

Asia and its various growing dimensions of globalisation for economic integration

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Abstract

The paper would try to look at the India-China relations of cooperation within BRICS framework. A comparison of this stance with India and China in power struggle Asia would form another part of the paper. India has opened up new platforms on either side of the subcontinent such as Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical Cooperation, Chabahar port project as well as joined Shanghai Cooperation Organization as its means of outreach. This has all been a part of India's changing role in Asia. However, it must be also kept in mind that there is a China-Pakistan angle to it. A battle for power and influence has been there in the region of South Asia even before the pandemic. Now post covid19 scenario as the western world shrinks and the power fulcrum shifting towards Asia with USA pivot to Asia program as well as the geo-political tensions between USA and China coming up there is a new role for South Asia right now. The paper would like to understand these scenarios with an eye on India-China relations in a cooperative competition relationship scenario. On one side of the paper the joint role of India-China in BRICS framework would be looked at against the Indo-Pacific Asian power struggle.

Keywords: Asia, Asian Century, India, China, Russia, Indo-Pacific, Power Struggle.

Introduction

The idea of a time being divided into two-time era in the form of B.C. and A.D. had been prevalent based on the life of Jesus Christ. An iconic messiah which had divided the global history into two different precincts. One before the birth of Christ and the other after his demise. Now the global covid19 pandemic could be also exactly looked at the same way. One where we could look at the similar way is world which existed before covid19 pandemic and the other which is now while we are still in the process and looking for a time, which may be considered as something post-Covid-19 (Yunling, 2015). This is where the idea of the global politics, economy as well as society has been transforming in the process of the pandemic of Covid-19. In a world where there has been a slew of integration and the globalisation has picked up pace there were big loopholes probably left behind. Today in the times of this unforeseen pandemic the world politics as well as the economics, trade and the society associated with it has also been changing. It may be argued that the world faced epidemics which could have been termed as pandemic had the World Health Organization existed since the times of *Black Death* in 15th century to even *Spanish Flu* of the 20th century. However, as the world of today is not only more populated but most importantly more connected the implications will be far reaching without exaggeration.

Global North vs Global South

The Covid-19 crisis was born in the times of the already crumbling times of the globalisation if not completely shattered (Steven A. Altman, 2020) ¹. There have been times of the way that the world has faced multiple challenges and all the same time. The world wars or the epidemics coupled with economic recessions, social tension have been there spread across the history of the world. However

¹ (Steven A. Altman, 2020) "Will Covid-19 have a lasting impact on globalization?"

there comes a question on how the world in the times of contrasts where, on one hand, globalisation is reaching a certain limit and, on the other, decoupling based on mistrust and suspicions if not unprecedented is definitely a new in the contemporary times. The Covid-19 is one of those times of breaking barriers and creating new chapters in the world divided between geo-politics of “Global North versus Global South development agenda” and/or the “Socio-economic and cultural clash of the Eastern part of the world against the West”. In between all this, there is an important question to be asked that whether the onus of not just leading the world by a sole hegemonic power but a collection of powers in a collective position (Chee, 2015). There is also an extension of this idea as to if the dynamics are being revisited or revision happening in the global quadrant divided globally in the North vs South and the East vs West. It is a challenge which may not be met by the arrogance and the vanity of the west but maybe looking towards a new global order.

Economic Integration

Now the most important question is about the economic and the political way of global integration. The idea is about the way that the current global pandemic has created a new wave of socio-economic upheavals and its fallout. Now if we narrow down the approach of this global system then let us narrow it down to the continent which is in the middle of this global situation over change. The continent which is in the middle of the storm of the change in the wave of pandemic would be Asia (Zhao, 2020). The continent of Asia has had a rich history and had been at the forefront of the global cultural and political narratives for a very long time. If we look back at the history of global human civilization then be it the old civilizations of *Indus, Mesopotamian, Sumerian, Chinese and even Egyptian civilization* considering Egypt an extension of the west Asia it would be clear that there has been the continent of Asia as a luminary of the global civilization progress. Only Greek and Roman civilization can be seen to have been born from the western world. Even in terms of the cultural spheres be it *Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Arabic, Turkish and even Russian* which acts as the crossing bridge into the west from the eastern part or Asia proves the fact that the continent of Asia has been one of the key drivers of the cultural epitome of human civilization. Asia therefore has a distinct importance of own.

Now speaking of Asia, the region of *West Asia* which has been colonially termed as *Middle East* has a very important dimension to play. It is one of those most important strategic regions in the world and of course in Asia where the western powers are still embroiled. The fight for the justice, democracy, and the improvement of the lives of the people there is their own fight. In the times of the pandemic there has been unrest in Lebanon, concerns over Palestine and the economic threat looming with concerns and delays over the delay of the *Dubai World Expo 2020* now postponed to 2021 and even the *Qatar 2022 football world cup*. Therefore, the western part of Asia which connects to Europe, Africa and Asia has a very important supply chain role too. Sanctions on Iran or the internal politics of Saudi Arabia especially in the current times can be of catastrophic proportion. The tensions over the Israel-Palestine issues, fragile economics of Jordan apart from Lebanon and of course the devastated Iraq-Syria on an unknown path of reconstruction are some of the most pressing issues that has no long-term solution and only to make matters worse the global pandemic is here. Speaking of the catastrophe and the global pandemic the worst humanitarian crisis is Yemen as of now and yet the challenge of the middle east is yet to be over. This is the time for the world to take a new look towards this part of world (Navdeep Suri and Kabir Taneja, 2020).

Now the question is before the paper tries to look more into Asia and going in depth on west Asia and other parts of Asia it would be imperative to understand Asia and why it's important. Asian politics and the world of today is probably more connected than other continents of the world. If we look at other continents from Europe where the European Union in itself is a union that is

closing in the general terms. Not to mention Brexit which is now a done process. Further down the Atlantic there lies the America's. On the northern front you have the USA which had been impacted by the Covid-19 crisis by numbers. USA had been ranked as the best country in terms of pandemic preparedness and yet here in the real world the supposed defender of the free world had been struggling to contain Covid-19. On the other hand, there is Canada which was never really a global player but in terms of the domestic quality of life standards they have maintained their position. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic despite Canada suffering initially has managed to get back on track thanks to their lower population numbers and other measures (Raluca Bejan and Kristina Nikolova, 2020). Last but not the least on the mainland of North America there is Mexico which has remained an emerging economy but surrounded and enclosed by prosperous and powerful Canada and USA respectively. Not to mention its role in global politics has been severely affected because of mentioned two countries (Velasco, 2018).

At the end of north America and before the beginning of South America is the small part of central America. A region like the Indian subcontinent but much smaller divided between the poverty stricken "Banana Republics" and an exception in the form of Panama which had grown due to US money. On spreading out there is the Caribbean where some of the islands are stuck in a rut such as Haiti or astray Cuba and on the other some are prospering although threatened due to the pandemic such as Dominican Republic, Bahamas etc. The question may be out forward as to why and how these are important in the global context. That will be answered later. Now moving on south there is the southern part of America which used to be seen some time back as the new hope for socialism and an egalitarian society in an emerging part of the world. A society where the old wounds of colonialism and even older civilization and their ideas can be juxtaposed for a great role of south America. However, starting from Argentine currency crisis to the destitution and the wandering off Brazil to the greater lengths of decadence has failed South America. The expectation on the two big countries in the form of Argentina and Brazil despite their rivalry has been a sort of downfall. Although countries like Peru, Chile despite the problems has grown economically but their prosperity hardly matters in terms of the trickle effect it could on Latin America.

The idea of the north and southern part of America's as well as the central and the Caribbean criss-crosses a lot of countries and their individual roles, aspirations, success, and failures. Now if we come back into Asia and most importantly in the western part of Asia also called the Middle East since the colonial times (Ramadhan, 2018). However as like the article here looked around America's although in brief the main point of context was to bring into attention as to how and why Asia has one of the most important roles in the world. Now coming back to the Middle East, the region has an important role to play as it is the main point of contact which still binds the region of Asia in terms of security with the west primarily. West Asia has seen upheavals in terms of the countries with artificial borders more complicated with the colonial regimes. Then comes the important aspect of governance and democracy. A region which is important not only for Asia but also for the entire world in terms of the relevance it holds. Therefore, west Asia has always been an important region of the world and its tumultuous nature has driven then world in terms of geo-politics as well. Now the question remains that how can the region which has been at the epicentre of turbulence since historic times march ahead with peace and prosperity together. There is no one simple answer to this question where conflict has reigned in historically.

West Asia has the historical conflicts which had been compounded by the energy politics, colonial overtures. European powers which had come in and dominated the countries today have become independent and proud countries in their own right. However, the middle eastern world has been divided along the lines of sectarianism, religious divide which has always pushed the voices of the people behind. The situation had been controlled by the dictatorships which had managed the

people across the lines of religion, political opinions etc. These are the attributes which have always allowed for the outside intervention especially in the form of the world's two powers in the form of USA and Russia. The century which is being touted as an Asian century and in the two decades Asia has definitely gone on in the way to make it true as well however needs to look at west Asia as the first step for an Asian solidarity. The region of west Asia with war ravaged countries and the battlefield for proxy war between two Islamic powers in Asia does not bode well for the continent. The energy routes and the importance of the region just not for Asia and the world is there (F. Rizvi, 2011). The region which has got some of the richest countries in the world has also become one of the most human refugees contributing region especially to Europe. These are some of the biggest questions which needs to be looked at and sorted although it would require amount of time.

The Asian Axis

Now if we move into the other parts of Asia then it could be central Asia as it also bridges Europe with Asia and not to mention it's the backyard of Russia. Central Asia has been calmer despite being rich in energy. It is not to mention that there have been political scuffles or rather show of military strength but the political balance there is so much in favour of Russia that it hardly makes any difference to the world. In terms of its importance for Asia the region of central Asia was once a major centre of silk trade and then post USSR regime became the hotbed of energy politics. Russia tries to keep the region in control and even aggressively. In 2008 Georgia was attacked by Russia but the world kept quiet as did the neighbours of Georgia. Now in the current times of crisis of Covid-19 central Asia has been relatively less affected and countries like Turkmenistan are already in the normal scenario mode. Now the question arises that has central Asia become more important than ever post USSR regime. The answer would be yes but nevertheless under Russia influence. That had made this part of Asia a very important player in the global politics (Foreign Policy, 2020). The idea for the region in central Asia is to keep on development of their respective regions while also balancing Russia. This could be attributed to certain countries such as Azerbaijan whereas countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan have still been holding back sovereignty.

Now the question is what makes the region of central Asia so important and what steps it can take forth for a greater prosperity and cooperation within Asia. That would require these central Asian countries to come together. Although they are a part of the Eurasian union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation both these organizations show a very different proposition altogether. The former is more like a union designed to keep Russia in charge. Whereas the latter is more multilateral and has multiple players which includes China, India, Pakistan and of course Russia as well. Therefore, this is the platform which could be looked into using central Asia to build on energy infrastructure projects as the first step. That could be seen as the first platform, and this is from where the shared prosperity of Asia especially when it comes to energy security despite playing the game of real politik could be worked out. Most of the central Asian countries does not function on democracy or are pseudo democracy however to keep the unrest away it all depends on keeping the development work going. In terms of prosperity there are a few countries which are ahead but some of the bunch of the countries in central Asia have still low human development where countries like India despite its own human development challenges can come in. Not to mention China has already been investing in their neighbourhood but may not want to irk Russia which considers it their exclusive backyard.

The idea of energy corridor in Asia and most importantly the dynamics of energy trade is where the region of central Asia has a prime importance. If we look at the countries of central Asia which also includes countries mostly ending with "stan" such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan out of which Kazakh is also a big country there is a lot more to play for this region. Their

trading partners can be more of Asian countries. China already has invested a lot in these countries not to mention that India too looks at the region in terms of the energy and the security policy pre covid19 pandemic. However, post this pandemic the equation of all the countries would have changed and Asian countries especially who can play a more bridging role and take forward the "Asian Energy Sphere" (Ramadhan, 2018). The whole idea of the Asian energy producing countries from the west such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar & Iran to central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and even up to South and Southeast Asia may seem far-fetched but it is possible. In fact, much like the cargo trains which operate between Asia and Europe by China and India could also be a reality in the form of energy pipelines. The investment has happened in some of the areas but there is a lot more which could be expected. Iran with its Chabahar port has emerged as a new energy and trade route overcoming the sanctions of the west pragmatically.

The whole region of central Asia once it starts building infrastructure albeit not just projects dreamt of by China in the form of "One Belt, One Road" initiative but similar on those lines and more inclusive as well. Central Asia could become the platform from where Asia can dream of securing energy, infrastructure development and most importantly developing prosperity for the lives of the people. Some countries have been able to do or are in the process while there are others which seems to be still grasping their own identity as a country and there could be more time needed for them to find that direction (Narins & Agnew, 2020). However, one thing which is important is to note that infrastructure coupled with energy trading and a balanced geo-political view can bring in prosperity in the region ((Eleanor Albert, 2019). Asia which has a huge economic development road ahead despite doing well in the last 40 years or so in terms of the economic growth and reducing poverty needs to take it a notch further. This is where the role of central Asia would come in. Europe is dependent on Russia for energy but also trades with other central Asian countries. However, when it comes to Asia the central Asian countries have a lot of markets to look at and also potential for cooperation as mentioned earlier to build this region as the place where all parts of the Asia can connect. The connect that can happen over the shared vision of economic prosperity for continental development.

If we move around from Central Asia while continuing on the context of economic development and prosperity, then one would have to look towards the region of East Asia. In terms of per capita income as well as development even if it still marginally behind the per capita income of western Europe, USA, Canada, Australia however there is no iota of doubt that this part of Asia has truly leapfrogged the Asian dream. The part of Asia which industrialized in the very early stages aside from Europe and USA had been at the pinnacle of the Asian success through East Asian miracle ((Birdsall, Nancy M. Campos et al. 1993). Once one looks at the region of East Asia one can find the smaller countries like European continent but heavily industrialized or business hubs such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau etc. The eastern part of Asia has the only Asian country that has been able to ward off western powers and in fact as an imperial power itself in the form of Japan. The country which has been devastated during World War 2 in the infamous incident of nuclear catastrophe but came up as one of the major manufacturing hubs in Asia. Today Japan is struggling with covid19 pandemic and has the added anxiety of whether the Tokyo Olympics will take place or not. Already the Olympics has been postponed to next year and the new Abenomics of rejuvenated Japan going back to manufacturing as well as service economy bolstering has challenges facing ahead.

Now the most important question is whether East Asia can lead Asia and the world into the next phase. That is where the role of "China" steps in. From the historic times to the modern days except for the colonial subduing this country has always been a major and important part of the world. Boasting of an ancient civilization and a rich cultural sphere China has had a long past of innovation history and today in the modern times China has been able to take on the mantle of "Manufacturer"

of the world (Minghao, 2016). Quantum leaping time frame and moving past industrialized western European countries today China is that country of the world that has been able to take forward Asia apart itself with its grand scale of business and trade and shifting the power balance from the west right to the "Pivot of Asia" (Premesha Saha, 2020). There have been issues raised on China be it geo-political, human rights violation or importantly their internal political mechanism however there is no doubt that China today is the centre of the Asian politics and also the only power emerging to challenge the western military might as well. However, the question which is more important that has the rise of China been peaceful where the other Asian countries can also come up to support China. The answer although is very generalized but it may still be seen as the answer from a lot of Asian quarters hampering "Asian Pax Lens" (Lu et al.2018).

East Asian miracle has been that miracle that has pushed countries like South Korea, Japan and China off late from the ranks of poverty into some of the most important economic powerhouses of the world today. This is where the role of east Asia becomes very important for the current times amidst Covid-19 pandemic and post pandemic to lead Asia. Already South Korea has emerged as a successful case study. Similarly, China although being criticized for its initial secrecy in letting the world know of virus and its allowance for the virus to spread still has managed to hold the virus infections at bay as per their records. Although at the same time China has been embroiled in diplomatic and geo-political tensions near and far it still has a role that is far from over. China has tried to safeguard their reputation by giving out masks and other equipment needed for covid19 fighting however there has been certain damaged done to the reputation of China as a nation brand. There is a very important context here for China rather than being assertive in their so called "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy (CNN.com). A diplomacy backed by aggression, but China may have an opportunity which is losing on the time to bring the Asian countries closer. China has lost the initiative that was once seen from them and now the continent is looking to move away from their influence (Liang 2020). This may stay for a long time but the work for China begins right now.

The cooperation of the Asian countries with China can only begin with genuine cooperation. Here the word "genuine" may seem utopian or non-realistic in the world of international relations. However, this is possible if China can build the confidence of the Asian countries and go soft on their territorial aspirations. On the other hand, Japan, South Korea have been trying to resolve their own differences although South Korea also needs to keep alert over its northern neighbour in the form of Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). The incidents of unrest in Hong Kong and the recent passing of Chinese law over Hong Kong subduing their autonomous status. The overtures of China towards Taiwan have also been on the same lines. These irritants which China has been at the centre of is also driving the Asian politics. A major policy shift for Asia can come up only when the other Asian countries can come together as an alternative to Chinese assertion else if China changes their way as mentioned in the above paragraph. The second alternative is definitely a far-fetched one and more on the utopian lines considering Chinese version of "Real Politik" (Johnston, 2019). However, going back to the first narrative it is possible if the idea of the Asian unity is considered in the world of post pandemic where investment, trade and economics would need to be looked at more than profits. The cooperative axis of east Asian neighbourhood can have a spill over on the entire continent.

The parts of Asia which are yet to be discussed are Southeast and South Asia. If we look at this region the geo-politics of Asia and world are centred around these two important regions in the current times. If one starts to look at Southeast Asia it is that region which has been able to form their sub-regional grouping in the form of ASEAN that has worked well. The region can be divided into three category of countries some of which are highly developed, developing and least developed. The most developed would-be Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei. Whereas Indonesia, Vietnam and

Thailand, Philippines are developing and have already an important footprint in Asia and growing global economy too. Last but not the least are Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are the least developed ones. Now this important region of Asia can be dubbed as the new “economic bubble of Asia”. Places like Singapore and even Malaysia have already established themselves as service and banking central points. They have their own internal ethnic divisions which is more pronounced in Malaysia which has been going through political upheavals just before the pandemic struck and still going on. Brunei on the other hand is an oil rich nation and have a very Islamic oriented society. Brunei in Southeast Asia is like a reflection of the west Asian countries. Therefore, these rich economies of Southeast Asia have an important role in terms of investment and trade in Asian continent (Huang, 2016).

On the other hand, if we look at the developing nations of Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Philippines all of them have not only an economic imperative but also a security responsibility. Unfortunately, it is related to an Asian country in the form of China. The region of South China sea which has China again as a common factor related to the control over south China and its supposed resources ((Rahul Mishra, 2020). The four countries mentioned above have a very important context in terms of the politics of geo-security where US, India, Japan, South Korea and even Australian equation comes in. The economic growth of Vietnam has definitely been the new talk of Asia and similarly Philippines despite its poverty, irascible president and societal problems not to mention impending ISIS threat has still been trying to grow although there is much work to do. Then comes Thailand which has been investing in infrastructure projects in Asian countries despite having its own economic challenges and political upheavals. Thailand has been an important trade related country and holds an important position in terms of trade transit of Asia. This is where the importance of Thailand is and has been apart from its tourism-based economy. Last but not the least is Indonesia which has been touted as the next big economy of Asia apart from India. It has suffered from colonial problems including poverty and economic issues but Indonesia off late is starting to emerge as an important and cooperative player in Asia over the times.

Then comes next in line the least developed countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar which are important. They have an important role of their own as not only they have a role of development for themselves and in turn for the continent but also, they have an important security dimension related to the economic aspects too. China has been harnessing these countries for infrastructure development which on paper may seem fine but there is also the tendency of intervening in the internal affairs as reports emerge from Myanmar in recent times (Hillman, 2018). The government of Myanmar has complained that China is inciting terror groups in Myanmar. In the country that is at crossroads of Southeast and South Asia, India too has also been keenly investing and also has maintained a steady relation. In fact, India had been able to conduct surgical strikes against insurgents of North-eastern India in collusion with government of Myanmar. That shows India knows that Myanmar is an important country nevertheless less developed but has immense potential in holding some of the important resources in the form of minerals as well from its strategic location from a security point of view. This is one country which India considers as a part of the extended neighbourhood in the eastern part although China has been investing heavily in Myanmar and that has an important security perspective in the form for India. China has been also trying to do “Mask Diplomacy” with Myanmar during the Covid-19 crisis (Alicia Chen, Vanessa Molter 2020).

The question however is how Myanmar government has been evolving and is going to in the near future. Myanmar is one of the ethnically divided countries in Asia and not to mention the Rohingya crisis which had plunged Myanmar into global news. This crisis also meant a dent for “Aung Sa Suu Kyi” who had been seen as the defender of democracy in Myanmar. However, her role in dealing with the Rohingya crisis had not been viewed well by the west. She was stripped of not only many western recognitions for her fight for peace and democracy, but this also meant that there was a

change in the political dynamics of Myanmar which had now taken a hardliner Buddhist approach. A religion-based nation to unite the divide country of ethnicities and religion for a long period of time. Myanmar's importance will remain as a strategic threshold country and will keep growing. Last but not the least comes Cambodia and Laos which have been trying to regain the economic impetus and to be on the growth engine of Asian story however it is still dependent on primarily Chinese investments (Chee Meng Tan, 2015). Not only that its political structure of communism has also been leveraged by Chinese for a long time. It is important to utilize the current pandemic as a watershed moment and the other countries like India, Japan, South Korea to invest in these countries for realizing the dream of fulfilling "Lens of Asian Pax" which only will enable realizing the Asian bloom.

Now comes the region of South Asia at the centre of which lies a very complex neighbourhood and a power struggle. A struggle for power which is like a triangular love story. A love for the quest and control of one of the most underdeveloped regions of Asia but the one which holds the most amount of potential and growth not only in the current times but also in the foreseeable future. The quest for power between the age old geo-political rivals India and Pakistan and not to mention to make things spicy in this triangular power quest the equation of China (Guo et al 2019). An idea for the prosperous and growing Asia united in its quest is the most challenged in this region. The region has the most important context for India. In the current context of the challenges of covid19 pandemic still going on India had a clash with China at the Galwan valley in a long list of conflicts between them. The conflict between China and India had been overshadowed by India and Pakistan for a time of at least 7 decades. However, the current context of the political game in Asia has a lot of importance on the context of the evolving relationship. Relationship between China and India the two age old civilizations turned into modern nation state has picked on a new age rivalry (Hillman, 2018). The relation between these two age old civilizations from cultural contacts and scholarly visits has turned a new leaf as of today's times.

India and China are at the heart of not only the politics in South Asia but also in the global sphere (Ayush Jain, 2020). Though in terms of the amount China has spent more money in terms of their investment or supposed assistance to the countries not only in Asia but also Africa as well as Latin America. However, coming back to Asia there is a very strange and complicated rivalry that has been brewing under the India-Pakistan heat or for China with its own internal political problems as well as its neighbours and not to forget also a geo-political rivalry with Japan and South Korea as well as ASEAN countries who are egged on by USA in all probability. The idea of the South Asian politics is generally limited to India-Pakistan and occasional reference to Srilanka, Bangladesh and off late Nepal and Bhutan. However how all of this region becomes significant and never been talked about that much. The reason is because the region had been looked on as just an extension of India in the form of Indian subcontinent with no offense meant to all the other rightfully proud sovereign neighbouring countries of India. Speaking of viewing the region unfortunately this myopic vision of not only the west but also the region of Asia as well. South Asia in many parameters especially on health, education as well as quality of life can be compared to Sub-Saharan Africa with utmost consideration for both the regions as well as the challenges facing them.

The region of South Asia and the role of India has now metamorphized from just an aid provider into a leader and the one who can guide the entire region. India has been slowly and steadily taking on that role. A role which is important for not only the region of South Asia but also for the entire continent. India has already taken on the role of that in terms of launching the South Asia climate satellite, infrastructure build-up and opening new trade routes as well as health, science and technology cooperation. However, amidst all this India has been very careful and subtle to side-track Pakistan. This is precisely the reason why India has opened up new platforms on either side of

the subcontinent such as BIMSTEC, Chabahar port project as well as joined Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This has all been a part of India's changing role in Asia. However, it must be also kept in mind that there is a China-Pakistan angle to it. The angle which also involve other players in Asia much beyond the subcontinent such as Iran, West as well as Central Asia. A battle for power and influence has been there in the region of South Asia even before the pandemic. Now post Covid-19 scenario as the western world sinks and the power fulcrum shifting towards Asia with USA pivot to Asia program as well as the geo-political tensions between USA and China coming up there is a new role for South Asia right now.

A region which has a lot of history and some of the world's oldest civilization and their influence etched in the minds of human civilizations have now regained their prominence. Prominence in the form of the clash, collaboration and mostly a mixture of both in the form of India-China relations ((Antara Ghoshal Singh, 2020). However, one must not forget that in the region of South Asia surrounded by West, Central, East and Southeast Asia the region has a very important place of its own. Truly if the Asian century must come full circle this region of South Asia and especially India and its neighbours have a role to play. During the pandemic there has been increased pharmaceutical export from India apart from the medicine diplomacy not to mention that China has been doing that too despite the allegations against them. Also, the growth of trade, energy corridor and the quality-of-life improvement are the most important factors that drives not only the domestic politics but also the international politics. A region which is critical to China's new silk road project apart from India's energy pipelines projects to counter China's so-called encircling of India through String of Pearl's investment in important infrastructure projects across India's neighbouring countries surely has enough reasons to look at South Asia which simply cannot be ignored further (G.S. Khurana, 2008). The time has come for the region of South Asia to move ahead, and no be encircled by petty politics of older big powers as new order in Asia emerges.

Moving ahead from the regional aspirations of the Asian subregions there is a greater role of Asia and Asia alone in this world of today. The continent which is the biggest inhabited landmass in the world has challenges and problems of its own. Some of the world's most complex historical problems lies in the continent of Asia (Fan, 2007). The geo-political rivalry between North and South Korean peninsula, the religious rivalry between Israel and Palestine and also Israel with other Arab states and Iran too not to forget the nuclear-powered scary enmity between India and Pakistan with a China angle and last but not the least a proxy war-based rivalry between the Islamic world of Shia Iran vs Sunni Saudi Arabia also including other players as well. The problems which are mentioned here are of magnificent proportions. The fallen countries of Iraq and Syria which had become a playground for power players such as Russia, USA, Western Europe and Iran and Saudi-Arabia needs to be looked at with very serious consideration. The west Asia is one of the most volatile regions in Asia that has a lot of stakes for the build-up of future prosperity and cooperation within Asia and also its impact on the greater world. Asia needs to come together and try to keep insulated from the other powers especially from the west to build and Asian centred world and to stop the leverage of these powers in Asia and it is what will drive Asian dream ahead (P. Duara 2001).

The idea of solving these problems especially in the Korean peninsula has moved beyond the powers which are beyond that region. The issue has lingered long enough and yet there has been no solution. Similarly, for Israel and Palestine the western backing of Israel as well as its newfound friends against the Arab world backed Palestine can have a solution through two state solution which has not happened. As for India and Pakistan several wars later and terrorism backed by Pakistan to trouble India the uneasiness lies between these two neighbours with its spill over on the entire Indian subcontinent or South Asia. As also mentioned, there is an angle of China. Amidst all of these the rivalry between Iran and Saudi-Arabia which spreads across the west Asia and North

African region through their proxy wars in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Libya and even Egypt apart from the other powers at play is important in the context of stabilising the region of Asia. Not to forget that there are other fracture lines in west Asia between Qatar and UAE in terms of their rivalry for being the fashionable opulence iconic country in the region. The problem between them is supposedly diplomatic with the allegation against Qatar of supporting *ISIS/Daesh* but there are other angles too. Like Saudi-Arabia who are themselves in the mix of things. Not to mention relations between Israel-Iran are murky and Jordan, Lebanon has their own creeping socio-economic problems apart from a risky neighbourhood in west Asia.

Conclusion

The idea of Asia being involved in most of the newly emerging major trade blocks such as APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) or the US sponsored Transpacific Partnership as well as China backed RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Program) shows that Asia is at the centre of the global trade. Not to forget that across the pacific from Asia lies two well established economies in the form of Australia and New Zealand. Australia is a big continent country and has lot of mineral resources and has an important role for Asian mainland continent in terms of trade. As for New Zealand it is much smaller but developed economy and has an important connection with Asian mainland countries in terms of the trade. The region of South China Sea is not the only place rich in mineral resources and one of the major trade routes of the world. The small island countries in the pacific are also mostly untapped and opens up new maritime based trade routes for Asia-Pacific. As for investment and the role of Asia in global trade China and India are two of the biggest investors in Africa. Also, the imprint of China and India following has been increasing to build free trade agreement not only with European after Japan and South Korea have already achieved that but also in the Latin American countries further from Asia right in the backyard of the still world's largest economy by GDP, USA. Therefore, Asia is already playing globally through trade.

The post-pandemic the world order has changed as we know it. The power structure, geo-political theatre all would be based on Asia (Du & Zhang, 2018). The rise of the science, technology, human capital all has been based on the Asian continent mainly. Just to put forward a fact that Asia is now at the epicentre of technology we can look at two examples. Pre pandemic the idea of quality semiconductors and that too in terms of the volume lay in Asian countries such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and China. Similarly, as the world and the human civilization approaches a new watershed moment amidst the talk of game changing technology 5G the one which has been pioneered in China. To overcome the Chinese threat advanced countries of the west including United Kingdom, France are looking towards Japan to counter China. Even in aspects of defence, automobile technology etc. the Asian countries are moving further ahead with not just countries such as Japan, South Korea, China etc but bolstered by newer ranks in form of India, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Thailand, UAE etc. Possibilities are endless for Asia the largest continent to be the greatest and the best as it was for millennia before the advent of the western traders and their imperialistic tendencies. As already mentioned in the article throughout that Asia has seen its rise and fall and rising again despite the huge challenges it faces but its fundamentals are strong, and rise is inevitable (Kersten, 2007).

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