any action and phenomenon should be in the form of a discourse in order to find

its meaning. Actions and phenomena are perceivable when they are put in a certain discourse format. Nothing has identity *per se*; rather, it takes its identity from the discourse in which it is located. Discourse analysis happens in three steps:

Identifying aggression space: The first step for political education in the framework of this theory is to identify at least two aggressive discourses which have an antagonism relationship with each other. Discourses always find identity through enemies and regulate their semantic system based on it.

Determining time and place: Simultaneous to the identification of aggressive discourses, one should also determine the time and place of considered discourses. Discourses exist in time and place and one should consider their time limit and geographical status in order to investigate them.

Semantic conflicts and social changes: Based on discourse theory, all social changes are the result of semantic conflicts among discourses. Always, discourses try to maintain “self” and “other” concepts. Hence, semantic domination on public opinion is the best and most effective method to pose power. Discourses are always competing on owning public opinions due to semantic mechanisms and other social changes are a function of semantic conflicts (Sultana, 2004: 14).

Now, we address two influential discourses in international arena:

(a) *Contemporary international political discourse*

(b) *Discourse of religion in international arena*

Contemporary international political discourse

So far, in international political discourse a civilized center with uncivilized margins entering civilized rituals based on the center model is represented. This has drawn a picture on out-of-center civilized areas such as declining historic museums and violence dissemination centers. This picture transferred to our contemporary literature through Western scientific and cultural processes has changed the relationship between ‘West’ and ‘Margin’ to a controlled and educational relationship.

Such imaging has put the Western world in a limitation of clichéd concepts and codes. Such terms as terrorism, rebel governments, backward countries are the keywords of this discourse. Such conceptual limitation has evoked reactions from developing countries.

What is recognized in the East as Anti-Occidentalism, xenophobia, return to the lost past splendor and so on is in turn a reaction to dominate demanding discourse of the West. The Western centralized discourse has a reason for establishing a single-minded discipline at global level and has paved the ground for justifying many violating and curbing methods in these regions (Khaniki, 2008: 20).

According to discourse theory thinkers like Foucault, in contemporary international political discourse, ‘terrorism’ is a vague term by which we are faced with a semantic crisis in scope, definition and limitation due to the complexity of its conceptual implications. The main issue in Michel Foucault’s theory is to conceive the conditions of terrorism and terrorists’ emergence as a title of knowledge.

To this end, terrorism recognition is a set of relations which unite discourse behaviors that generate knowledge, sciences and thinking systems in a given period of history. In this way, terrorism recognition is not a kind of knowledge rather it is a set of relations created in a historical age between sciences at the level of discourse rules (Soleimani, 2011).

Since terrorism is a political – social construct, its conceptualization emanates from collective relation mechanisms which are rooted in language; and therefore, it is a bridge of joint meaning. In this perspective, the real function of terrorism definition is to *de-legitimize* identity changing.

It is in the framework of such models that “With Us” or “Against Us” discourses determine semantic borders between terrorism and anti-terrorism. For the same reason, it is inevitable to be aware of the interests of individuals, groups, governments and international organizations in order to conceive their language mechanisms to show our considered image correctly and to show the image of other people on terrorism incorrectly (Ibid.).

To analyze peace discourse, one should identify its competing discourses and then to clarify their conflicts. In the meantime, in peace discourse analysis, place and time interval should be considered. Therefore, according to this theory, the most important mechanism for creating a fair peace is to clarify peace discourses against terrorism discourse in global public opinions. One of the most important discourses which can play a vital role in establishing peace discourse and mitigating terrorism discourse is religious discourse in international relations.

Discourse of Religion in International Relations

There are three thinking schools concerning the role of religion in international arena:

(1) Eternitists (2) Instrumentalism (3) Constructivism

Some thinking styles have remarkable differences in their interpretation on the relationship between renewing religious communities and violence conflicts.

Eternitists argue that differences in religious traditions should be considered as an important independent variable in order to elicit violence interaction in and among countries. At international and national levels, actionists tend to shape unity around a joint ideology; so that there emerge tensions among unities with different ideologies while instrumentalists believe that regressive religious beliefs can intensify challenges.

However, they insist that if religious beliefs are not regressive, there is lesser possibility for challenges. According to them, the relationship between violent conflicts and renewal of religion is not surprising although such relation is not necessary.

Rebels and wars are the outcome of political, economic and social inequalities in and among countries. On the contrary, conservative constructivists argue that in many situations, putting real religious people close to unbelievers cause the politicians to mobilize their fans for violent actions (Hosen Clore, 2009: 209).

Conservative constructivists see social challenges in the heart of cognitive structures such as nationalist

ideology or religion. Such structures which consist of “understanding joint expectations and social knowledge” provide actionists with valuable concepts and, as a result, their strategic options will be impacted (Ibid, 216). They consider religion as a middle variable i.e. a casual factor of interference between an assumed challenge and a challenging behavior.

Hence, the impact of religious traditions on challenging behavior is too important: on the one hand, they can produce more violence since the interpretations they provide on holy texts justify armed conflicts and, on the other hand, they can produce less violence since the interpretations they provide on holy texts de-legitimize using violence in an assumed or even more general situation. Hence, it is recommended that conservative constructivism designs discourse strategies which enhance foresight of the people or the principle of denying in the minds of the people (Ibid, 219).

The Ontology of Religions

To elicit the role of religion in the arena of international relations, we address now the status of religions in constructivism theory and its role in international relations.

Discussion on the status of religion in international relations, without understanding the fact that differences in religious and secular thoughts have an ontological shape, is impossible. Put it differently, each one sees the reality differently (Fred, 1995: 47). All spiritual communities, along with both Western and Eastern religions, consider a common difference between normal reality and actual reality.

Such difference in ontology leads to cognitive and methodological differences among religious and customary attitudinal methods in the world. Efforts to enter religious experience into a positivist framework can only weaken it, imitate it, divert its meaning and neglect its power. A serious study on the role of religion in international relations should be started by discovering the ontological foundation of religious discourse. This can be done by following two approaches.

3 Law – oriented Constructivism and Religion

Law – oriented constructivism claims that it can provide a framework for all social theories since its ontology scrutinizes real social world in its most basic level. The ontology of law – oriented constructivism is a joint bridge in the changing scope of social activities in which people interact to shape the world and also to be shaped by the world. Law – oriented constructivism points out vocabularies, verbal behaviors and norms as the main constituents of human interaction and attitude toward the world.

3 Constructivism and Religion as Social Structures

By linking religions to governments or attitudes to civilizations like a puzzle which includes governments in the same religious format, constructivism draws our attention to the risk of falling in government – orientation (Vendolka, 2009: 93). Similarly, there is a contrary risk in attitude toward religions and governments as fully separated affairs. For instance, Jürgen Mayer argues that to conceive today’s world, it is necessary to study two frameworks which compete and interact with each other: there is no way superior to extension and it is only the careful study of rules and their interactions which indicate the nature of such relations.

Cultural and Convergence Functions of Religion

Among thinkers who have a functional glance at international relations and discuss the importance of culture, convergence theorists have a special status. Most convergence theorists believe that cultural relations and mutual actions are, *inter alia*, the most important functions that can pave the ground for regional and global convergence. Expanding cultural relations and communications cause the growth of need for sympathy and cultural interactions.

The interests of different people from different cultural backgrounds cause their walls of narrow thinking fall down and they demand their cultural goods and they create new needs to use different cultural products as well as modern cultural cooperation. It

not only can mitigate cultural nationalism and its conflicts, but also can lead to closer attitudes, values and existing thoughts in different communities.

Therefore, culture can play a vital role in the expansion of cooperation and international sympathy as well as paving the ground for the convergence of nations (Salami, 2006: 78).

Thus, cultural sympathies and harmonies can play a critical role in paving the ground for convergence (Hodges, 1972: 108 – 112). Karl Deutsch has mentioned certain conditions to achieve international convergence in the realm of international relations. According to him, various explicit conditions are necessary to achieve convergence after preparing a certain mentality.

According to Deutsch, some conditions to achieve convergence in international arena are:

1. Adaptability of values and a joint idea on how to attract for life: culture, ethics, religion, behavioral patterns and so on which can satisfy such convergence conditions if cultural commonalities exist.
2. Ideological similarity in paramount comings and goings by political leaders and governmental officials (Deutsch, 1972: 110).

Therefore, in the views of Karl Deutsch and convergence theory thinkers, cultural relations along with other affecting factors on convergence create a new environment in international relations.

Functions of Religious Discourse

Discourse strategy seeks to de-legitimize use of force in political conflicts. This strategy is designed to interact with those people who support armed combats in order to create an inner mental motivation to withdraw armed combat. Contrary to other two strategies discussed above, which mainly act on external motivations, discourse strategy relies upon convicting arguments which motivate people internally.

They should condemn violence as an unfair practice. Hence, the proponents of discourse strategy are faced with verbal challenges in capturing the hearts

and minds of the people and this is exactly what is regarded by Appleby and Kong as an opportunity for great global religious communities and their leaders in order to promote challenge management tools and principles based on peace inside and outside their own communities.

According to the proponents of discourse strategy, religious officials throughout the world support increasingly holy traditions of their communities and opponents try to use such traditions to increase their power as a tool (Hosen Klor, 2009: 245).

1. Prior to everything, official religious authorities are in a position that can condemn any framework based on challenges in the format of a believing conflict. As mentioned before, differences in understanding holy issues can be considered as the real reasons of violent combats in rare cases. Furthermore, all great religions have controlled on legitimized usage of force against people and groups in order to adopt measures used rarely by quarrelsome. By opposing stimulating terms of politicians or the threats by governmental officials, religious officials can decrease the tendency of ordinary members to violence and social support of quarrelsome remarkably.
2. Official religious authorities have the power to conduct the willingness of religious people for altruism toward peaceful initiatives designed to compensate dissatisfaction. Every day, new social movements are emerging from global religions which not only try to introduce fundamental political reforms but also inspire the followers to undertake serious peaceful initiatives. For instance, one can point out freedom movement of the Indian National Congress, fact-path clergymen in Cambodia, reformative Pashtun movement in northeast Pakistan, Human Rights movement in the United States and Tibet freedom movement (Ibid, 248).
3. As mentioned before, if official religious authorities condemn satanic nature of aggressors in their preaching, a common ethical pillar will be shaped among global religions at least in theoretical terms of preventing satanic nature of opponent side and its members in an assumed

conflict. However, political conflicts often arrive at a peak point where the quarrelers nurture intense aggressive feelings in their minds. Under such conditions, religious leaders may use their power to mediate between parties (Brown and Edart, 1996: 133).

Due to their popularity and as the representatives of victims throughout the world, religious officials are in a position to support the reestablishment of mutual trust among aggressors by which all parties commit to respect fundamental religious values. They can reopen communicational channels, organize conferences and provide formula to resolve conflicts.

Furthermore, they are in a position to monitor agreements and provide valid assessments on possible successes or failures. Religious officials can play a constructive role in preventing challenging behaviors. On the other hand, they can reveal dissatisfactions. Hence, they act as a safety valve before the people afflicted with dissatisfaction or empathy with violence (Appleby, 2000: 140 – 143).

Therefore, discourse of religion is an important strategy which plays a vital role in resolving international challenges and conflicts, tribal clashes as well as violence and terrorism de-legitimization. After years of scientific and practical efforts to realize discourse among religions and based on his recognition of tradition and modernity, Raymon Penicar talks about two types of discourses: intra-religious discourse and discourse among religions. Discourse among religions is the contribution of believers in facing with predetermined religions in external objective world.

He calls intra-religion discourse as a dialogue shaped inside the person and does not consider it as a discourse starting with theological teachings and discussion on such issues. According to him, the aim of both discourses is not to establish a global religion or to achieve a “United Nations of Religions” (Penicar, 2003: 35).

Intra-religious discourse entails with three discourses: secular discourse, religious discourse and spiritual discourse.

So far, most inter-religion discourses happen through intra-religion discourse. It has three radical components: cognition which is the trait of Hinduism; another component is wisdom which is the trait of the Chinese religions like Confucianism and the third one is prophecy and mission of the Messengers which is an element of Islamic religion and two other Ibrahim religions (Kong, 2008: 63).

Secular discourse with two ranges of religion – altercation and religion – has proved itself in releasing human social life from religious penetration. The third discourse, namely spiritual discourse, has a special inner diversity and tries to criticize the first discourse as an inefficient realism and the second one as a discourse captured in reductionism tap by which it draws the third scientific path and its main determinant is its holistic view.

According to Hans Kong, postmodern global discipline brings some items of which two most important ones are:

Firstly, religions make no effort to promote and convert into a global religion. Secondly, a peaceful life and sympathy with various religions will be realized by mutual respect and joint cooperation/discourse. Therefore, religious discourse process should answer these radical questions: What kind of threats does peaceful human life face in different communities? What are the barriers against peace and understanding among governments, nations and religious communities? Are violent and combating interpretations compatible to holy texts enshrined in religious holy books? Hence, the role of ideologies is important in accessibility to a peaceful life (Talebi Darabi, 2009: 32).

Conclusion

Discourse changes in contemporary era have created new problems and issues for international relations. The role of religion in the realm of international relations has created new discourses and thinkers with different approaches have addressed the question as to what is the role of religion in terrorism and peace discourse in international arena.

By studying discourse changes in international relations, scholars have analyzed the discourse of religions based on constructivism and studied its role in creating fair peace discourse and avoiding terrorism in religious functions. In answering the main question, this paper enhances its hypothesis that religious discourse with quadruple functions, particularly religion discourse strategy, plays a vital role in establishing fair peace among governments – nations, global community and de-legitimizing terrorism.

Therefore, religious leaders and authorities and religious/cultural entities and institutes in the international arena can play an important role in developing and promoting peace discourse against terrorism, war and violence and as the new efficient players and the rivals of governments in global civic community.

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