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MARITIME SECURITY OF BANGLADESH: STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

ABUL KALAM*

Abstract

In terms of policy destiny, Bangladesh remains committed to a peaceful course, however, the strategic pathways require delicate, even calculated managing. Its maritime policy is largely geared towards meeting the developmental challenges it faces. The maritime security of the country is indivisible from the overall insecurities it confronts. It is, therefore, imperative for Bangladesh to strategize the policy, both internal and external. A credible security system, encompassing both land and maritime, can only be assured by democratic continuity and consensus. Deficits manifested in such areas must be overcome if Bangladesh is to play a credible regional maritime role and enhance its maritime clout regionally and internationally. The paper analyses maritime security concerns of Bangladesh and its evolving oceanic policies from a strategic vantage point. Towards such an end, it reviews the strategic analytical tradition from a maritime perspective and identifies the relevant approaches in this context. It then highlights a conceptual design encompassing applicable notions that look pertinent. The conceptual blueprint is then used for analysing the evolving pattern of the nation's maritime policies in terms of strategy and a secured developmental destiny. The nation's maritime insecurity concerns, both traditional and non-traditional, are reviewed; appraisals are also made of threat perceptions as well as perceptual interests, touching on its maritime clout. The findings of the paper are then summarised, with reflections on the emerging nature of the nation's maritime policies and the prospects that are offered.

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Introduction

Bangladesh gained accreditation as a maritime nation following successive international verdicts vis-à-vis Myanmar and India (2012/2014) in the contentious maritime claims by both the neighbours. The country's marine space now consists of 200 nautical miles of exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and a continental shelf extending up to 354 nautical miles, with sovereign rights on all living and mineral resources.¹ This constitutes a huge accomplishment. Until then, the country was spatially lodged in about 56,000 square miles of landscape for over 160 million people. For a nation-state in its current space, land, and aquatics, it is imperative for Bangladesh to be attentive towards conceptual barriers and bounds in light of emerging trends of maritime-strategic and security studies.

For Bangladesh, with its tumultuous past, it augurs well that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has led the nation towards amicably realising its due maritime rights. In doing so, she has fulfilled what was embarked upon and envisioned by her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, adorned as *Bangabandhu* ('Friend of Bengal'). She equally upholds the zeal required to pursue the nation's maritime objectives, going often around the country's coastal belt with a view to prompt all stakeholders towards securing the maritime gains. Since the verdicts, many of the nation's key stakeholders, including the Bangladesh Navy (BN), seem increasingly alive to the opportunities offered to and the challenges faced by the nation in consolidating the maritime gains.

However, the loftier dream of transforming the country into a 'trade-transit hub' and '*Sonar Bangla*' (Golden Bengal), as envisioned by the nation's founding father, cannot be attained without ensuring a sustainable maritime policy framework towards harnessing the marine resources for national development. Such a framework has to be backed up by strategic appraisals and a careful scrutiny by specialists in maritime fields. The country has to grasp the elements required to secure the vast sea now under its domain. A national awareness also

has to develop mirroring the nation's maritime destiny. Indeed, the policies have to evolve in line with the nation's strategic aspirations. The following questions arise in this context:

- What strategic interests does Bangladesh have in its newly acquired maritime space?
- How does the country conceptualise its strategic directions in terms of policy, strategy, and security for optimising its national maritime interests?
- What are the plausible threats that might constrain the nation's policy vision?
- What policy responses can be visualised to allay concerns, mitigate perceived threats, or identify elements of national interest?

This calls for unremitting maritime appraisals by concerned specialists and wider participation by all key stakeholders. The objective must be to advance a national maritime policy framework and chart a secure destiny. In this milieu, Bangladesh can ill-afford to lag behind. Being in a critically situated strategic maritime neighbourhood, it must appraise the multiple security concerns of diverse nature. Resource-wise, the aspects of exploitation and utilisation of everything in the newly acquired maritime territory also necessitate appraisals and warrant adoption of considered policy options towards the much cherished sustainable development.

Both Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal attracted a surge of analytical interest in recent years. Analysts have touched on a range of aspects, including projection of economic gains, geographic and strategic concerns,² geostrategic environment and significance,³ and geopolitical and geo-economic impacts.⁴ The emerging transnational and major powers' interests go beyond the Bay of Bengal and broadly encompass the entire Indo-Pacific zones and the

emerging sea lanes along both the oceans. The Bay of Bengal itself, located at the intersection of the expanding zones of strategic interest of China and India, is seen (like its Pacific 'twin', the South China Sea) as a key transit zone between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the main route for trade in energy to East Asia.⁵ Whilst all the foregoing aspects are linked to pertinent geo-maritime and strategic-security issues, as well as developmental aspirations and ecosystem concerns, the credence of maritime Bangladesh and its consequent needs of policy synchronisation become even sharper. However, lacunae exist in the continuity of analytic dimensions and in conceptual linkages.

Key to strategic appraisals of relevant maritime concerns is an assessment of those notions pertinent to identifying conceptual frontiers and revisiting the challenging issue areas. It will then be helpful for the country to envisage how to overcome the strategic and security challenges facing the state in the maritime field. The next section of the paper reviews the strategic maritime analytical tradition and identifies the relevant approaches. Section three underlines a conceptual blueprint encompassing relevant notions that are applicable in Bangladeshi context. Section four utilises the conceptual design for analysing the evolving pattern of the nation's maritime policies in terms of strategy and a secured developmental destiny. The conclusion sums up the findings and reflects on the emerging nature of the nation's maritime policies and the way forward.

Strategic maritime approaches: Analytical tradition

The challenges facing maritime-strategic perspectives are diverse. It is imperative, first, to reflect on 'maritime security'. The word 'maritime' now is a buzzword worldwide but it is a multifaceted field. The dimension of 'security' adjoins further complexities. Maritime studies represent an interdisciplinary field of academic pursuits. It takes in a new generation of scholarship from a wide range of disciplines with a variety

of interests—not bypassing the service professionals. It takes in diverse linkages from the military and naval defence, as well as economic development. It entails the resilience of seafaring and coastal populations as a starting point but envelops the destiny of all others in a nation whose interests, lives, and livelihoods are tied to its maritime destiny.⁶ The maritime challenges faced by Bangladesh are entwined, encompassing all sectors perceptible in their overall manifestations.⁷ Such sectors need to be understood in terms of both ‘security’ and ‘strategy’ for meaningful policy interpretation and action-planning.

In maritime affairs, as in strategic studies, conceptual ideas have evolved over millennia, but the maritime-related concepts merit focused attention. As an accredited maritime state, it is essential for Bangladesh to endow itself conceptually with a view to ensuring that the nation moves in the right direction towards optimising its maritime interests. Indeed, managing the ever-changing natures and interdisciplinary challenges of maritime sectors demand a complete understanding of the special characteristics of the nation’s current maritime space. The operations of ports, infrastructures, trade, and ships—both present and future—entail complexities. These include sea-transport/marine/shipping services within and beyond the uniquely crisscrossing coastal belt of the country. All these necessitate naval and coast guard maritime security operations. There is also the economic significance of business/trade requirements and the inherent security vulnerabilities of regional/global maritime trade. All this requires an adaptable understanding of concepts relevant to maritime-strategic and security phenomena, including defence, development, diplomacy, and similar fields.

Strategic studies originated in Asia. Sun Tzu (544–496 BC), the classical Chinese theorist, pioneered the field. He envisaged knowledge, strategic planning, judicious analysis, and wisdom as the keystones for a

mature policy. For attaining strategic objectives, he called for staying focused on policy ends.⁸ Chanakya/Kautilya, the legendary Indian theorist (350–283 BCE), articulated the *mandala* doctrine of interstate relations. His notional ‘ideal kingdom’ was the centre of a circular *mandala*, consisting of 12 levels of concentric circles. For the ‘ideal kings’, Kautilya had set the traditions and virtues, specifying how to transact with each other amidst the layer they belonged to in the *mandala* construct. Metaphors like ‘*enemy’s enemy*’/‘*neighbour’s neighbour*’ is ‘*friend*’ are images his name conveys. The strategic facets of the ‘ideal king’ like gift, bribery, illusion, and show of strength whilst dealing with the neighbours are also manifested in his writings.⁹

Modern strategic thinking owes its genesis to the realist Prussian theorist Carl Von Clausewitz (1780-1831). In his masterpiece *On War*, he emerged as an exponent of absolute war. He saw war as the “continuation of politics by other means.”¹⁰ His contemporary, Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779-1869) viewed war in its ensemble, *not* as “a science, but an art.”¹¹ Jomini’s works seeped into the maritime thoughts of the renowned exponent of sea power like the US naval specialist Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840 –1914).¹² His works over the years had an impact on the versatility and speedy global expansion of the US maritime power.

Amongst the British theorists, Julian Stafford Corbett (1854-1922) was the leading maritime exponent. Winston Churchill commended his works as ‘best accounts’.¹³ Analysing theory and conduct of naval war and methods of command and control, Corbett stressed both limitations and scale of naval power in the national strategy. He emphasised coordination between land and naval strategy and considered defensive maritime strategy not only possible but sometimes prudent even for the UK, a major maritime power. The concept of a ‘blue water navy’, now widely used, did not feature in his works, but controlling lines of

communications with presaged role of naval power was his strategic priority.¹⁴ B.H. Liddell Hart (1895–1970), another eminent British strategic thinker, did not specifically address maritime strategy as is associated with the ‘blue water navy’, but his military thinking, focused on ‘grand strategy’, has drawn the interest of maritime specialists in the reflective debate of the 1930s whether Britain should adopt a continental commitment or instead adopt a ‘blue water strategy’.¹⁵

Apart from the evolving maritime-strategic analytical framework, a more focused perspective of strategy, security, maritime security, perceptions of threats and interests, spheres of influence/interest also warrants elucidation.

Strategy

‘Strategy’ is a contested concept rooted in the Greek word ‘*strategia*’, meaning ‘generalship’.¹⁶ Clausewitz relates it to ‘war’. He sees strategy as “the art of the employment of battles as a means to gain the object of war.”¹⁷ Corbett pleaded for devising a *strategy* that would protect national interests. He focused on the perceived enemy and advocated manoeuvres for tactical advantage, with priorities placed on aspects of politico-economic and financial dimensions of waging war. Technological facets and material aspects of war also found weight in his strategy, so did the sustained efficiency in battle whilst preserving costly assets. He also differentiated between ‘major strategy’ and ‘minor strategy’: the former he saw as a branch of statesmanship dealing with the nation’s total resources, including all the disciplined services and diplomacy, seen as parts of one force; whereas the latter is more tactical in nature to him, which has for its province the plans of operations.¹⁸

Liddell Hart, a Clausewitzian, differed with his mentor’s equation of strategy. He defined strategy as “the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy.”¹⁹ However, strategy no longer presages solely military means. It is widely used in contemporary contexts of business, development, diplomacy, and socioeconomic analysis. To attain such ends, as a prelude to victory, he sought to evade

direct confrontation, yet disrupt the perceived enemy's psychological-physical balance stressing diplomacy, movement, flexibility, and surprise. He viewed all this as a tonic for business and political planning.²⁰ Strategy thus emerges as the relevant means by which policy is implemented. He also introduced the notion of 'grand strategy' or higher strategy—more akin to Corbett's 'major strategy'—viewing it as 'policy in execution'. The objective is to establish and maintain peace. The notion of 'strategic' in this context becomes pertinent, as it enables its use in framing various methods for employing cultural, informational, diplomatic, military, socioeconomic, and political means towards attaining the objectives.²¹

All such concepts constitute the framework of strategy and hence may be applicable when required to attain the objectives in view. The vocabularies of policy, grand/higher strategy, strategy, and tactics, thus, form part of a strategic continuum. Both strategy and tactics represent facets of the same coin; tactics constitute the lower part of the spectrum, though. Indeed, he even sees the object of war as "a better state of peace."²² His avowed emphasis on keeping peace as policy object and adjusting the means to the objects echoes Sun Tzu's insistence on policy ends. Thus, Liddell Hart's delineation of strategic domain sounds systemic for defence professionals, academia, and to all policymakers engaged in both security and governance. In decision-making, however, Corbett's view of 'major strategy' (i.e., grand/higher strategy that is reserved for statesmanship to ensure the security of national interest) and 'minor strategy' (a tactical area for security operations) should be kept in view.

Maritime security

The concept of 'security' gets entwined with 'strategy' in maritime affairs, as in other contexts of military defence or peacebuilding. The former refers to a condition, the latter conveys a process; both are dynamic multidimensional concepts. Geopolitical considerations have their direct/indirect ramifications on maritime security objectives and interests, which bring into focus the conventional/traditional concerns of state security affecting maritime affairs, inclusive of perceptual issues relevant to the identification of threats and interests. However, 'maritime security' needs further illumination because it is a familiar expression

mainly with the maritime community. It refers to the security of maritime-geographic space, i.e., sea/ocean, with features dissimilar when compared to land. The location of such threats, often identified as non-traditional security, has an impact on the way states and non-state actors' security is affected. It has come into usage following 9/11 and subsequent terrorist and counterterrorist operations at sea. These included the surge of piratical attacks in the Strait of Malacca (2001-2004) and then Horn of Africa (2007-2012). Since then, specialists from related disciplines have been addressing the related issues from geostrategic, military, legal, and several other dimensions. Maritime security interests result in a practice, projecting security beyond their external boundary into the global maritime domain.²³

However, there is no built-in architecture of security applicable in all cases. It can only be understood in the context in which it is used. In Bangladesh context, maritime security has been brought into view since the international verdicts. The milieu, thus, has emerged to project and protect the maritime interests of the country. It is for the specialists, however, to work out its appropriate relevance. Maritime security presently is often exhorted in a range of national policies concerning the maritime geography of every other nation. Such policies cut across the marine coasts, as well as territorial and open seas. All these serve as determinants of developmental aspirations and ecological concerns, resource and wealth creation, interstate and neighbourly affairs, and regional and international relations.

Several approaches are thus applicable in a matrix to assess maritime security in its relation to other relevant concepts. The webs of notions include brown, green, blue, and golden economy, marine safety, the projection of sea power, and business/trade buoyancy.²⁴ Second, the conceptualization of a security framework enables an insight into the developing nature of maritime threats or how these

can be perceived. There may also be follow-up contentious claims entailing disparate interests and divergent ideas, which need unfolding. Finally, there is the security practice theory that enables the analyst to identify what political players do when they make endeavours to enhance their respective maritime security.²⁵ All these constitute elements of a coherent framework that may enable the mapping of maritime security and charting the strategic course for effective policy action.

Strategy and security, therefore, get entwined: the former draws in the policy process. It deconstructs as part of a holistic process the insecurities or threats at all operational levels of armed/defence services, with whatever political, military, economic, and cultural ramifications. Strategies, after all, are the modes or means through which security objectives are achieved. Thus, security emerges as the end, whereas strategies provide the means. Approaches from security studies can illuminate the meaning of maritime security for players of different mindsets.

Strategies of mapping the meaning of maritime security are introduced, which, in Bangladesh context, seem urgent. Strategies are the modes or means through which the nation's security objectives would have to be achieved. Seen thus, security is the end or the condition, and strategies provide the means. Security arguably sets the form, but it may be combined with a strategy to set the contours of national security strategy of a country like Bangladesh. The maritime strategy has its direct bearing upon both national security and national strategy. The maritime/naval strategy consists of the set of principles that govern a maritime war. National strategy is conceptually a

sum-total of national interest encompassing the political, military, diplomatic, economic, commercial, cultural, regional, and international facets of the nation's strivings in regional and international relations.²⁶

Security, whether military or developmental, works at all different levels: national, bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and international. There may be differences between theory and practice, as well as between cooperative or positive and negative security. There are various concerns, however, from developmental to ecological/environmental to business/trade to organisational to human security, and so on. The key objectives in every case must be to overcome the multiple challenges of insecurity and advocate effective policy measures or programmes of action aimed at achieving the nation's objective vision.

Thus, managing the ever-changing nature and interdisciplinary challenges of the maritime sector demands a complete understanding of the special characteristics of the nation's current land and maritime space. Conceptually, the concerns and questions relevant in this context include issues related to multi-dimensional aspects of peace, security, and strategy, national security and national maritime strategy, ecological and ecosystemic security, economic and developmental security, and national security. Such policies cut across the marine coasts and the open sea, perceived as a determinant of developmental aspirations and ecological concerns, resource and wealth creation, interstate and neighbourhood relations, as well as regional and international relations.

Threat perceptions

There are close interconnections between concepts of security and strategy on the one hand and threat perceptions on the other. Threat perception has a vital role in theories of diplomacy and functioning of interstate relations. Thucydides, the classical Greek scholar, required threat appraisal prior to policy action to balance against a power with threat potentials.²⁷

The terms, 'threat' and 'perception' merit exposition. Threat perceptions are referred to in deterrence and balance of power contexts.²⁸ Conceptually, there is also 'perception' and 'misperception' of threats.²⁹ Threats do not explicitly speak for themselves, as a threat is mediated by the perception of the target, with the variance between what is perceived as threatening and what the evidence of intentions and military-strategic capabilities mean. Perception is the process of comprehending by means of the senses and recognising and interpreting what is processed.³⁰

Threat perceptions are likely to be complicated by sets of variables, including 'status dilemmas' of the 'security seekers', changing the balance of power and the attendant difficulty the sender faces in making commitments credible to the perceiver, institutional interests, political culture, and violation of norms, etc.³¹ Signalling and threat perception also become more difficult when motives are difficult to read because of the workings of the confronting security dilemma and the strategic decisions/actions that might be appropriate or required.³² Being situated in a sensitive maritime neighbourhood, where the major global power players are set to play off each other in a strategic gambit, Bangladesh

needs to be watchful of every move of the contending strategic players.

However, threat perceptions need not be confined to state or similar type of corollaries. Bangladesh has multifaceted ecosystemic threat potentials. It needs to be alert about threats emanating from extensive hazards of nature: climate change, natural hazards, and seismic-quakes are increasingly called 'security' problems, as these impact upon the role of the state in development and peacebuilding. These often undermine the capacity of states to provide opportunities and services required for sustaining people's livelihoods. Security concerns also arise out of the vulnerability of local places/social groups to such occurrences in terms of their livelihoods and the possibility of violent conflicts among them.³³

Perception of interests

Along with threat perceptions, Bangladesh, like all other countries, should also take into cognizance the perception of interest: the essence of national decision-making in the areas of strategy and security, or alternately, their ramifications on diplomacy and foreign policy prerequisites pre-emption of any kind of euphoria. Interests can be vital or non-vital, though vital interests have their major impacts on strategic formulations in maritime affairs, as in diplomacy/foreign policy. In such contexts, there are 'no eternal allies' and 'no perpetual enemies'. Only "the interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests" ought to be the shibboleth or guideposts for the policymakers to follow with moderation and prudence.³⁴ This spirit represents what Morgenthau viewed as power or

political realism that governs socio-psychological relations between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised. Politics appear more of an art than a science; mastery required in the realm is not just the reasoning of an engineer but also the wisdom and the moral potency of a statesman.³⁵ Again, the interests perceived ought to be relevant and identifiable in terms of geo-maritime, geopolitical, geoeconomic, geopolinomic, or ecosystemic concerns of the country itself, not governed by those of others.³⁶

Succinctly, previews of the strategic imperatives of maritime security of a country like Bangladesh suggest that those are of interweaving nature, as specified underneath:

- Since maritime security is inextricably linked to the overall insecurity concerns of the state in terms of perception of threats and interests, so are the processes required in maritime strategy; and
- Since sustainable maritime development prerequisites an integrative approach of strategizing the policy agenda, so are the processes required in attaining the objective of peace and concurrent drives toward development and socioeconomic harmonising.

The following could be identified as action points for pursuing maritime strategy and peace/developmental objectives:

- Locate and trounce the perceived security threats or risks in relation to the state;
- Secure the nation from the emerging threats to the perceived interests;
- Identify strategic/tactical steps needed to secure those interests;
- Keep in view the shared threat perception whilst pursuing interests;
- Spot and prioritise the interests in terms of up-and-coming threat perceptions, whether geo-maritime, geopolinomic or ecosystemic concerns;

- Circumvent euphoria, adversary image/perception and/or personal dimensions whilst pursuing national maritime interests;
- Be vigilant about achieving the objectives that may be at risk; and finally,
- Focus on the levels of policy and stick to the strategic contours chosen, coupling with fine-tuning of the tactical preferences.

Strategic maritime security concepts:

A schematic model

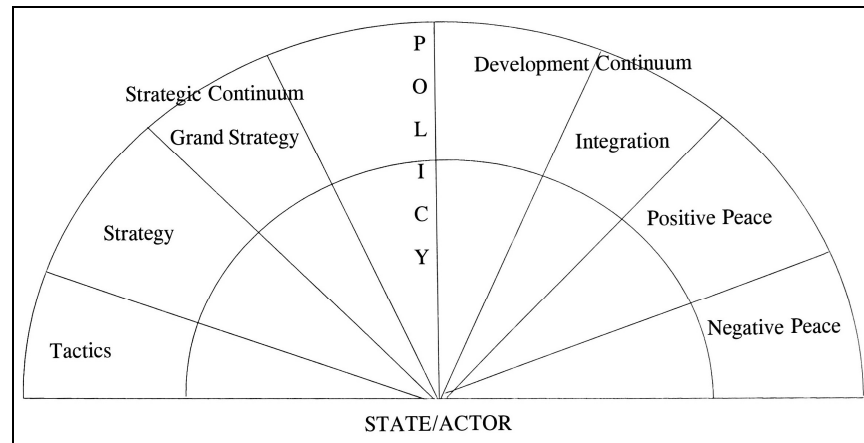
In the backdrop of the preceding strategic appraisals and analytical exposition of those concepts that are imperative, it is pertinent to chart a framework for analysing the emerging pattern of policies in the context of the strategic maritime situation facing Bangladesh. The objective is to underline those key concepts that are relevant to maritime policy formulation, governance, and effective decision-making at all levels in Bangladesh.

International maritime politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. National maritime policies of a country like Bangladesh have to evolve keeping in view the conceptual parameters, as appraised. Being in the unique context of its present maritime situation, Bangladesh does need an insightful conceptual framework for maritime policy planning and concrete actions to secure and enhance its maritime interests. But for all that, it has to keep in view the cross-functional nature of strategic prerogatives, institutive skills, and actions of wide-ranging nature required on the part of policymakers at all relevant levels of maritime decision-making. Similarly, concrete follow-up actions must be tagged all along at the levels of the marines and navigators, technocrats and engineering community, and businesses and traders concerned.

Chart 1 below identifies the state/actor levels of aspirations horizontally—from right to left, whereas policy levels are represented perpendicularly—top-down and vice versa. The half-globular twin direction of policy continuums, viz., *strategic continuum* and *development*

continuum are oriented towards shaping state's policy; such continuums may emerge correspondingly via strategic tracks (tactics, strategy, and grand/higher strategy), whereas the *development continuum*, may shape itself via peace routes (negative peace, positive peace, and integration) eventuating a momentum towards sustainable development. The idea inherent is to empower the state to choose the direction and outlook of policies at an appropriate level of options that may be required for implementation. The model thus contemplates a two-track policy dance of the state, but it ties together the notional combines and tags a mix of strategic thinking focused on levels of strategies, named *strategic continuum* (on the left) and then labels of state insecurities in a *development continuum* (on the right).³⁷

Chart 1: Schematic model of strategic analysis: Development continuum and strategic continuum³⁸



The foregoing two alternative, albeit interrelated, frames of continuums seem relevant for analysing the strategic situation in Bangladesh: the *development continuum* represents a peace paradigm that is applicable in Bangladesh context of its aspirations towards national development; whilst the *strategic continuum* represents a paradigm oriented towards managing/overcoming the challenges/situations of conflict. To sum-up, the model thus envisages a concurrent dual process—applicable towards strategizing policy ends of Bangladesh:

- A *strategic continuum* to beat the looming challenges through tactics and strategy—geared to attain the grand/higher strategy—moving towards reaching the pinnacle of state policy;
- A *development continuum*—moving from conflict to positive peace through negative peace towards integration, catered to reach the peak of the nation's developmental vision.

The framework largely borrows from Liddell Hart and Corbett, whose holistic thoughts concerning strategic processes and peacebuilding seem more akin to and are apt towards a step-by-step approach for attaining the objective ends of the policy of Bangladesh. It

also keeps in view the wiser strategic angles laid down by Sun Tzu and others, whereas Mahan made it relatable to the maritime affairs. The model combines strategy with development. Both are viewed as integrative continuums of state's policy pursuits: strategy without a peace and developmental objective is likely to be nihilist, whilst there can be no peaceable outcome without a malleable strategy. A framework such as this takes into cognisance the challenging courses lying ahead for a maritime nation such as Bangladesh. In both continuums, the objective is to reach the eventual policy end.

The framework, thus drawn, should help identify the nation's maritime destiny and steer it in choosing from the strategic options of its decisions at different maritime levels towards policy formulation/coordination and action-planning. Concurrently, it may also help select the levels of investigative analysis, whilst providing guidelines as inputs for research and policy advice.

Strategic maritime policies of Bangladesh:

Direction and outlook

The strategic direction and outlook of Bangladesh's maritime space necessitate a considered preview of its strategic situation, inclusive of challenging realities at both national and regional/global levels. Naturally, the relevant strategic formulations have to consider policies encompassing geopolitics, geo-economics, or geopolinomics/geo-maritime contexts. Such blends of consideration are meant to enlighten all concerned about the maritime security objectives and strategic actions required. These include requirements for freedom of the seas and good governance at sea and attend to developed maritime geopolitical visions, aimed at securing adjacent and distant maritime spaces that will impact positively on the nation's maritime security. Furthermore, contributing to global maritime governance may well 'hide' more 'realist' policy agendas in the form of a justification for power and forces

projection beyond one's legal zone of competencies.³⁹ What cannot be hidden behaviourally by maritime states is the directions of policy in terms of either development continuum (negative peace, positive peace, integration) and/or strategic continuum (tactics, strategy, higher/grand strategy).

Maritime security intrinsically is a mix of strategic/security concerns, as it intends to project power both within and beyond the nation's frontiers, around the regional/global maritime domain. Quite often, these are identified as traditional security, i.e., those connected to military/naval strength and protection from external threats like coercive behaviour, aggressive incursions, attacks, and wars, etc., with a focus of security on the state. There are then non-traditional insecurity concerns such as ecology, environment, and human security where the focus shifts from the state to the effects on individuals, human and natural, or ecosystemic surroundings. Such non-conventional concerns of security recognise other aspects of insecurity, which are non-military in nature, socioeconomic, ecological and transnational in scope.

The schematic framework, shown above, manifests Bangladesh's need to be attentive to strategic/security concerns, both traditional and non-traditional, whilst being focused on enhancing its maritime interests in the newly acquired aquatic space. Over the last 45 years, Bangladesh did make strides in various fields of national development. The maritime gains, however, are more recent and require both conceptual planning and concrete policy actions in development, diplomatic, and strategic frame. For a country that has earned its independence through a struggle and underwent a tortuous course of history since its birth, it is not

easy to develop courses of development and strategic continuums that would be fitting and easily harmonise all the policy aspirations in both traditional and non-traditional areas of concern, given the sensitivities around its neighbourhood. Yet, some appraisals of the strategic trends are discernible.

Policy direction

In the aftermath of its liberation, war-wrecked Bangladesh sought to dedicate itself to the task of rebuilding and chose a *development continuum*. It presaged embracing a *peace paradigm* that was framed and left behind by the nation's founding father ('friendship with all, malice towards none'). He himself practised the paradigm for ensuring the nation's sustained development, even though he had infinitely suffered during Pakistani period and the Bengalis went through a brutal process of the Liberation War. His strategic motto carried no semblance with either Clausewitzian or Kautilyan idioms; rather his chosen strategic policy route was to guarantee the nation a secured future by building a *Sonar Bangla* that could only be grasped by clinching a development continuum. Such an idealised policy dimension is more akin to Sun Tzu.⁴⁰ The processes towards such a policy destiny required an absence of conflict and violence and passing through phases of positive peace and integration before reaching the ultimate policy destiny. However, he also saw the looming processes of conflict and violence that gripped the nation since the days of the Liberation War, which needed to be trounced, moving through into a state of *negative peace* (i.e., absence of conflict) and then ultimately reaching the phases of positive peace on to integration through sustained development. All this was to enable the country to reach the state of positive peace, leading finally to integration and sustainable development.

The entire pedestal of policy aspiration was laid in the overall maritime contexts. The nation's maritime aspirations were concretised in the vital legislative piece 'Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act, 1974' and initiated a process of maritime dialogue with the contending neighbours. For a land-scarce country, such an envisioning was of multidimensional import. Conceivably, it took into account the country's population density, which might plausibly be alleviated by a planned

utilisation of possible gain in aquatic marine space, enabling an effective exploitation of maritime resources and/or building a viable oceanic economy.

For all this to materialise, the country needs to take proper policy planning towards the much-envisioned dream of '*Sonar Bangla*'; this forms the pinnacle of its policy aspiration. The driving process of development towards the end, as invoked by the country's founding father, is to transform Bangladesh into a 'trade-transit hub' or 'Switzerland of the East'. The strategic process was predicated upon 'connectivity', enabling Bangladesh to build bridges across the neighbourhood and the Muslim world and getting closer to the pinnacle of its development continuum.

Subsequent regimes, though critical of the pattern of politics set by the nation's founding father, did adhere to his developmental and peaceful policy motto. However, Sheikh Hasina, after her assumption of office, fully embraced her father's policy legacy, especially focused on maritime concerns that brought immense gains to the nation. The newly acquired maritime possessions have indeed, for the first time, significantly bestowed the country with wider openings to the world beyond. Bangladesh, with its maritime possessions, remains firmly wedded to peaceful development. It has taken a resolute position against conflict in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. It carries a legacy of resolving maritime concerns with the neighbours peacefully. Therefore, it can credibly call upon other countries to follow the "path of cooperation and collaboration, not competition and conflict" to tap into the full potentials of the region.⁴¹

However, keeping in view any possible situational adversity in an unpredictable world order, the nation must also be vigilant ('the price of liberty') and remain prepared for an alternative option of a 'strategic continuum' indicative of the pathways that may have to be substituted to surmount any adverse situation. Whilst Bangladesh remains wedded to a

vision of peaceful development in formulating its strategic policy, it cannot but be alert about the adversities, including militancy and terrorism. Hence, it has opted for means to beat such vices.⁴² The strategic framework also has to keep in view the policy objectives, i.e., grand/higher strategy, strategy, and tactics Bangladesh puts in perceptual terms of threats and spheres of interests whichever notions seem relevant.

Direction of grand strategy

Bangladesh, a Bay of Bengal coastal country, is directly associated with the sea and its resources. It could not harness its resources earlier due to non-delimitation of the maritime boundary with the neighbouring countries. All that changed after the successive favourable verdicts that enabled Bangladesh to assert its sovereign rights over the living and non-living resources of the Bay of Bengal exclusively, and also to lay claim to sovereign rights on all living and mineral resources of the Continental Shelf extending up to 354 nm. For making such rights effectual, the country has adopted the key concept of 'blue economy' as a grand strategy, since it believes that as a coastal country this "could usher in a new horizon" for its economic advancement through utilisation of the sea and marine resources and could significantly contribute to the country's socioeconomic development. The rationale for such a conceptual embrace include the following elements:

- A historical awareness that the countries that utilised the sea and its resources became economically more prosperous than others;
- The seaborne nature of the fast-growing Bangladesh economy, which is currently export/trade-led and further streamlining towards achieving the nation's growth vision;

- A concern that the fish and other living and non-living resources in its maritime boundary/under the seabed and water column, which could contribute greatly to its economy, may remain unexplored or lost to others;
- Ensure protection of the ecological balance, including that of the Sunderbans and of marine environment and biodiversity of the Bay of Bengal, and
- Energise a sustainable course of development through utilisation of the existing natural and mineral resources in the Bay of Bengal and its adjoining areas.⁴³

The BN's strength has been geared up as a potent force, as epitomised in its 'Forces Goal 2030'. The maritime-strategic outlook took into account, as the prime minister stated, the country's geo-strategic location and protection of its maritime space and resources, given its land-resource limitations.⁴⁴ Being in a sensitive neighbourhood, Bangladesh has also sought to co-opt support from major maritime powers, including the neighbouring giants, India and China.

Strategic maritime security: Traditional concerns

With the international award of a large chunk of the Bay of Bengal, it has emerged as Bangladesh's 'third neighbour'.⁴⁵ It is the world's largest bay; yet it is just a bay, *upa-shagar*, as the Bengalis call it, the soft underbelly that is bound up with the aquatic flow beyond the Indian Ocean (*Sagar*), world's third-largest ocean.⁴⁶ Again, this huge stream adjoins the world's largest Ocean, the Pacific, making up the entire marine chain, called Indo-Pacific Ocean.

Seen from the traditional security-strategic context, the Bay of Bengal—the northern extension of the Indian Ocean—is the most significant spatial phenomenon in the political and economic sense. Since its significance is packed with a geopolitical-strategic frame in the

current context of regional-global rivalries, it could emerge as an area of very exceptional concern. The key geophysical reality is that the Bay of Bengal has been of major anxiety not only for Bangladesh but also for both India and Myanmar. Due to security-strategic reasons, both India and Myanmar are equally cautious about the destiny of the Bay of Bengal under a range of circumstances.⁴⁷ Bangladesh itself has proved to be alert about enhancing both the capacity and manpower of the nation's maritime forces, coast guard, and BN. Efforts have been underway to enrich these forces with bases, training facilities, equipment, and supportive ships to overcome the challenges of multiple insecurity concerns of the nation.⁴⁸

The Bay of Bengal has its wider strategic significance due to its central location in the region stretching from the Middle East to the South China and the Philippine Seas. That is equally true about its aviation's strategic aerial position. It lies at the dead centre of two huge economic blocs, the SAARC and ASEAN. It is accessible to China's southern landlocked region in the north and major sea ports of Bangladesh and India, the latter also having a major presence in the outlying Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The US, as the leading global actor, sees itself as a major stakeholder in the Asia-Pacific. It has held several major exercises with various Asian countries, including Bangladesh and India. It has also drawn many of its international allies in 'Malabar 2007', the largest ever wargame held in the Bay of Bengal. China has also sought to project its sphere of influence into the region through port visits and tie-ups with Bangladesh and Myanmar. There is thus little left in the presumed validity of the conceptual division between the Bay of Bengal and other Asian maritime regions. However, India's emergence as a major powerhouse may draw the Bay of Bengal to newer mental mapping as a coherent strategic region, where India has its image as a vital stakeholder.⁴⁹

A shift in global strategic power rivalry away from Europe to Asia-Pacific, a steady emergence of China as a global politico-economic player, and an increasing trading/maritime activity focused on the Indo-Pacific region added to the strategic sensitivity of the entire region. South Asian sub-region forms part of all this. Added convolution to

the above is the competitive road and infrastructure planning such as the Maritime Silk Road by China, India's proclaimed cotton route, together with the developing hydrocarbon industry in the Bay of Bengal. This has led to economic, ecological/environmental, and politico-security implications for Bangladesh's position as a key South Asian maritime player. Bangladesh, now an accredited maritime nation, has a bulging population. As a trading state with its needs of shipping, transport, and navigation, Bangladesh cannot but be watchful about what goes around the Bay waters, across and beyond into the Indo-Pacific Oceans.

In this milieu, Bangladesh has been persevering to maintain harmonious ties with both the neighbouring power contenders, India and China. There is ample strategic rationale: both have a common association with bodies like Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). All countries in the groupings are likely beneficiaries in infrastructure projects such as highways and tunnel-building under the River Karnaphuly. China maintains a continuing interest in helping Bangladesh in its infrastructure projects for securing sea access for its own territories, India's landlocked areas, and for landlocked Bhutan and Nepal. It has also evinced an eagerness to help Bangladesh in building a floating oil terminal in the sea near Maheshkhali Island in the Bay of Bengal to unload imported fuel oil.⁵⁰ Such Chinese interest has raised India's strategic sensitivities due to its adversarial perception of China, a lingering Sino-Indian contention for primacy in Asia, and their bilateral contentious territorial claims across the Himalayan regions. India tends to view any kind of developing ties

between Bangladesh and China with some unease, apprehending that those would be to India's detriment and hamper its stakes in strategic planning as a leading global role player in the region. However, Bangladesh has been persistently committed to friendly relations with India based on mutuality, connectivity, and reciprocity.

The maritime verdicts accepted by all three countries with contentious maritime claims represent a 'win-win' product for all. It provides sufficient prospects for a cooperative destiny for all three neighbouring Bay of Bengal nations.⁵¹ The maritime strategies for all three nations, seen thus, ought to be one of cooperative engagement for peaceful development and exploitation of relations between and among all three nations.

Beyond bilateral/trilateral mechanisms, there are other forums such as FAO/Global Environment Facility and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to deliberate upon mutual cooperation for the development of marine/maritime resources and resolving security concerns. The countries remain pledged to strengthening cooperation for 'security and prosperity' of the region.⁵²

However, with the events in the South China Sea zone, including a row over the competitive artificial island-building and a follow-up competitive naval build-up in the wider Indo-Pacific region, there still remain areas with potential for maritime conflicts involving the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean region as well. New Moore, or as India calls it, South Talpatti Island, which both Bangladesh and India had claimed since the early 1980s, is now recognised as India's sea territory. The verdict has awarded India sovereignty over this disputed island, which is now under water. India also received nearly 6,000 km² of the contested zone including the area where once the island had existed. All this may have security ramifications for Bangladesh.⁵³ India may, for instance, plan artificial island-building for purposes similar to what is

happening in the South China Sea, including the setting up of air and/or naval bases. Such a possible adversarial scenario may grow in the backdrop of possible antagonism in broader relationships linking China, India, and the US.

The verdicts could also contribute towards the building of strategic partnership amongst the nations sharing the Bay of Bengal marine space. It assumes strategic significance against the backdrop of China's close ties with Bangladesh and its growing interests and activities in the Bay of Bengal region for which New Delhi may have its reservations or feel concerned. There is, however, a scope for more positive reflection: a settlement of maritime disputes between India and Bangladesh through legal means may have a restraining influence on any expansionist designs China may have.⁵⁴ Bangladesh may have a final point for future policy reflection: it has gained 19,467 km² in the EEZ but little of its claim in the continental shelf has been admitted, which might be a future source of contention. Contrarily, whilst India's rights over the extended continental shelf have largely been protected, Bangladesh has acquired an outlet in the continental shelf, which Dhaka insistently demanded and gained sovereign rights over all living and non-living resources in the seabed extending as far as 354 NM from the Bay of Bengal coast.⁵⁵

Non-traditional maritime security concerns

Beyond the traditional threats of state-based maritime security, there has been an ever-increasing momentum of non-conventional maritime concerns causing insecurities in several areas. This originates from a conceptual division of the earth's water surface areas, using physiographic and/or geopolitical criteria.⁵⁶ A variety of security threats is posing danger to maritime peace and stability. Maritime terrorism has also surfaced as an omnipresent global and regional threat. Human trafficking and drug smuggling are the twin issues that have lately re-captured global attention. Piracy has emerged as one of the most worrisome maritime security challenges. All these emerging issues require a

strong commitment from all the nations of the region and beyond towards achieving their shared objectives and agreeing on a common cooperative approach to respond to the emerging challenges.⁵⁷

With oceanic transport, in particular, there are spreading complexities of maritime safety and security, requiring shipping protection and protection of marine minerals and maritime resources, including all other living and non-living resources. There are also increasing phenomena of manmade threats, which include the following:

- Unregulated fishing;
- Wilful pollution through contamination and toxic waste;
- Terrorist acts, armed robberies, coercion, hostage-taking;
- Criminal trafficking of arms and weapons, as well as narcotic drugs smuggling;
- Trafficking of human and of psychotropic substances; and
- Damaging maritime/marine life environment.⁵⁸

Other non-traditional areas of concerns include the following:

- Accidents;
- Transnational threats;
- Natural disasters; and
- Recurrent seismic shifts, tremors, and Tsunamis.

All such non-traditional maritime concerns hamper good governance at sea. The past few years witnessed an increase of maritime activity of the naval forces to counter such threats. Yet, further engagements seem essential to realise the full maritime potential. Enhancement of port facilities, shipping fleets, deep-sea fishing, and greater efforts for extracting marine resources are needed to ensure law and order at the sea. The sea is progressively becoming the bastion of the nation's economic system and its destiny depends ever more upon the effective and efficient use of the maritime resources.⁵⁹

Such concerns call for cooperation, harmonisation, information-sharing, and such other coordinated actions within the nation's defence services, as well as between and among all maritime nations in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean neighbourhood. To perform all such actions, there are indeed a number of international/regional agencies, organisations, and entities to oversee ocean governance such as ensuring freedom of high seas, global commerce and trade, preservation of the marine environment, and equitable and sustainable exploitation of marine resources.⁶⁰

For Bangladesh, maritime security, both traditional and non-traditional, has been the key policy concern since the days of the Liberation War. The BN, the key naval component of Bangladesh Armed Forces, is projected as an effective force to oversee the defence of the country's coastal belt and maritime territories. It is assigned to secure Bangladesh's maritime boundary, the defence of its harbours, military bases, and economic/continental zones.⁶¹ Since independence, through the 1970s/80s, the BN adopted a steady naval equipment procurement policy. The Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCC), a naval paramilitary force, has been created as the maritime law enforcement force of the country on 14 February 1995, with a view to guarding the coastal-maritime waters. Its mission includes control over piracy and illegal trafficking, protection of fishery, oil, gas and forest resources, checking environmental pollution in Bangladesh waters and coastal areas, ensuring overall security and law and order through security assistance to sea ports, and conducting relief and rescue operation in the coastal areas during a natural calamity.⁶²

The BN, as part of 'Forces Goal 2030', has acquired a *Limited Blue Water Navy* status with expanded naval fleet strength and capabilities to protect the country's economic-military interests at home, develop blue water economy, and enhance its regional position and peaceful image abroad.⁶³ Being an organised force now, with a three-dimensional deterrent force structure, it owns certain state-of-the-art warships, including survey vessels, fleet tankers, container vessels, and submarines. It also developed the local capability to build warships, patrol vessels, replenishment ships, and landing craft tank. All this is meant to significantly increase the length of stay of the BN ships in the deep sea. It is a frontline disaster management force in Bangladesh and also has several humanitarian missions abroad. It is a key regional player in counter-terrorism efforts and has engaged in sensitive locations for international peacekeeping. The BN ships regularly participate in exercises with other navies. A submarine base is under construction at Pekua in Cox's Bazaar and a new BN base with submarine berthing and aviation facilities is being established at Rabanabad in Patuakhali. It also has regular communication, interaction, and exercises with friendly navies, including China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, and the US. In the process, it has gained significant experiences and improved combating capabilities (See Appendix 1).

Threat perceptions: Ecosystemic

The country's new maritime gains confer upon her added responsibilities to appraise the security predicament of its people and to fix the nation's self-destiny. This involves a deeper understanding of the causalities inherent in maritime ownership, the challenges that go with such ownership against the onslaughts of nature, and then, developing a measured sense of how to beat them. A maritime boundary generally is recognised by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to identify international waters. It includes areas of exclusive national rights over mineral and biological resources, encompassing maritime features, limits, and zones.⁶⁴

All this has implications, both legal and practical. The Bay, together with the Indian Ocean, provides Bangladeshis with their life-support system, regulate the aquatic system, climate and weather, and regenerates the people with the required nutrients.⁶⁵ Along with defence, disaster/ecosystemic threats may be identified as the keystones of maritime security of Bangladesh. The ecosystemic threats have added a new dimension to the complexities of the evolving security milieu. The Bay is an extension of the Indian Ocean and shares many of its oceanic characteristics, including cyclones and the south-west monsoon. The Bay of Bengal countries are four times more likely to be affected by a natural catastrophe than those in Africa, and 25 times more vulnerable than Europe and North America.

Bangladesh is located at the frontline of Asia's ecosystemic vulnerabilities and natural hazards. It suffers acutely from recurring threats of multiple types. Historically, it has been a major victim of nature's onslaughts, including some of the deadliest cyclones and tornadoes (See Appendix 2). *The World Risk Report (WRR) 2013* places Bangladesh at one of the highest ranks with 19.81 per cent in the list of countries with risk of natural disasters.⁶⁶ Such cyclonic and tropical depressions have ecosystemic contexts. The Bay is the north-eastern extension of the Indian Ocean; both are enclosed on three sides by Afro-Asian and Australian land masses. There are also the Himalayas that hamper airflow in the north. The basin that includes Bangladesh has the warmest surface ocean temperatures because this zone lies within the tropics.⁶⁷ All these cause natural catastrophes along the Bay of Bengal coastal regions, particularly hitting Bangladesh's southern coastal zones. This oceanographic region also has relatively few islands and narrow continental shelves. Large rivers like the Brahmaputra (Padma) and the Ganges and their tributaries flow into Bangladesh from the northern Himalayan range and further into the Bay, carrying both sediments and polluting chemicals, adding vulnerability to the blue waters of the Bay.

Occupying low-lying floodplains and tidal plains, Bangladesh is indeed one of the largest and the most disaster-prone populous deltas in the world. Because of its unique geomorphologic-oceanic situation, Bangladesh is subject to recurrent climatic-topographical onslaughts. It is one of the tropical cyclone hotspots of the world, with two cyclonic seasons each year: May-June and October-November (as epitomised by 'Roanu', see Appendix 3).

There are also looming threats of climate change and resultant sea level rise, adding further to the vulnerabilities. Bangladesh is now even more exposed due to its legal ownership of a large portion of the Bay, which grabs parts of its lands. This, coupled with the miseries of the rise of sea level, faster ocean warming, more storm surges, and swelling of water induced by melting of the ice due to an unequivocal climate change and subsidence would make Bangladesh more vulnerable in future.⁶⁸ Consequently, there are projections of a ticking time-bomb of a natural holocaust and mega-thrust earthquakes that may stake lives of millions,⁶⁹ submerging probably one-third of Bangladesh.⁷⁰

Perception of interests: Strategic maritime clouts

There are numerous corollaries for Bangladesh towards identifying its perceived political and economic interests as a Bay of Bengal littoral facing key challenges. It has maritime borders with two immediate neighbours. With its crisscrossing coastal belt, it is now open to embrace an expanded definition of neighbourliness. A direct neighbour of all Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean nations, it is also a global neighbour of all other adjoining nations in the international maritime system. It now appears as a strategic centrepiece in the global maritime rivalry. This enshrines a position of influence but also underpins responsibilities. Yet its policy must be how to capitalise on its national interest without becoming a tool in diplomatic squabbling or strategic gameplay.

Such reckoning has several dimensions. A keynote of its maritime policy must be to preserve or enhance its progressive national self-interest. But it must also take an enlightened view of how to advance regional stability and promote international peace, harmonising its own interests and common interests of all other nations involved in the maritime contentions emerging in the wider Indo-Pacific region. After all, the waves of the huge water mass, as well as the transit routes beyond, affect all aspects of Bangladesh, including people's life and living, geoeconomics and geopolitics, strategy and security, migration and Diaspora, culture and energy, business and trade, and shaping culture and outlook.⁷¹

The strategic clout of Bangladesh rests on its maritime contexts. It has especially wider openings to the open seas, being in closest proximity to the shores of other Asian countries. It is thus well situated to project its own economic clout, should it position itself persuasively to advance its marine know-how and skill, as well as technology and economic strength, and transform itself into a salient object for international business and investment. Bangladesh is no longer just an aid-dependent country. It has already emerged as a trading nation and enjoys total duty and quota-free access to Australia, Canada, the EU, Japan, and most other developed countries. It is a signatory to all the relevant multilateral/bilateral agencies, including the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). It also has institutional accords to promote and secure investment and to resolve possible disputes over matters. Bilateral agreements exist to

avoid double taxation with many countries and negotiations are also underway with many others to such ends.

However, the maritime strategic diplomacy of Bangladesh needs a realistic assessment. The Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean region attract world's major powers because of its strategic location and natural resources. With 66 per cent of the world's oil shipments, the oil arteries of the world run through the region. It has also emerged as the most prominent global economic highway, with 33 per cent of its bulk cargo and 50 per cent of the world's container traffic passing through its waters. For reasons of trade, economic competition has been growing among the major powers in securing a visible and credible presence in the region, which has combined and shaped the dynamics of the wider maritime territories, including the Indo-Pacific region. The lingering maritime territorial disputes between China and its regional neighbours vitiated regional relations. Major world powers are keen to develop new infrastructures and exhibit their strengths with naval exercises, drills, and wargames, etc.⁷²

The wider strategic relations have been in a state of flux since the inception of the new millennium. Internationally the US has already waded into the maritime row against Beijing and has kept up its unipolar stance. Both are already embroiled in a struggle for positional advantage, influence, and interests in the Indo-Pacific region, which has emerged as the world's most dynamic geo-maritime zone.⁷³ This struggle encompasses both maritime and mainland. China, India, and the US have all exhibited their intent to turn the region into a strategic crossroads. Whereas the US has set itself for strategic 're-balance' in the region,⁷⁴ China sees the US as an extra-regional power with no legitimacy in dictating any terms on regional matters. However, India's regional role is beyond question, due to its geo-maritime positioning. The extent to which these powers co-exist or collide in the region could set

the agenda for global security in what many have dubbed as the 'Asian Century'. Doubtless, all three power-players seek economic affluence—China and India to develop, whereas the US, along with regional allies such as Japan, the EU, and the UK—to maintain its edge. In such a setting, conflict is not in any power's interests. A milieu such as this will require all the powers in the strategic contest to commit to mutuality, cooperative trust, and co-existence in the increasingly contested region.⁷⁵ In any strategic contest for positional advantage, whether in conflict or cooperative frame, Bangladesh was once perceived as one of the minnows in Asia's strategic backyard. With the owning of the vast maritime space beyond its shores, however, Bangladesh should no longer be viewed so, as it has the potential to emerge as a major player when it comes to its maritime neighbourhood.

Thus, as a maritime neighbour of many a nation, Bangladesh faces its watershed in diplomacy in a chain-link fashion. As a geoeconomic entity bordering the vast Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal, respectively the world's third largest ocean and the largest Bay, Bangladesh could never distance itself from the geo-maritime and geopolinomic situations involving its neighbourhood. It has geopolitical proximity to both the major fast-growing regional economies having progressively prosperous populations, projected to grow to three billion. Bangladesh is an emerging economy with its sturdy domestic market of 160 million people. Already it has planned along its coastal belt 100 new EEZs; many of these are meant to draw in foreign investors, including those from the neighbouring giants.

China, the world's second-largest economy, perceived as a strategic rival by both India and the US, is eager to create new connectivity between its landlocked southern provinces and the Indian Ocean.⁷⁶ It is Bangladesh's largest trading partner (bilateral trade, between the two countries, though mainly in China's favour,

has increased to over \$12 billion).⁷⁷ It is a lead player in current international economic diplomacy, unveiling the 'string of pearls' and 'Belt and Road' policy. Bangladesh is not technically included in either, yet China is seen as Bangladesh's 'time-tested' friend and Bangladesh does feature importantly in China's strategic diplomacy.⁷⁸ It is also a leading weapons supplier to Bangladesh, supplying key systems of weaponry required for equipping the BN, and also a provider of training to the BN personnel. China is also a lead player in its connectivity and infrastructure projects, including railways, road transport, and power sectors, improving the standard of life, industries and fuel, as well as ICT and digital connectivity. Both the countries are active participants in the BCIM economic corridor linking all four regional countries (known earlier as the Kunming Initiative) and the AIIB and the Trans-Himalayan Development Forum (launched in 2015). The construction of road and rail infrastructure connecting Chittagong with Kunming through Myanmar are meant for developing connectivity of all three countries⁷⁹ and offer prospects for connectivity with other South-east Asian countries and the Chinese mainland. China is also set to contribute to maritime undertakings that include Sitakunda-Cox's Bazaar marine drive expressway, coastal protection, and energy-related projects.⁸⁰

There has indeed been a scramble by all the major powers to build 'connectivity' throughout the region. To what extent Bangladesh could benefit from such scrambling would depend on its policy dynamism and driving ability to benefit itself from the scrambling for positional advantage.⁸¹ For materialising the developed vision by 2041, it is pertinent for Bangladesh to secure funding and technological support

from the richer development partners. However, should all these powers act to extend their current contentions in the South China Sea to the Bay of Bengal due to its propinquity, the Bay of Bengal could reel into Bangladesh's strategic hot-belly.

Bangladesh with its geo-maritime and trading orientation cannot be different from other maritime powers. Like all other trading nations, the geopolitics and geo-maritime objectives of the country need to be cushioned on objective considerations of its permanent interest. A wide maritime geography to the south and sharing of a long border with India on the rest of the three sides has led to its strategic portrayal as 'India-locked'. However, given the intensity of economic activity between China, India, and Bangladesh, coupled with the range of connectivity between and among them, any adversarial strategic scenario such as China's use of the 'chicken neck' via Siliguri Corridor through Bangladesh territory to encircle or to take on India⁸² currently carries diminutive weight. Indeed, Kolkata, not any of Bangladesh's ports, has featured in China's 'string of pearls' for an extension of the latter's influence in the Indian Ocean region. As both the neighbouring giants are major trading/development partners of Bangladesh, it has nothing to gain from an enemy perception or imagining a conflict scenario between the two Asian colossi. Indeed, Bangladesh-India bilateral cooperation has been increasing at a faster pace than any other pair of countries in South Asia. Since 2010, the instigating intensity of trans-shipment operations, train and bus, as well as energy transmission services have radically raised the prospects of greater connectivity and trade/investment between the two

countries. Apart from these two neighbouring giants, Bangladesh has also been developing vital connectivities and trading relations with other neighbouring nations such as Bhutan, Myanmar, and Nepal—all of them have similarly important strategic and trading relations with both China and India.⁸³ Additionally, Bangladesh is gifted with geo-maritime/geo-physical proximity to Southeast Asia that confers upon it to emerge as a potential economic/strategic bridge between India and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, Bangladesh hosts its headquarters) and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries.⁸⁴ Both the blocs are trade-oriented. It also shares coastal waters with the countries of East Asia, including China, Japan, and the countries of the Korean peninsula—all major trading nations.

In the foregoing backdrop, maritime security is very important for Bangladesh both in terms of economic and national security: fisheries protection in the territorial waters and EEZs, security of sea lanes of communication, energy security, as well as protection against drug trafficking and human trafficking, including women and children. It is time for Bangladesh to focus on strategizing its maritime policy and work towards securing its maritime interests.

Conclusion

Whilst revisiting the findings, some remarks are due on the strategic imperatives of maritime policy and on how the nation could move on towards securing its development destiny. It is apparent that Bangladesh at this juncture faces the most defining moment in its strategic maritime journey

and in setting the tone and tenor of a secured development destiny. A revisiting of the strategic constructs seems proper in policy terms and action planning. The key is to view the regularity between peaceable developmental vision and the continuum of strategic permanence.

Being an independent country, vision-wise Bangladesh remains committed to a peaceful course set by the nation's founding father. But the strategic pathways require delicate calculated management, due largely to an innate militancy and political volatility worldwide, including Bangladesh. Such a contingent situation necessitates Bangladesh to take a firm position against any kind of violence and retain "every preparation to foil" any design against its "independence and sovereignty."⁸⁵

Nationally, its development diplomacy is geared towards meeting the challenges of connectivities and associating chosen countries and selected companies considered competent and qualified for the infrastructure projects for maritime connectivities along its sea coasts. However, Bangladesh faces its greatest challenge in the maritime project planning process, which takes too long a time in contemplation, conjectures, and wandering before projects get the final nod for action-planning. When it comes to maritime security, it is imperative to strategize the policy process towards ensuring sustained momentum between policy initiation, appraisals, formulations, and action-planning.

Currently, with meagre resources, Bangladesh is not by any yardstick a major maritime power. Yet, for securing its maritime domain, it does have major strategic stakes, including protection of its fishing, the safety of its shipping

lanes, and preventing intrusive behaviour in the marine zones. In any scenario of a perceived threat, it has no option but to deploy its coastguard and naval capabilities to areas within its maritime space and to secure key chokepoints in order to understand and influence these areas towards enhancing its maritime interests.

Maritime security, region-wise, is vital for Bangladesh, as it helps build trust and assists her to develop and steers communication and information-sharing. A decade ago, the Straits of Malacca were well-known aquatic yards for pirates, but it is no longer so, as the major South-east Asian nations came together and employed a range of joint measures, including intelligence sharing and coordinating sea and air patrols. Bangladesh, as well as both of its Bay of Bengal neighbours, could also coordinate similar efforts to deal with maritime malevolence such as arms smuggling, drugs and human trafficking, and piracy. The Bay of Bengal countries are all fish-loving. They can join in designating a Bay of Bengal Marine Monument, like the US-led Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, off Hawaii, which now spans 1.5 million km²—the world's largest marine reserve where commercial fishing and new mining are banned.⁸⁶ Such measures in the Bay of Bengal need regional harmony. Over the past few years, Bangladesh-India relations have evolved in positive directions. But Bangladesh-Myanmar pair thus far remains cloudy, largely due to the mindset of an abusive junta in Yangon, now in civilian garb, that is engaged in spiteful acts against the minorities and also in the Bay of Bengal, such as shooting at Bangladeshi fishermen, thus denting peaceful maritime neighbourliness.⁸⁷

Yet, Bangladesh has the potential to become a regional harmoniser, given its geo-maritime strategic location, the warmth and even-handed nature of its relations with the regional giants, India and China, and equally warm relations with all other global powers drawn into maritime contentions in the Indo-Pacific region. Both the UK and the US have important maritime-strategic relations with Bangladesh: both provided naval equipment and maritime training to Bangladesh. Japan, another Chinese rival, though not an arms supplier to Bangladesh, has been a major development partner and is also drawn into infrastructure and maritime-linked energy projects in Bangladesh.⁸⁸ As a maritime nation, Bangladesh needs to enlarge its profile in maritime-related industries and skill-enhancement but also act rationally. It has to reassess the role of the Bay, the Indo-Pacific Ocean, as well as the possibilities, limitations, security, and the related concerns of both traditional and non-traditional natures. The Bay and the Indian Ocean serve as its fluid bridge to connect itself via navigation with diverse and distant lands of the global system.

The vital interest of Bangladesh as a trading nation lies in keeping freedom of navigation for safety and security of its cargo/trading/fishing vessels. Equally vital is to ensure the security of its coasts and fishing preserves, get access to superior equipment and higher technology, better-quality investment, franchising for the qualitative production of apparatus, and paraphernalia for connectivity and relevant competence-building. Such objectives are achievable not through 'hard power', but 'soft power'—peaceable means without being drawn into squabbling or wrangling. Such an option, as Joseph Nye implores,⁸⁹ presages co-opting rather

than coercing others for positional advantage by generating a continuum of power based on the tools useful for implementing policy aspirations and objects that are controlled and regulated. For all this, Bangladeshi maritime specialists have to work towards setting the national agenda and styling policy in a fashion that would provide useful analytical variables mastering international relations and providing policy recommendations for attainable policy means. Soft power thus lies in subtleness to attract and persuade, with attainable means for success in maritime diplomacy.

Bangladesh-India diplomatic pair emerges as a test case. Bilateral ties fluctuated depending on regime perceptions across the fences, the respective perception of interests, and the strategic policies pursued. Political barometers used such as 'time-tested ally', 'honeymoon period', engineering 'aggressive diplomacy to dominate', are some of the passé and clichés used to project the pair of relations.⁹⁰ Likewise, notions like 'game changer' or 'personal chemistry' of top brasses are used in unfolding strategic linkage in bilateral relations. India's fable-like self-image as a 'benevolent elephant' placed across the geo-maritime sprawling lawn, comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka seems contrary to objective realities. Often such images may feature as the grace of sagacity and togetherness to project as a counterweight to the Sino-Pak 'all weather relationship'.⁹¹ Such facets are of sheer 'irrelevance of morality'. Similarly, an emerging Indo-US concord directed against China won't help peacebuilding or cooperative relationship in Asia or the world.⁹² Diplomatic subtlety and the ideal of regional peace require Bangladesh to circumvent any such knots.

Internally, Bangladesh has to mend some of its strategic ways. Its use of the 'blue economy model' for the BN has a strategic content meant professedly to develop its natural marine resources. However, such an espousal as a grand strategy needs to take into account the contexts of the

country's southerly flow of rivers and soil-water dispersal systems, which affect the coastal belt, the territorial sea, the EEZ, the continental shelf, and the open sea. Its procurement policy, which so far has proved prudent, as it is *not* intended for missile-rattling but to equip its forces for due operational purposes and enabling the naval forces to overcome the country's challenging traditional and non-traditional maritime security needs.

On ecosystemic matters Bangladesh, particularly its tropical coastal belts, is enriched with mangrove thickets and animal life specific to that environment (such as Sunderbans, a UNESCO World Heritage), these are characterised by numerous corals and other organisms capable of building reefs and coral islands. Such mangrove thickets also stabilise the land along the coastal margin, serving as important breeding and nursery grounds for offshore species,⁹³ adding also geomorphologic spaces, together with their ecosystemic values. However, the government's ecosystemic policy needs reassessment, much as its planned construction of a coal-fired power plant near the Sunderbans at Rampal, has come under fierce opposition from the environmentalists at home and abroad under the banner of the 'Save the Sunderbans Movement'.⁹⁴ The Bengal Delta and Bay coasts are highly flood-prone and tide-dominated, where flood and wandering tides play a key role in the sediment dispersal process and in the shaping of the delta.⁹⁵ There are then seismic projections of megathrust proportions. However, the Bengalis, carrying their proud tradition of living with nature, would find ways of how to adjust with the qualms of nature. In planning any challenging schemes, Bangladesh could benefit itself from the delicate learning and planning experiences of 'living with nature/water' of countries such as Singapore and The Netherlands.⁹⁶ An integrated maritime policy could map joining the maritime and other service professionals to carry forward the nation's proud legacies in disaster management.

Bangladesh's economy currently enjoys positive signals with leveraging impacts of strategic location and productive dynamics, which attract foreign investors and international community, but the country is yet to surmount problematic macro-political atmospherics. It continues to

suffer from myriad deficits in several fields of maritime security. These include areas such as credibility and a commonality in mindset—both with and without a lack of steady harmony in the physical and socio-psychological environment. All cycles of maritime doings need to be geared-up and redrawn if the nation is to overcome and realise its vision of sustained development and a secured maritime destiny. Just as the sea can bring Bangladesh affluence, any deficiency in coping with the entwining challenges ahead could leave the nation behind in a competitive world that is becoming very volatile.

The country's maritime security is inseparable from the overall insecurities it faces. A credible security system, encompassing both land and maritime, can only be assured by democratic continuity and consensus. Deficits manifested in such areas must be overcome if Bangladesh is to play a credible regional maritime role. Tough on terrorism and violence, tenderly towards the autistic and the disabled, such an image of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina does raise expectations. The country's governance requires democratic fine-tuning and strategizing. The 'opposition', consisting of a political hodgepodge, is in total disarray, enabling the ruling regime to monopolise governance and ensure regime continuity. No ruling regime would conceivably fix the opposition's problem; yet Sheikh Hasina, as the standard-bearer of her father's charismatic legacies, with her wide-reaching statesmanship image and lustrous role in the maritime gains, owes the nation some obligations for integrative reasons. These include help to harmonise debates over Rampal, institutionalise democratic governance in Bangladesh, and inculcate populist seeds across the grassroots and party levels, as well as campuses and professional bodies.

Maritime strategies are imperative in the nation's larger policy planning because they provide the means to apply power to areas of interest along coastlines, beyond coastal belt along the territorial sea, EEZ, and the continental shelf, as well as the open sea. The first line is called the littoral, "the areas to seaward of the coast which are susceptible to influence or support from the land and the areas inland from the coast which are susceptible to influence from the sea."⁹⁷ Strategic policies concerning the

coastal belt and the delta, disaster and environmental management, and sustainable development require effective role projection of all service professionals. Bangladesh as a maritime state ought to formulate a 'national maritime security strategy', mitigating the needs of all force components and related services and ensuring the connectivities and development needs of the entire nation.

Appendix 1

BN exercises with foreign friendly navies
[Towards enhancing interoperability between the participating navies]

Years	Exercise	No. of days	Participating Units	Total Units	Area of Ex
1992	Joint Ex Sea Bat	07	BD & US Navy	01	At Sea within Bangladesh EEZ area
1993	Joint Ex Sea Bat	04	BD & US Navy	01	At Sea within Bangladesh EEZ area
1994	Joint Ex Sea Bat	11	BD & US Navy	01	At Sea within Bangladesh EEZ area
1995	Joint Ex Sea Bat	08	BD & US Navy	01	At Sea within Bangladesh EEZ area
1998	Joint Ex Sea Bat	08	BD & US Navy	01	At Sea within Bangladesh EEZ area
2009	EX Tiger Shark-1	46	BD Navy & US Special Force	07	CTG Outer Anchorage area
2010	EX Tiger Shark-2,3,4,5	86	BD Navy & US Special Force	02	CTG Naval area
2011	Joint EX CARAT, & Tiger Shark-8	23	BD Navy & US Special Force	15	At Sea within Bangladesh EEZ area

2012	Joint EX CARAT & Tiger Shark-12,14	32	BD Navy, JAPAN & US Navy	13	At Sea
2013	EX Tiger Shark-15,16,18 87	87	BD Navy & US Special Force	02	CTG Naval area
2014	Ex MILAN-14	16	BNS Sangu	01	Port Blair, India
	WPNS China-14	08	BNS Abu Bakr	01	Qingdao, China
	Ex CARAT-14	13	BD Navy & US Special Force	02	CTG Naval area
	Ex Tiger Shark-20, 22 & 24	64	BD Navy & US Special Force	02	CTG Naval area
2015	Ex LIMA-15	07	BNS Abu Bakr	01	Langkawi, Malaysia
	Ex Ferocious Falcon-15	14	BNS Somudra Joy	01	Doha, Qatar
	IMDEX ASIA-15	05		01	Singapore
	Ex CARAT-15	06	BD Navy & US Special Force	05	CTG Naval area
	Ex Tiger Shark-26 & 28	38	BD Navy & US Special Force	02	CTG Naval area
	Ex Cope South-15		BD Navy, BAF & US Special Force	03	Sylhet

Source: <http://www.navy.mil.bd/ex_foreign_country.php> (last accessed on 25 Oct 2016)

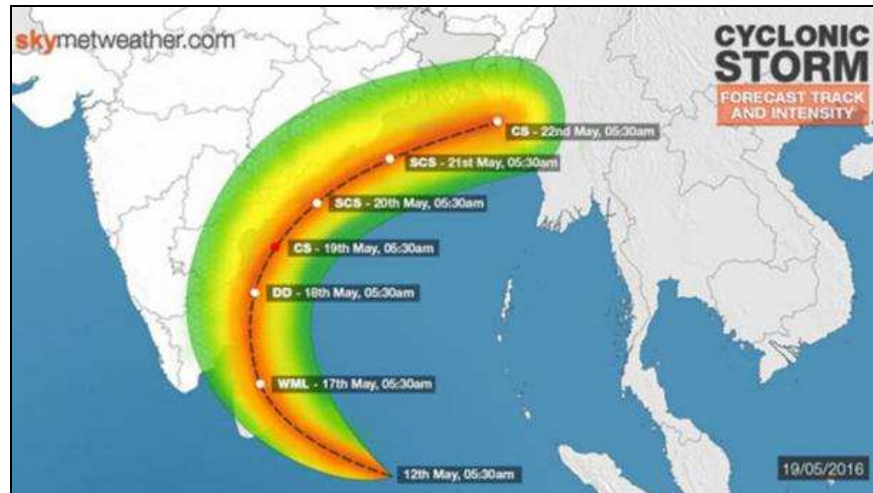
Appendix 2**Recurrent deadliest tropical cyclones/tornadoes
affecting Bangladesh***A: Tropical Cyclones*

Deaths 375,000 (250,000– 500,000)	Event Rank <u>Bhola Cyclone</u> , Nov 13, 1970 1	<u>Location</u> <u>Pakistan (Bangladesh)</u>
138,866	<u>Bangladesh Cyclone</u> , April 29, 1991 7	<u>Bangladesh</u>
200,000	<u>Great Backerganj Cyclone</u> , 1876 5	<u>India (now Bangladesh)</u>

B: Deadly Tornadoes

Death 1,300	Event <u>Daulatpur-Salturia Tornado</u>	Location Rank <u>Manikganj, Bangladesh</u> 1	Year 1989
440	The Tangail Tornado	Bangladesh 9	1988
681	Dhaka Tornado	<u>Bangladesh</u> 4	1973
500	East Pakistan Tornado	(now <u>Bangladesh</u>) 7	1969
923	The Narail-Magura Tornadoes	<u>Jessore</u> (E now <u>Bangladesh</u>) 2	Pakistan, 1964

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_natural_disasters_by_death_toll#Ten_deadliest_tropical_cyclones> (last accessed on 23 August 2016).

Appendix 3**Cyclonic storm 'Roanu': Forecast track and intensity,
May 12-21, 2016**

Source: "Cyclone Roanu: 20 killed in 5 districts," *The Daily Star*, 21 May 2016.

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ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA: TIME FOR MORE AND BETTER AID

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a continuation of the unfinished plan of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They are, however, more comprehensive in scope, encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects of development. To implement the agenda, mobilization of substantial resources is needed both at the domestic level and from transnational partners. To this end, the role of development cooperation or Official Development Assistance (ODA) from traditional donors of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as international cooperation from non-DAC aid-providers, is one of the key sources of financing the SDGs. While the agenda does not come up with a new discourse on the role and importance of ODA for the SDGs, aid donors have been asked to achieve the target of 0.7 percent of their gross national income (GNI) as ODA. Aggregate ODA was over \$131 billion in 2015. Averaging about 0.29 percent of the GNI of DAC donors. This level is still noticeably below the internationally agreed target of 0.7 percent of their GNI. This paper examines the role and significance of international development cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the 17 SDGs. Besides ODA, the paper also reflects on other means of financing such as aid from non-traditional donors, climate fund, and private financing. It argues that in view of the ambitious nature of the SDGs and lack of resources and capacities in numerous countries, there is a need for significant

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quantitative and qualitative increase in ODA in line with requirements of the SDGs.

Introduction

People in the developed, as well as the developing countries, have a shared responsibility to make this planet a liveable place for the coming generations. To this end, numerous initiatives have been undertaken in the past under the United Nations (UN) umbrella. The latest is the 2015 UN Summit on Sustainable Development where world leaders agreed on the next set of goals, now known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Concerning the MDGs, considerable gains were made regarding poverty alleviation and in the fight against illiteracy and disease. However, the overall progress has been mixed and uneven across regions and targets. As was the case with the MDGs, eradication of extreme poverty is at the core in the SDGs because poverty, hunger, inequality, and environmental degradation are the stark realities of the present time. For implementing the post-2015 development agenda, substantial resources are needed, particularly in the form of Official Development Assistance (ODA) or development cooperation. Hence, a renewed and reinvigorated global partnership for development is required. Achieving the SDGs is the shared responsibility of every UN member state whether it is a developed country providing cooperation (donor) or a developing country receiving such external development assistance (aid recipient). Thus, alongside domestic resource generation and mobilisation by developing countries, development cooperation has a significant role to play. Rather, in numerous resource-

deficient countries where needs are the greatest and resource mobilisation capacity the weakest, international development cooperation is one of the most important tools to enable these countries to implement the SDGs. In doing so, there is a need for both quantitative and qualitative increase in ODA. In terms of quantitative upsurge, there is a positive sign concerning gross ODA to developing countries, which was over \$131 billion in 2015. However, averaging about 0.29 per cent of the Gross National Income (GNI) of donors belonging to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), it was still markedly below the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their GNI to which they had agreed in 1970 at the UN forum. So far, only five of the 29 DAC donors have met this target. Hence, implementing the 2030 Development Agenda demands that along with numerous other initiatives, the international donor community meets the target of 0.7 per cent so that reasonable financial resources are available for the people in the most urgent need. If donors reach the 0.7 per cent target, it would contribute an additional \$250 billion annually, bringing ODA to around \$400 billion, a significant increase by any standard. Concerning qualitative increase, development cooperation needs to be more effectively allocated to achieve the intended goals. While aid effectiveness remained the primary pursuit during successive High-level Forums on Aid Effectiveness in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011), significant issues still exist at both the donors' and the recipients' ends leading to aid ineffectiveness. The SDGs aim at forming a renewed and reinvigorated global partnership to mobilize the required resources for successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda

but how it is actualised will be integral to accomplishing the SDGs.

Journey from MDGs to SDGs

At the turn of the current millennium, the global community, under the UN umbrella, envisaged a set of interrelated development goals to be achieved by 2015.¹ These included halving extreme poverty, achieving universal primary education for both boys and girls, reducing infant and maternal mortality, promoting gender equity, and ensuring environmental sustainability.² Known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), most of these goals were interrelated and the main focus was to eradicate extreme form of poverty and to raise people from abject poverty and enable them to have decent living conditions. Concerning the accomplishment with respect to these goals, the overall progress has been mixed and uneven across different regions and various targets. For example, a number of countries have fared relatively well regarding certain MDGs such as achieving universal primary education (Goal 2), promoting gender equality and empowerment of women (Goal 3), fighting disease (Goal 6), and global partnership for development (Goal 8).³ However, progress for a majority of countries has not been satisfactory in relation to the targets including eradication of extreme form of poverty (Goal 1), reducing child mortality rate (Goal 4), improving maternal health (Goal 5), and ensuring environmental sustainability (Goal 7). The *2015 MDG Report* also acknowledged that there were “uneven achievements and shortfalls in many areas. The work is not complete, and it must continue in the new development era.”⁴ Amongst these, the overall

performance has been visibly dismal towards reducing child mortality and improving maternal health in numerous countries across various regions.⁵ Hence, the prevalence of extreme poverty, hunger, disease, inequality, and environmental degradation are the stark realities of the present time and if not properly addressed, these will pose grave challenges to the well-being and progress of future generations.

While 2015 marked the deadline for the MDGs, the UN had already started preparing a new development agenda. At the Rio+20, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012 in Brazil, UN member states decided to build on MDGs and spearhead a process for launching a broader and more comprehensive set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The conference report, titled *The Future We Want*, acknowledged at the outset that “poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.”⁶ The document called for the establishment of an Open Working Group (OWG) comprised of 30 members to ensure “fair, equitable and balanced geographical representation.”⁷ To come up with a new set of SDGs, the UN document reiterated that OWG would fully commit “to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system in its work, in order to provide a diversity of perspectives and experience.”⁸

In view of this, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) selected 11 key themes for global consultations related to the post-2015 development agenda.

These themes cover various facets of development challenges and include conflict and fragility, education, energy, environmental sustainability, food security, governance, growth and employment, health, inequalities, population dynamics, and water.⁹ To have a diverse and comprehensive global representation, 88 national consultations were held across the globe with over one million people from diverse backgrounds and age groups. The entire process was facilitated by UN country teams in coordination with governments, the private sector, think tanks, civil society, and academics. Following this year-long process, a report titled *A Million Voices: The World We Want* was released by the UN in 2013, which summarises the efforts and consultations of various stakeholders to be utilised during the formulation of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. The report reveals that participants have prioritised issues such as ending extreme poverty and hunger, accomplishing gender equality, and improving health services and access to education for every child as their foremost concerns. It added that the participants wanted the future development framework and agenda to primarily address these issues.¹⁰ Based on this, the stage was set for a new global development agenda.

The 2030 Development Agenda and the SDGs

In the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, all UN member states agreed to strengthen the framework to finance sustainable development by means of resource mobilisation, including both domestic and international, for effective implementation of the post-2015 development

agenda. In the conference that became known as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), participants committed to reinvigoration and strengthening of the financing for development and “to ensure that the actions to which [they] commit are implemented and reviewed in an appropriate, inclusive, timely and transparent manner.”¹¹ Following this, during its 70th session in September 2015, the UNGA adopted the post-2015 development agenda in the document called *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹² Focusing on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets centred around people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership (5Ps), member states have committed to eradicate global poverty; to combat inequalities; “to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.”¹³ The declaration reaffirms to build on the unfinished agenda of the MDGs and to achieve until 2030 what remained unaccomplished concerning these development goals.

There is no doubt that the SDGs are broad, comprehensive, and far-reaching in their scope and universality. This has been acknowledged by various stakeholders including the UN bodies, the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). To implement the post-2015 Development Agenda, it has been mentioned under the SDG 17 to forge a renewed and reinvigorated global partnership for sustainable development. The document states that the global community is “determined to mobilize the means

required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development...with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.”¹⁴ To fully implement the post-2015 development agenda, significant financial and technical resources as well as a high level of political commitment from numerous stakeholders at the local, national, regional, and international levels is required. The challenge of implementing the 2030 Development Agenda has been duly addressed in various UN conferences and subsequent policy reports. For example, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda clearly states, “Achieving an ambitious post-2015 development agenda, including all the sustainable development goals, will require an equally ambitious, comprehensive, holistic and transformative approach with respect to the means of implementation.”¹⁵ In view of this, some of the initiatives taken so far and future requirements and courses of action are briefly discussed here. Along with various other alternatives, one of the key roles will be that of Official Development Assistance (ODA) or development cooperation, which is available to the developing countries in various forms to complement their efforts and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Current trends in development cooperation and their role in the 2030 Agenda

The role and effectiveness or ineffectiveness of development cooperation in poverty alleviation and achieving sustainable development is an unresolved issue. Many believe that foreign aid, at times, has played a significant role in enabling people in the developing countries

to address their foremost development issues. Some argue that development cooperation has served donor countries more than serving the interests of developing countries. Regarding these two debates and arguments, Monye, Ansah, and Orakwue observe that “the debate goes on and the jury is still out.”¹⁶ Putting aside this debate, development cooperation has undoubtedly remained a key concessional financial tool available to developing countries and continues to play an important role in poverty alleviation in numerous countries across various regions.

Although the volume of development cooperation from member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD is still far behind the agreed target, it showed some upward trend in the year 2015. According to the 2016 Development Cooperation Report of the OECD, the total amount of aid flows was \$131.6 billion in 2015.¹⁷ The report also adds that with an increase of nearly 7 per cent, this has been the highest level reached by DAC members. Regarding the overall ratio of net ODA to gross national income (GNI), it was 0.3 per cent. While the overall levels of development assistance continue to record upward trends since 2000, there are significant variations amongst donors and their development cooperation allocation policies and practices. In terms of aggregate development cooperation, the largest aid-providers were France, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the US in 2015. In relation to donors’ development cooperation efforts and commitment regarding the achievement of the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of their GNI, as agreed upon under the UN resolution back in 1970, “only Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom” reached that

target in 2015.¹⁸ Thus, only six of the 29 DAC members have exceeded the UN target while a majority of the developed countries providing development cooperation lag behind achieving that mark. Amongst these six, the UK became the first country within the elite Group of 8 (G8) countries to accomplish the target since it was agreed in 1970.

As mentioned earlier, keeping in view the ambitiousness and vastness of the SDGs, along with various other modes of public and private financing, efforts must be intensified to increase the overall volume of development cooperation. At present, “close to 800 million people are chronically undernourished and do not have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.”¹⁹ Similarly, access to decent education and health services is a grave development challenge for a vast majority of poor people in numerous countries. Hence, in contrast to the aggregate volume of aid, it is argued that a huge sum of \$3.3 trillion to \$4.5 trillion is required annually to achieve the SDGs globally.²⁰ A World Bank document states that alongside the over \$130 billion in development cooperation, there are various other modes of financing that contribute significantly to sustainable development including philanthropy, remittances, South-South cooperation, and foreign direct investment (FDI), “together these sources amount to nearly \$1 trillion.”²¹ Similarly, the main responsibility lies, as has been clearly laid down in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as well as the 2030 Agenda, on governments in the developing countries to increase their domestic resource mobilisation while the international community would help complement their efforts. Counting the aforementioned available resources of one trillion, “the annual SDG financing gap in

developing countries is estimated at approximately \$2.5 trillion.”²² The same report further adds that although this seems to be an unachievable and unrealistic amount to be mobilised, it is merely 3 per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP), 14 per cent of the global annual savings and 1.1 per cent of the value of global capital markets. In sum, for achieving the post-2015 SDGs, both developing countries and the international community need to forge effective, inclusive, and multidirectional partnerships involving the private sector, particularly the business community.

There is no doubt that the SDGs implementation requires financial resources far beyond the current aid volume to move from billions to trillions. However, development cooperation being an important financial resource, the donor community in the DAC needs to revitalise its aid efforts to achieve the ODA/GNI ratio of 0.7 per cent. Once that target is achieved by all the DAC members, it is estimated that it would bring the aggregate aid volume to about \$400 billion, nearly three times the current level. To this end, in almost all UN conferences and subsequent reports, the international donor community has been encouraged to raise aid levels. For example, the Monterrey Conference (2002), the Doha Conference (2008), the Rio+20 Conference (2012), and the Addis Ababa Conference (2015) have specifically mentioned that the DAC members need to achieve the ODA/GNI ratio of 0.7 per cent. The same has been addressed under the SDG 17 in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development where it has been reiterated that developed countries need to “implement fully their official development assistance commitments,

including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries.”²³ Thus, as development cooperation constitutes an important mode of concessional financing and in some cases it is the most important tool of development financing in a number of poor countries, it is imperative for all major actors, particularly the DAC donors to increase their development cooperation levels to accomplish the 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI target and play a more vital and central role in contributing to achieving the SDGs.

Development cooperation from non-DAC donors and aggregate volume of development financing

Alongside development cooperation from traditional aid-providers consisting of the DAC members that have properly established bilateral aid mechanisms and programmes, there are several other actors in today’s international aid and development landscape. These actors contribute considerable financial resources in various forms to finance development interventions in developing countries. According to OECD, development cooperation volumes from 29 non-DAC aid-providers reached \$33 billion in 2014 and there was a significant upward movement in aggregate aid flows as compared to the \$24 billion in 2013.²⁴ This group of bilateral donors is quite heterogeneous geographically and ideologically as well as in terms of targeting their aid efforts. These include the “BRICS” (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China, and South Africa), some Latin American and Southeast Asian countries, and

various Arab countries including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar.

Thus, besides the DAC countries that provided an aggregate of over \$131 billion, development cooperation from the non-DAC donors also constitutes an integral element of development financing in numerous developing countries and can play a more significant role if utilised and targeted effectively. Also, along with government-to-government development cooperation, a large number of private organisations, foundations, philanthropists, and charities also contribute significantly in various sectors, particularly in health and education. For instance, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which also reports its development efforts to the OECD, disbursed about \$2.9 billion in 2014, mostly to African countries.²⁵ Thus, the total aid volumes from the DAC and non-DAC donors, as well as assistance from private entities, was \$183 billion in 2014, including \$24 billion disbursed by governments that are not members of the DAC.²⁶ Hence, utilizing this amount as effectively as possible where it is needed most can have a significant impact on the lives of those who lack sufficient resources and can play an integral role in alleviating acute poverty and help in achieving the SDGs.

Aid effectiveness: Enhancing the quality and impact of ODA for achieving SDGs

There is no doubt that development actors need to intensify their aid efforts with respect to increasing the volume of ODA, there is also a need to improve and enhance the quality of aid. Along with quantitative surge, qualitative improvement is of equal significance for enabling

development cooperation to make an impact on the lives of those in whose name the whole business of aid and development is carried out. That is why the UN has also emphasized that besides achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of GNI as ODA, “further improving ODA quality must be seen as part and parcel of a renewed global partnership’s effort to maximize the development impact of aid.”²⁷ Hence, attention towards and focus on aid effectiveness is as essential for achieving the SDGs as are other numerous initiatives. Regarding the on-the-ground impact of ODA for partner countries and bottom-of-the-pyramid groups as well as for reforming the international aid architecture, a number of initiatives have been undertaken under the OECD umbrella during the last two decades. All these initiatives resulted in the accord known as the 2005 Paris Declaration (PD) on Aid Effectiveness.²⁸ Signed by over a hundred actors including the governments providing and receiving development cooperation and a host of multilateral organisations, the PD was an unprecedented success. The signatories agreed upon a set of five interdependent commitments comprising ownership, alignment, harmonisation, management for results, and mutual accountability. The message of the declaration is simple but very important: “Aid will be more effective if the actions and behavioural changes listed as commitments under the five headings are undertaken, and less if they are not.”²⁹ Similarly, it is argued that “the PD is taken as the only globally accepted framework for concretely assessing donor progress towards aid effectiveness.”³⁰ It is believed that from the mid-1990s up to 2005, PD is a period of evolutionary policy thinking spearheaded by the OECD, which resulted in the emergence of a new aid paradigm

characterised by radical reforms in the international aid regime.³¹ A dominant characteristic of the new aid paradigm, illustrated clearly in the PD and subsequent declarations, is that the governments in developing countries have re-emerged as important actors in aid and development policies.³²

**The global aid effectiveness agenda:
Did the quality of aid improve and did
signatories achieve the PD targets?**

The effectiveness of development cooperation depends on how the donors and recipients manage and utilise it; in line with the PD commitments or not. Upon signing the PD, all signatories committed to undertake periodic surveys measuring progress towards implementation of the PD principles. The first two surveys were carried out in 2006 and 2008 and involved 34 and 55 countries, respectively. In the last survey carried out in 2011, 78 countries participated. During the baseline survey in 2006, evidence showed that significant ODA remained uncoordinated as there were numerous actors, sometimes with competing goals, leading to high transaction costs for development partners.³³ It illustrated that although some progress was made by both aid-providers and recipients, they lagged behind as the report called for more sustained efforts from both sides. The 2008 survey found that the overall aid landscape was not promising as signatories were unable to meet the targets concerning enhancement of the quality and impact of ODA.³⁴ The report identified that despite having systems of good quality in certain recipient countries, donors still tended to bypass those systems and

institutions and “too many donor activities remain[ed] uncoordinated at the country level.”³⁵ Covering 78 countries, the 2011 survey reported that globally only one out of the 13 targets set up for 2010 had been achieved.³⁶ However, it was stated that noticeable progress had been made towards achieving a majority of the 12 remaining targets. The main conclusion of these surveys was that in contrast to aid donors’ policies and practices of aid delivery, development partners had shown significant improvement in certain areas related to public financial management. Another report titled *Aid Effectiveness 2005-10: Progress in Implementing the Paris Declaration* depicts a fairly similar position as it asserts that overall progress concerning aid effectiveness is uneven across both providers and receivers of development cooperation.³⁷ This report also affirms that in various areas development partners have taken a number of initiatives in line with the PD but donors’ responses have not been reciprocal and progressive to meet the PD commitments.

Besides studies conducted by the OECD to monitor the implementation of the Paris Accord, other works have also explored the PD implementation. A study by Wood et al. has examined aid modalities and practices of 18 donor agencies in 22 countries.³⁸ The study finds that aid effectiveness “principles and commitments have been applied, if gradually and unevenly, among partner countries and more unevenly among donors and agencies.”³⁹ Echoing similar concerns highlighted by the OECD reports, this study also emphasises that although aid-receiving governments have made some progress, improvements from a number of aid providers are not up to the mark. Major constraints causing slow progress from the donors’ side include “the

over-centralization of many donors' and agencies' systems and decisions running counter to alignment with country systems; disconnects between corporate strategies and the aid effectiveness agenda and weak organizational incentives."⁴⁰ The study also pointed out that "it is urgent that all donor governments find ways to overcome the internal institutional or administrative obstacles slowing their aid reforms."⁴¹ Similarly, in another study focusing on Canada, Norway, and the UK, Gulrajani has also emphasised that donors' policies and on-the-ground practices are a cause of low progress towards the PD implementation and advancing the overall aid effectiveness agenda.⁴² According to the author, among numerous stakeholders on the aid landscape comprising "multilateral institutions, aid recipients, non-governmental agencies, think-tanks, media observers, consultants and academics...donor governments and their publicly financed donor agencies...are not pulling their weight in the global effort to enhance aid effectiveness."⁴³ In sum, although not ideal, considerable progress has been made in various areas because "compared with the aid situation 20 to 25 years ago, current practice presents a global picture of far greater transparency and far less donor-driven aid today."⁴⁴

Contrary to the above studies that conclude that donors are mainly responsible for the lack of progress towards accomplishing aid effectiveness commitments, Knack asserts that donor governments have shown considerable progress in line with the PD principles.⁴⁵ Focusing on the years 2005-10, the author examined aid practices of 34 aid donors, comprising both bilateral and multilateral, across 151 developing countries and territories.

The study finds that “donors’ behavior over the measurement period is largely consistent with their commitments in this area under the PD.”⁴⁶ The study adds that “donors appear to have modified their aid practices in ways that build rather than undermine administrative capacity and accountability in recipient country governments.”⁴⁷ Studies discussed earlier also highlight that in several areas the Paris Accord has made a noticeable difference and donors have considerably, if not entirely, reformed their aid policies.

There are other country case studies that have examined the actual impact of the PD principles on aid effectiveness. These include research by Hayman on Rwanda; Monye, Ansah, and Orakwue on Nigeria; Blunt, Turner, and Hertz on Cambodia and Indonesia; and a study by Ali on Pakistan to assess aid effectiveness within the PD framework.⁴⁸ These studies have identified two main issues that result in the ineffective delivery and utilisation of development cooperation. Concerning the role of development partners, the incidence of corruption and lack of strong and capable institutions are the major hurdles leading to the ineffectiveness of development of aid. In relation to the role of aid providers, their strategy of coming up with predetermined development interventions having little input from their development partners results in the ineffectiveness of development cooperation. The findings of these studies illustrate that in such a situation development cooperation is targeted at ventures that are not prioritised by the recipient governments and aid is not spent where it is needed the most. Thus, for implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs, it is vital for improving the quality and impact of development cooperation. Aid needs to be spent where it is needed the most and where it can make a marked contribution to the

lives of people for whose welfare and development aid is actually provided. To this end, lessons must be learnt from past experiences to reform and improve aid delivery practices so that development cooperation is more responsive to the needs and priorities of the bottom-of-the-pyramid groups and communities.

Role of ODA in implementing the 2030 Agenda in South Asia

While ODA constitutes an essential part of development financing in numerous developing regions and countries, its role is equally significant in South Asia as the region is faced with a number of development challenges. The total area of South Asia is about 5.2 million km² and its population is 1.7 billion or about one-fourth of the world's total. Thus, while South Asia is one of the most populous and the most densely populated regions in the world, it is also the region with the highest number of people suffering from acute poverty. It is one of the most dynamic regions in the world, but it is also one of the least economically integrated. While intraregional trade is about 25 per cent in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, in South Asia "intraregional trade accounts for just 5 percent of total trade."⁴⁹ On account of the shared history and culture of many of the region's countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, there is a significant potential for economic integration but it has been dwarfed by decades-old interstate rivalries and mistrust. Also, "all nine countries have experienced internal conflict in the last two decades, and the resulting casualties have outnumbered those from interstate conflicts."⁵⁰ In this regard, Afghanistan and Pakistan are glaring examples

where thousands of people have been killed and millions have been displaced in the conflict during the last decade-and-a-half.

In view of the above, the region faces numerous development challenges. According to the *2015 Millennium Development Goals Report*, “The overwhelming majority of people living on less than \$1.25 a day reside in two regions—Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.”⁵¹ The report further adds that in terms of overall poverty, about 80 per cent of the global poor people live in these two regions. According to the World Bank, “About 399 million people—40 percent of the world’s poor—live on less than \$1.25 a day” in South Asia.⁵² The region has “the greatest hunger burden, with about 281 million undernourished people.”⁵³ Similarly, “an estimated 57 per cent of out-of-school children will never go to school.”⁵⁴ The World Bank has stated that over 200 million people live in slums and about half a billion people have no access to electricity.⁵⁵ Similarly, a number of countries in the region suffer from extreme forms of social exclusion and huge infrastructure gaps. To sum it up, South Asia’s score on Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.607 and life expectancy at birth is 68.4 years. It is only better than sub-Saharan Africa as its HDI score is 0.518 and life expectancy at birth is 58.5.⁵⁶

In recent years, economic growth in the region has been remarkable and is considered one of the fastest in the world. According to the World Bank, “driven by strong expansion in India and low oil prices,” growth was 6.9 per cent in 2014 and 7.1 per cent in 2015.⁵⁷ However, as illustrated earlier, the dividends of economic growth have not benefitted a vast majority and there is still significant inequality across geographical areas, sectors, and genders. In order to overcome the challenge of acute poverty, the region will also need sustained development cooperation in various

forms and from various sources. In 2014, the World Bank provided \$7.9 billion to the region for 38 projects.⁵⁸ The primary sectors that were financed by the World Bank included water, sanitation, and flood protection (\$1.4 billion), transportation (\$1.3 billion), and public administration, law, and justice (\$1.2 billion). Similarly, the region received a total of over \$15 billion from DAC-OECD donors during 2014.⁵⁹ The data further reveals that the largest aid recipients were Afghanistan (\$4.8 billion), Pakistan (\$3.6 billion), India (\$2.9 billion), and Bangladesh (\$2.4 billion). Other smaller countries including Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka also received significant development aid. It shows that development aid is a critical mode of concessional financing to promote sustainable development in South Asian countries. In view of the stark realities of the region, implementation of the 2030 Agenda and accomplishment of the SDGs in South Asia will need substantial international and transnational development cooperation. Thus, as in other regions, the South Asian region will also need more and better aid to show progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

SDG 17: Strengthening and revitalizing a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and the role of developing countries

While the SDG 17 itself is a goal to be accomplished, it also provides a kind of a roadmap with regard to building a reinvigorated and revitalized global partnership for achieving the SDGs. As discussed earlier, it has asked developed countries to accomplish the ODA commitment to reach 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI. There is also an emphasis on developing countries to increase domestic resource mobilisation including improving “domestic capacity for tax

and other revenue collection.”⁶⁰ Thus, for implementing the 2030 Agenda and accomplishing the SDGs, accountable and inclusive institutions, “good governance, the rule of law... and measures to combat corruption and curb illicit financial flows will be integral.”⁶¹ While the Addis Ababa conference, as well as the subsequent 2030 Agenda, has reiterated that achieving SDGs would require trillions of dollars as billions are insufficient to achieve the intended outcomes, the primary responsibility lies on the shoulders of the leaders of the developing countries to take far-reaching and sustainable measures to make huge sums available for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Currently, a majority of developing countries in various regions are not doing enough concerning good governance and the rule of law. For example, the Washington-based think-tank Global Financial Integrity (GFI) has found that illicit financial flows (IFFs) from developing countries have continued to rise. In its 2015 report, it has stated that during the 2004-14 period, countries in the developing world across various regions have lost an aggregate of \$7.8 trillion in IFFs.⁶² The study further adds that the total volume crossed the \$1 trillion mark in 2011 and reached \$1.1 trillion in 2013. In sum, it is vital for developing countries to take the issue of good governance and the rule of law very seriously. Unless they have taken concrete measures for the eradication of corruption and curbing illicit financial flows, it is hard for developed countries to increase their aid flows and also to trust developing countries in having a greater say and a more central role in the utilisation of foreign aid funds, which could eventually result in aid ineffectiveness.

Alongside the international cooperation in the form of ODA or other kinds of assistance, achieving SDGs will require a “greater policy coherence between aid and non-aid policies (trade, debt, agricultural subsidies, financial and tax regulations, technology, etc.).”⁶³ Thus, FDI has been mentioned in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as a vital complement to national development efforts. It is argued that “investments in developing countries—and even in the least developed countries—are seen as business opportunities...companies provide jobs, infrastructure, innovation and social services.”⁶⁴ However, the OECD report has also appropriately emphasised that “investors want to invest not just in good projects, but also with ‘good’ partners in ‘good’ countries with ‘good’ policies.”⁶⁵ Hence, for improving aid effectiveness as well as for attracting investors, it is exceedingly important that there is supremacy of the rule of law and good governance characterised by sound policies and efficient and accountable institutions. It is primarily the responsibility of the developing countries to ensure a domestic environment that could subsequently play a vital role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Total official support for sustainable development (TOSSD): A new measure to broaden the concept of ODA for better coordination and planning

For enhanced coordination and effective use of international cooperation to implement the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda has called for “open, inclusive and transparent discussions on the modernization of the ODA measurement and on the proposed measure of total official support for sustainable development [TOSSD].”⁶⁶

However, it has also asked to reaffirm that any such measure will not dilute commitments already made by the international donor community. In the context of a revitalized Global Partnership to implement the 2030 Agenda, it is argued that there is a need of “bringing together Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources.”⁶⁷ To properly capture and analyse the impact of all available financial flows from diverse official sources, the OECD is working on developing a broad and modern concept of international cooperation, which would include not only ODA but all forms of official assistance comprising South-South cooperation and assistance from numerous public and private entities including both bilateral and multilateral ones. It consists of launching sound, transparent, and accountable international standards for calculating and monitoring development finance for implementing the 2030 Agenda.⁶⁸ The aim is to have a full picture of all financial resources that are available to assist developing countries in implementing the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda states that these will include “the mobilisation of financial resources as well as capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms.”⁶⁹ To this end, it is believed that the TOSSD measurement framework would promote increased transparency about the impact of numerous actors and their financial flows. Also, sharing of information and experiences of various stakeholders would lead to enhanced understanding with regard to “good practice among developing countries about accessing and combining resources most effectively... [and] how and to what extent the international community is

addressing global challenges.”⁷⁰ In the long run, the TOSSD framework could play an essential role in promoting “informed policy discussions about the quality and impact of development finance.”⁷¹ Consequently, stakeholders in developing countries and in the developed world would have a clear picture related to overall financial flows as well as about resources available for each country and each sector. It would eventually lead to better planning and allocation of resources where these are needed the most for achieving the SDGs.

Increased funding for climate change: An additional form of development cooperation

The 2030 Agenda is comprehensive and holistic in scope focusing on people, planet, and prosperity. Unlike the MDGs, the environment has been a key component in the SDGs as SDG 12, 13, and 14 are specifically related to environmental sustainability and it has been reaffirmed to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.”⁷² It has been asserted in the 2030 Agenda that intense and coordinated efforts will be made by all stakeholders to hold “the increase in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, or 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.”⁷³ In this context, the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) held in Paris in December 2015, was a historic event where stakeholders vowed unprecedented commitment to managing climate change. At the forum, it was resolved to significantly increase efforts to address challenges caused by climate change. To this end, it was also decided by the international community to increase

funding for climate-related interventions. In the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), developed countries committed to mobilise \$100 billion per year by 2020 under the Green Climate Fund (GSF) to assist developing countries in countering adverse effects of climate change.⁷⁴ Thus, alongside the initiatives discussed earlier, developing countries would have access to this additional financial resource to tap into and make progress towards achieving the SDGs, particularly those related to environment and climate change.

Conclusion: Lessons learnt and future directions for implementing the 2030 Agenda

Two key lessons can be learnt from the journey towards the SDGs. First, from a somewhat cynical perspective, it can be said that the replacement of the MDGs by SDGs is the continuation of the same process. It is a justification of the existence of a vast international development bureaucracy and architecture. For example, more than two-and-a-half decades back, Hancock had stated that “more than 80% of all the money passing through the UN system is spent on its 50,000 staff.”⁷⁵ One can imagine that the development industry has expanded enormously at the global level since then, as Lumsdaine asserted more than 20 years ago that it consisted of “half a trillion dollars, a score of donor countries, many international agencies and 120 recipient countries.”⁷⁶ To quote Hancock again, “Over almost fifty years they should have dealt systematically with the problems they were established to solve, closed up shop and stopped spending tax-payers money.”⁷⁷ Hence, there is immense criticism on the overall

role of development cooperation in global poverty eradication.

It is commonly argued that despite being in practice for decades, development cooperation has failed to achieve what it had intended to do. Second and an optimistic perspective is that there are people and organisations working honestly and dreaming for a better world: a world with less poverty and more prosperity for the people of this planet. However, to achieve the vision of a world free of poverty, the developed as well as the developing world needs to do a lot more to accomplish the highly ambitious targets and goals specified under the SDGs. Implementing the global 2030 Development Agenda is a joint responsibility of all UN member states both developed and developing nations. On the part of the former, it is vital to fulfilling their aid commitments both in terms of quantity as well as quality. Regarding quantitative increase, aid donors need to achieve the internationally agreed target of 0.7 percent of their GNI. If accomplished, it would markedly increase the overall aid levels: up to around \$400 billion from its current value of over \$130 billion. In relation to increasing the quality and impact of development cooperation, it is essential for aid-providers to allocate aid where it is needed the most and where it can make a real impact on the lives of the poor. To this end, the internationally agreed principles of the 2005 Paris Accord and the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation can be very helpful and both providers and receivers of development cooperation need to revisit existing aid policies and practices and reform them in the light of these principles. Also, while the international donor community is there to support, it is the primary

responsibility of developing countries to put their house in order with regard to improving governance and controlling corruption. The 2030 Agenda's Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation is a right step and both developed and developing countries need to forge mutually beneficial partnerships and learn from past experiences regarding effective delivery and utilisation of development cooperation.

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MUSLIM WOMEN'S SUPPORT FOR FUNDAMENTALISM: COMPARING IRAN AND PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Muslim Women's support for Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and Pakistan has its roots in the liberation struggles of their peoples against despotic rulers seen as agents of the West and colonial masters. The rise of Islamic feminism in these countries, once again, is perceived as either an outright support for Islamic fundamentalism or as an apology for its misogynist approach—a case of feminist fundamentalism. This paper draws a distinction between the case of Islamic feminists in Iran and Pakistan using the framework of Kandiyoti's 'bargaining with patriarchy' and Jalal's 'convenience of subservience'. It is argued in this study that the feminists in Iran are engaged in an active debate with the republic, bargaining to negotiate concessions for women. Grounding their arguments in the words of the Holy Quran and Hadith, a language that the fundamentalists understand, they have won considerable ground. In Pakistan, however, owing to their own upper and upper-middle-class status, their failure to attack the roots of the oppressive system, or their accommodations and submission to it, has either been convenient or rewarding for them.

Introduction

Muslim women of the South Asian subcontinent have time and again attempted to influence politics through their

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faith. David Willmer¹ reminds us of the 1913 Cawnpur incident, where parts of a mosque were demolished to make way for a road. This created a furore amongst the Muslim community and the ensuing protest was put down through violent means. Willmer mentions how Harcourt Butler, the lieutenant-governor of the United Provinces in the undivided India, complained against Muslim women and their use of religion to incite men to rebel against the British. He wrote to the Viceroy saying, "My problem is to keep the *Musalman*² women right. If they get a handle, as they did over the Cawnpur mosque incident, they will force their husbands and male relations to do something for Islam. No Government in the East can control a combination of priests and women."³

Even today, many women in Pakistan are staunch supporters of right-wing radical parties and endorse state policies in the name of Islam that is seen by some as damaging to their own cause. On 5 September 2003, hundreds of veiled women activists of *Jamaat-i-Islami* (JI)⁴ protested outside the parliament house in Islamabad against the recommendations of the state-sponsored National Commission for the Status of Women (NCSW) to repeal the *Hudood* Ordinances. Led by the *Naib Nazim* Sakina Shahid of the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, the protesters rejected the recommendations of the NCSW and opposed the idea of imposing what they termed as the suggestions of a handful of Westernised women on the nation against the will of a majority of women. The protesters included some prominent women members of the parliament, belonging to the opposition as well as ruling parties, who marched with them as a mark of solidarity.⁵ The country at the time had 200 women parliamentarians sitting in the national and provincial

legislative assemblies and 40,000 women in the local governments⁶ who could have turned the tables on the issue of repeal of such discriminatory laws. But instead, they chose to either stay quiet or join the ranks of fundamentalists who uphold them as divine laws and thus sacred.

Iran's case is no different. Women actively supported the Iranian revolution in 1979 that resulted in the establishment of an Islamic state with the overthrow of the Shah of Iran's monarchy.⁷ Women students participating in the anti-Shah campaign willingly veiled themselves with *hijab-e-Islami*⁸ and discarded adornments like jewellery and cosmetics to show their disgust for what they called *gharbzadgi* (Westoxication)—a disease that had afflicted people's minds and hearts, usurping the nation's natural resources, distorting people's identity and cultures, and degenerating the entire moral fabric of the society. Muslim women writers and intellectuals, like Fareshteh Hashemi, Zahra Rahnavard, and Tahereh Saffarzadeh, joined hands with the Islamic revivalists and advanced the cause by denouncing the Westoxicated images of women and reconstructing the Islamic model of womanhood.⁹ Even after the revolution, when the enthusiasm of some of these ardent supporters had started to wane in the face of the Islamic regime's misogynist policies, some women continued to legitimise its discriminatory practices using the rhetoric of Khomeini's teachings. Shahla Habibi, presidential advisor on women's affairs in 1991 stressed in *Zaneh Rouz*¹⁰ that women, irrespective of their qualification and knowledge, should not overlook the family unit and undermine their obligations as housewives.¹¹ Even those who increasingly objected to the regime's policies and have ever since

actively engaged in the debate on the 'woman question' in the Islamic Republic are very much aware of their Muslim identity. They reject Western feminist thought and explore possibilities that exist within Islam, calling themselves Islamic feminists. Examples include Nayarah Tohidi, Afsaneh Najambadi, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Azam Taleqani, Maryam Behrouzi and Zahra Rahnavard.¹²

Women's support for Islamic revivalism or Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and Iran, as shown above, seems unusual when fundamentalists are seen to be major oppressors of women today. Even more so, Islamic fundamentalism is perceived to be allied with the subjugation of women and curtailing of their economic, legal, and political rights. In such a scenario, then, why have some women in Pakistan and Iran chosen to reject the call of feminisms of all sorts and joined the creed of Islamic fundamentalism?¹³ A number of reasons have been put forward to explain this phenomenon of women's support for Islamic fundamentalism, ranging from identity crises in a rapidly changing post-colonial era to aspirations for the achievement of a higher spiritual and moral order to a fear of divine disapproval.

This paper analyses women's support for Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and Iran within the frameworks put forward by Kandiyoti¹⁴ and Jalal¹⁵ where they place women's seeming defence and accommodation of systems of oppression like 'patriarchy' and 'state-sponsored process of Islamisation' in models of bargaining and subservience. Such an analysis, to begin with, requires an understanding of this particular 'system of oppression', i.e., Islamic fundamentalism, the form it has taken in Pakistan and Iran,

and its implications for women. The paper highlights a few possible reasons why women support fundamentalisms in general. The two models, 'bargaining with patriarchy' and 'convenience of subservience' are then explained. The case of 'Islamic feminism' is used to explain whether the belief that the "Islamic path to women's emancipation [is] the only viable, home-grown and culturally appropriate alternative to [Western] feminism, Marxism and the liberal humanist project."¹⁶ Support for Islamic fundamentalism or strategies is used by women to work within a concrete set of constraints to strike better bargains. To take it a step further are the so-called Islamic feminists merely creating excuses for a system's oppression in the name of religion. By avoiding to challenge its very foundations, they are ensuring a convenient position for themselves. The conclusion, once again, draws out the debate and discusses the contention: Is Islamic feminism a support for fundamentalism? The paper concludes with the argument that it is bargaining with the system in Iran and convenience for some who benefit from it in Pakistan.

Islamic fundamentalism

The term 'Islamic fundamentalism' in its very basic sense means 'returning to the fundamentals of Islam', 'returning to the source', or 'a return to a puritanical Islam' and is widely associated with various forms in which certain groups of Muslims, living in Muslim as well as non-Muslim societies, manifest in their own ways. Islamic fundamentalism thus attempts to motivate the Muslims to follow the preaching of Islam through reaffirmation to the founding principles of the divine doctrine and restructuring

contemporary society in light of the same. It also involves efforts to build up confidence and faith to face modern day challenges.¹⁷ Movements involving this attempt 'to return' do not use the term fundamentalist to identify themselves. Instead, they conceive of themselves as 'revivalists'—as people or groups who seek to revive the purity and dynamism of Islam as in its beginnings. Owing to the turbulent times they exist in, fundamentalism or revivalism is one of the means by virtue of which they can cope with the contemporary problems.¹⁸

Rudimentary definitions explaining fundamentalism as an out-moded phenomenon, a desire to return to medieval thinking, or a revivalist movement to bring back the past can, however, lead to an oversimplification of the phenomenon. Fundamentalism is also about political power and as such Islam is undeniably one of the modern political forces competing for power around the globe. Islamic fundamentalism, thus, has great attraction for the high achievers among youth. As Mernissi reminds us that in global metropolises "Islam makes sense because it speaks about power and self-empowerment. As a matter of fact, worldly self-enhancement is so important for Islam that the meaning of spirituality itself has to be re-considered."¹⁹ Moreover, we cannot deny the inclusiveness or anti-elitist pull of fundamentalist movements that promise to make governance more accessible to people as well as more attuned to their needs based on moral-religious grounds—the 'New Religious Politics'.²⁰

Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and Pakistan

Islamic fundamentalism is not a uniformly homogenous movement.²¹ Individuals as well as groups deemed connected to it vary not only in their understanding of the ends of their movement but also the means to achieve it—Pakistan and Iran being two such examples. Although both are Muslim societies, Pakistan is predominantly a *Sunni* and Iran mainly a *Shiite* society. Pakistan is within the South Asian cultural sphere, Iran within that of the Middle East. In Pakistan, fundamentalism stems out of a communal movement whereas in Iran it is categorised as non-communal.²² In Pakistan's case, religious revivalism has been attributed to "the search for identity and reassertion of tradition in transitional societies" in a post-colonial era.²³ Political Islam owes its beginnings in Pakistan to the creation of the state in 1947 as a 'Muslim homeland' and to the 1905-06 constitutionalist revolution in Iran.²⁴

The fundamentalists in Iran represent the state and are all-powerful in their domain. In Pakistan, they are only a part of the ruling coalition and must compete for political and electoral power with other political parties and interest groups. Their interpretation of the role and status of women, marriage, and family law is much more contested than that of their counterparts in Iran.²⁵ Iran, then, is a case of 'fundamentalism consolidated' and Pakistan a case of 'fundamentalism in flux'.²⁶

Where there are differences, there is also much common ground. Fundamentalist movements, in general, are believed to have "patriarchal views regarding gender, family relations and social mores."²⁷ The Islamic fundamentalist agenda, both in Iran and Pakistan, in the

1980s and the 1990s included veiling of women, segregation of sexes, control of female sexuality, opposition to women's autonomy, and a literal interpretation of the *Shariah* (the Islamic law). Fundamentalists react against the liberties gained by women in the post-colonial era, viewing them as a consequence of the Western hegemony in their societies and as a deviation from the sacred rights and obligations. They attribute the ills of their societies to these 'un-Islamic' changes in male-female relationships, perceiving them to be against the divine and accepted laws. They concentrate their energies in bringing three areas of their lives, namely: status of women, marriage, and family law, in line with the 'pure' teachings of Islam.²⁸ This has had grave implications for women in both countries, legally relegating them to second-class citizens in matters of inheritance, marriage, and divorce.

A woman in Iran needs her husband's permission if she is to travel abroad. She can only join limited fields if she wishes to work, like teaching and nursing. Women's participation in agriculture, mechanical/electronic engineering, metallurgy, chemistry, computer programming, civil engineering, and accounting/commerce have been restricted. Veiling is mandatory for women and they can be legally punished with 74 lashes and internment for rehabilitation if they appear publicly either unveiled or 'badly-veiled'. A man in Iran has the unilateral right to divorce and polygamy. He can keep up to ten wives—four permanent and the rest temporary. In Pakistan, since the fundamentalists do not solely represent the state, their inroads have been limited to the changes they have been successful in making to the otherwise secular legal system in

the form of *Hudood* Ordinances. The fundamentalists never gained any electoral support except once and had to rely on pressure tactics of law and order situation to coerce governments into giving in to their demands. They have also supported the military dictatorships of Yahya and Zia. General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamisation programme in the 1980s is responsible for the *Hudood* Ordinances²⁹ that make no distinction between rape and adultery, leaving women in a precarious position, reducing their legal status to half that of a man's, and prescribing severe punishments like public flogging and stoning to death of the offender.³⁰ In spite of all this, the veiling of women is not a state law and it is not uncommon to see unveiled women in the cities and villages of Pakistan. There is also no restriction in their joining most fields if they seek employment. However, there is a considerable social pressure on women to conform to the Islamic standards and on governments to enact and enforce *Shariah* by the fundamentalists.

Women's support for fundamentalism

Men's support for fundamentalist regimes in power or fundamentalist movements in government's opposition is easy to understand as they may gain a divine mandate to exercise unrestrained authority over women with little interference, upward mobility on the socio-economic ladder, and lesser responsibilities towards women limited only to material support and up-keep with much greater rights in matters of divorce and sexual service. Women's support for such movements is, however, difficult to fathom and the reasons for it are varied. In general, women's involvement in fundamentalist movements may have been inspired by anti-

colonist or nationalist sentiments. In current times, they, like their men, may feel alienated and deprived in the processes of urbanisation, industrialisation, and immiseration of rural areas. Fearful of change, they stand to lose more than men in the loss of the security of wide kinship links amidst the social changes that frequently accompany the growth of fundamentalist movements. The common ground of acceptance and reinforcement of 'tradition' as the key to counter displacement and disempowerment in such circumstances is as willingly acknowledged by women as by men. Sometimes women support such movements because they wish to be recognised as morally upright members of their religion seriously engaged in addressing contemporary social problems. Fundamentalist networks may also assist women in their efforts to domesticate men, bringing them into the realm of life defined by the family. Alternatively, women might support them out of fear of male reprisal for non-compliance and defiance. Withdrawal of economic support, fear of legal procedures like divorce, taking away custody of children, and various physical punishments sanctioned by religious laws may scare them into obedience. Fear of divine disapproval, excommunication by the religious community, and supernatural punishments may also be added to the list. Finally, many women find that modernity presents them with difficult choices about things they were raised to believe to be inevitable. Freedom in matters of marriage, self-support, and control of fertility all become matters of choice representing revolutionary changes for them. These changes bring on a moral crisis in conceptions of marriage. Fundamentalism's assertions of marriage's divine origins, a nexus in which women's salvation is

achieved, is an answer to the crises. Its call for renewed dedication to the institution in absolutist terms gives such women a programme for moral action imparting religious meaning to the choices they have made in marriage, employment, and fertility decisions.³¹

In Iran and Pakistan, fundamentalism has arisen in conjunction with nationalism, anti-colonialism, and anti-Westernism. Women joined in the battle for liberation from colonial domination, as in Pakistan's case, or Westernised local masters, as in Iran's case, attributing sacred significance to their struggle. They saturated their ideals for the newly-independent nation or the emergent republic with religious meanings. Women saw the domination of the coloniser or a tyrannical ruler, an agent of the West, as a much greater source of oppression than anything inflicted upon them by their own menfolk. As such, they have had the tendency to analyse male violence against themselves as rooted in the greater evil of Western imperialism or colonialism.³² But once liberated from the Westernised despot, women in Iran continued to be oppressed by the Islamic Republic. In Pakistan, the Islamisation policies of Zia haunt women's lives even today. Women have reacted to the oppression in varied ways in the countries, some acquiescing to the pressure and siding with the regimes, some taking up a secularist struggle against it, and some creating spaces for themselves in the system neither bowing to it completely nor going against it outright. Belonging to the elite classes, the women in the first and the last category call themselves devout Muslims and continue to counter the fundamentalist demands as such.³³ The emergence of Islamic feminists, scholars, and activists who struggle for

gender justice in light of Islamic principles and readings has to be seen within this context.

Islamic feminism is, however, dubbed by secular feminists as either forthright support for fundamentalist regimes or as an apology for their policies. These oppositional views split Islamic feminists into two types—the 'fundamentalist apologists'³⁴ who support the divinely-determined differences between male and female, and the 'cultural revivalists'³⁵ who have attempted an enlightened interpretation of the Holy Quran, the *Hadith*,³⁶ and of pristine historic Islamic accounts. Islamic feminists are perceived as supporting, strengthening, and licensing the fundamentalist state's gender approach,³⁷ something that is seen as circumscribing and compromising the goals of their feminist agenda. Their efforts are considered an anti-Orientalist campaign with a union of the apparently radical and anti-representational standpoints with a fundamentalist orthodoxy.³⁸ Scholars like Hale Afshar, Leila Ahmed, Riffat Hassan, Afsaneh Najambadi and Nayyarah Tohidi are accused of being postmodernists and cultural relativists depicting selective representations.³⁹ The attempts of some of these scholars like Fatima Mernissi, Aziza AlHibri, and Riffat Hassan to compose feminist religious studies and woman-friendly hermeneutics of Islamic scriptures are thought to be ineffective, as Islamic feminism is seen as nothing more than an oxymoron.⁴⁰ Are the Islamist feminists apologists for Islamic fundamentalism,⁴¹ or have they simply struck out a bargain that has enabled them to negotiate better terms?⁴² Alternatively, is it simply the ploy of the female elite who can, by bowing down to the regime, gain favours and highly paid positions for themselves?⁴³ The

questions can be answered by an analysis of Kandiyoti's 'bargaining with patriarchy' and Jalal's 'convenience of subservience'.

'Bargaining with patriarchy' and 'convenience of subservience': Islamic feminism in Iran and Pakistan

Patriarchy is commonly used as a blanket term for all forms of male dominance. Radical feminists generally allocate patriarchy to the ideological sphere with a material basis in the division of labour between sexes and tend to apply the term to almost any form of male dominance and its subjugation of women. For socialist feminists, it has emerged as a residual category, as exploitation and oppression of women can primarily be attributed to race and class. What cannot be explained through the workings of capital can be justified with the rationale of the system of patriarchy. They, therefore, endorse the association between patriarchy and the class under capitalism.⁴⁴ Such generalisations, however, are problematic as they suggest the monolithic concept of male dominance, which undermines the culturally and historically determined mutual engagements between genders.⁴⁵

Kandiyoti, therefore, suggests investigating different strategies of women, which they adopt to cope with various forms of patriarchy. She argues that women negotiate and strategize within existing societal constraints, which outline the 'patriarchal bargain' of any given society. This blueprint may exhibit variations according to class, caste, and ethnicity. She asserts that women make accommodations to 'classic patriarchy' and even support it because they have a long-term vested interest in the system that oppresses them.

The cyclical fluctuations of power position that involve the subordinate and powerless daughter-in-law growing into the authoritarian mother-in-law ensure that women have a stake in the continuity of the system and become active colluders in the reproduction of their own subordination. Women, knowing their limits and constraints, espouse interpersonal approaches that safeguard their well-being through the favour of their sons and husbands. They, thus, become expert at maximising their own life-chances. Also, without any empowering alternatives, when women perceive the old order slipping away from them, they often resist the processes that can change the system.

Islamic feminism in Iran is a classic case where the Islamic feminists are strategizing within the constraints of the Islamic framework. The use of Islamic discourse by them is a strategic attempt to acquire legitimacy that also serves to broaden the base of support for women's rights in addition to being an expression of their religious convictions.⁴⁶ The alternative of Western feminism is rejected by them as being one of the many instruments of colonialism and they rebuff the liberation offered to women under Western patriarchy.⁴⁷ They believe that by concentrating on the study of the labour market and the experiences of white/middle-class/affluent women as a norm, Western feminists have come up with an analysis totally irrelevant to the lives of the majority of women that live in non-Western parts of the world.⁴⁸ In the absence of any acceptable alternatives, their own path to liberation is the most suitable one. In this worldview then, when women see the old system of classic patriarchy collapsing, they use all the pressure they can to make men live up to their obligation. In Iran, the defenders of faith

women took the Republic to task for failing to deliver its Islamic duties. They used Islamic revivalism to fight against their political, legal, and economic marginalisation. Using the language of the Holy Quran, they have, for example, succeeded in removing many of the bars placed on women's education. As Afshar points out, "By deconstructing the Islamic discourse, Islamist women have succeeded in reconstructing an ideological framework that enables them to make political demands, framed in the language of Islam."⁴⁹

Pakistan's case, on the other hand, is aptly explained by Jalal who has used the term 'convenience of subservience' "for Pakistani women from middle and upper strata in the rural/urban areas who submit to a subservience decreed by a highly inequitable socio-economic order, buttressed by a thin veneer of ostensibly Islamic morality."⁵⁰ For these women, making such accommodations can be socially rewarding. As long as they do not violate social norms, they are accorded some respect and privilege in the family sphere and depending upon their generational and marital status, also in wider social networks. Jalal claims that the classist composition of the front-runners of the Pakistani movement has had a bearing upon their articulation of women's issues at the state level. They have a stake in the maintenance of the social order as they themselves are its beneficiaries based on their class-based privileges. A radical demand that dismantles the stability of the patriarchal family will also destabilise this social order that lends them class-based social, political, and economic privileges. She asserts, "As beneficiaries of social accommodations worked out over long periods of history, middle and upper class women everywhere have a stake in preserving the existing

structures of authority, and with it the convenience of a subservience that denies them equality in the public realm but also affords privileges not available to women lower down the rungs of social hierarchy. So insofar Pakistani women share a common fate, subservience has been relatively more convenient for some than for others.”⁵¹

It is common for women active in right-wing fundamentalist organisations in Pakistan to sit in their party offices and issue statements promoting women's domesticity. “A man's primary duty is to ‘provide’ (or ‘protect’) for his family and that of the wife's is to raise children, take care of her husband, and be obedient to him at all times.”⁵² They themselves sit in parliaments, pursue careers, and participate in political rallies. Jamaat had 215 women's units in 1978, which had grown to 554 by 1989. It also has a very active women's student wing by the name of *Islami Jamiat-i-Talabat*.⁵³ They tend to issue statements that actually do not affect their own lives but present a model to be followed by the “silent and unmentioned majority of Pakistani womanhood.”⁵⁴ Take the example of Fareeda Ahmed who was a member of parliament during the MMA rule, a member of the NCSW, and an Islamic scholar. As a member of her political party MMA,⁵⁵ she cast a dissenting vote against the recommendations of NCSW for repeal of *Hudood* Ordinances. She reasoned that flawed administrative and procedural measures were responsible for injustices against women, not the laws.⁵⁶ She said that as the *Hudood* Ordinance was strictly based on the Holy Quran and *Hadith*, repeal was out of the question.⁵⁷ On polygamy, the learned doctor asserted that majority of women opposed to it themselves had a status of second or third wives of their

husbands but they were defending the American/European laws in which the man had a right to have one wife with the opportunity of having many girlfriends.⁵⁸

Then there is the case of Pakistani Islamic feminists living in the West who have a firm faith in the egalitarian spirit of Islam, are opposed to secularists, and have prescriptions in abundant for their counterparts back home. One such feminist, Riffat Hassan, points out that the “correct reading of the Quran, from a non-patriarchal perspective, leaves no doubt that men and women have been created equal by God and that there is no religious or ethical justification whatsoever for discriminating against women.”⁵⁹ She is against the religious extremists who teach hatred, bigotry, and violence in the name of religion, but is no less vocal against the anti-religious extremists who maintain that Islam and human rights are incompatible.⁶⁰ “The only hope of saving Pakistan from religious extremists, the feudal-tribals, the corrupt bureaucrats, and various types of opportunists and fortune-hunters alike is the emergence of an educated group of persons who understand Islam to be a religion of justice and compassion, of knowledge and reason, of openness and peace. It is possible to build a justice-centred society within the ethical framework of the Quran which is the Magna Carta of human rights” she asserts.⁶¹ The support for Islamic laws for one who does not have to live under it in an Islamic state like Pakistan is understandable. In addition, the role of economically privileged and educated women like Farida Ahmed in the reproduction of the gender biases underpinning their subservience has to be acknowledged in the same spirit. In a social setup where a woman’s obedience to her husband

and to the larger social order is reciprocated with financial security in the family and prestige in society⁶² subservience is for sure a safer option.

Conclusion

Iran and Pakistan are amongst the countries where Islamic fundamentalism has been seen to flourish. In Iran, it has gained state power, whereas in Pakistan it is still struggling to do so in collusion with the state structures. Historically, in both countries, women have supported the religious/nationalist causes like the revolution in Iran and the independence struggle in Pakistan only to have their rights affected as a result of the enforcement of Islamic laws. To struggle against their oppression, however, they have rejected the alternative presented by Western feminism, joined the ranks of Islamic feminists, and used the same revivalist spirit of Islam in their favour as used by the fundamentalist men. But the emergence of Islamic feminism as support of Islamic fundamentalism⁶³ is to be seen within the context of various personal, political, and cultural factors. These factors determine for women in individual countries what is probable, possible, or out-of-bounds for them, who then in the light of their knowledge and experiences devise strategies for survival.⁶⁴

In Iran, to counter the oppression and create spaces for themselves, women have used the language of religion, familiar to the fundamentalists. Working from within an Islamic framework, in the absence of any other empowering alternatives, they have been able to negotiate and strike better bargains for women. In Pakistan, women's struggle has always been led by a handful of educated upper- and

upper-middle class women. They come from politically active families and have the protection of their influential kith and kin. Their family status ensures that for them an outright support for Islamic fundamentalism does not entail the application of same laws in their own lives. Submission to the oppressive order means access to the National Assembly and many other prestigious posts for the likes of Farida Ahmed. Therefore, they conveniently ignore the plight of thousands of women whose lives are affected by Islamisation of national laws and try to show that a 'truly' Islamic state is the only road to salvation.

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CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR: THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS FOR BALOCHISTAN

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Abstract

Unlike transit corridors, economic corridors are explicitly designed to stimulate economic development and uplift social indicators. While the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been efficiently described as an economic corridor and game changer to the overall economic landscape of Pakistan, its implications for the economy of the Balochistan province of Pakistan are yet to be determined. The fact that 61 percent of the total \$62 billion CPEC-related investments will be allocated to projects in the energy sector, which are situated out of Balochistan, a relevant point worth investigating is whether the CPEC will be just a transit route for Balochistan or it will be a harbinger of a greater socio-economic change to the province. This paper attempts to analyse how CPEC can be instrumental in changing the social and economic landscape of Balochistan. The study, while analyzing various aspects of Balochistan's economy, argues that the CPEC enterprise has an enormous significance for the social and economic development of Balochistan. With numerous growth nodes and economic corridors, Balochistan needs Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and greater connectivity. The CPEC will likely provide the much-needed physical infrastructure and help to exploit the trade and other economic potentials of the province.

Introduction

In mid 2000s Pakistan and China developed a proposal under the China-Pakistan Economic Cooperation to

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create an Economic Corridor from Gwadar in Balochistan to Kashgar in western Chinese province of Xinjiang. This proposal culminated into formal launching of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2013 with the planned portfolio of projects worth around \$62 billion.¹ CPEC is a well-thought out and well-crafted concept that is likely to usher in a process of significant and broad-based cooperation between China and Pakistan. CPEC will potentially augment the increasing mutuality of interest based on shared understanding of political, strategic and economic vision of both China and Pakistan. It will construct a new framework of collaboration and interaction for economic engagement and regional cooperation that will have far-reaching geo-economic and political implications not only for China and Pakistan but also for the neighbouring regions of West Asia, the Central Asia, and the Middle East.

CPEC, in fact, is a vital part of the greater Chinese concept of 'Go West' through the 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) project. Thus, the project is part of China's grand vision, known as the OBOR initiative.² This vision extends from the Baltic region in Europe to Southeast Asia and from China to Africa. Therefore, it is safe to say that CPEC offers a great strategic advantage to China as it gains physical access to the Indian Ocean and closer proximity to the Middle Eastern oil resources. Other OBOR projects around the world do not offer such advantages to China. Arguably, the CPEC enterprise recognises the new dynamics of geopolitics by pursuing a more systematic, pragmatic, and prudent interaction for economic, energy, trade, and commerce development. Besides further consolidating the bilateral relations of China and Pakistan and putting them on

firmer commercial and economic basis, CPEC will also provide an opportunity to both the countries to improve their economic and geostrategic interaction with adjoining regions. Both China and Pakistan will expectedly obtain enormous social and economic gains from trade and commerce connectivity through roads, railways, and sea-lanes with the neighbouring regions, the Middle East, and Europe.³ It will equally contribute to economic development of countries that may potentially become an active part of this arrangement. However, in order to reap the full benefits of CPEC, Pakistan needs to harmonise her relations and pursue a politics of interdependence and positive connectivity with the neighbouring countries and closed economic ties with far away economies. This will give a considerable boost to Pakistan's economy. With this, the regions along the corridor will witness a substantial socio-economic development. It will offer a prospect to Pakistan to address some of her key issues, i.e., poor physical infrastructure and connectivity, energy bottlenecks, and limited or no attraction for foreign direct investment (FDI) that are a great source of hampering its economic growth and development. Under the CPEC agreement—which is further elaborated in Energy Project Cooperation of both countries signed on 8 November 2014—around 61 percent of \$62 billion CPEC investments would be allocated to energy-related projects in order to meet the much-needed energy demands of the country. The energy deficit, according to some estimates⁴ costs the economy of Pakistan around 2 percent to 2.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) every year. The energy projects that were planned for completion in early harvest phases—in 2017-2108—would

add up to 10,400 Megawatts of electricity to the energy system of Pakistan. So far 7,000 Megawatts of electricity has been added to the national grid system.⁵

According to the agreements signed between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the Chinese President's visit to Islamabad in April 2015, 36 percent of CPEC related investments would be devoted to infrastructure and communication development.⁶ Pakistan desperately needs a vibrant infrastructure to bring its economy to potential level as, according to a report of the Wilson Center,⁷ the poor performance of transport and communication in Pakistan costs the economy 4 percent to 6 percent of GDP annually. Improved communication and greater connectivity are crucial not only in creating new opportunities of development in the country, facilitating smooth movement of goods, services, people, and ideas across country, and enabling Pakistani exports, but also in reducing the regional and provincial inequality, as the peripheries will be connected to the core and countryside to the main markets and cities. The construction of highways and motorways, railway tracks, and other means of communication and transportation all the way from Gwadar to the western region of China will generate massive economic activities and employment opportunities in Pakistan. Notwithstanding the fact that CPEC has significant geo-economic importance for the neighbouring countries, its likely contribution to the economic growth and development of Pakistan is far bigger than any other country. Hence, the CPEC project, if not a panacea for Pakistan to fix her economic distresses altogether, will

certainly have the potential to make a substantial contribution to putting the economy back on track.

For China, CPEC is equally important geopolitically and beneficial economically. It not only provides an opportunity for China to make a strategic presence at Gwadar at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz⁸—a place with immense geo-strategic importance—but will connect the Chinese western Xinjiang region to Southwest Pakistan, the Middle East, and the rest of the world through road and rail networks, as well as sea routes.⁹ Such connectivity will spur regional and international trade with Xinjiang province of China and could bring a substantial improvement to the economy of the entire region. This, of course, will provide China with a sea route access to her relatively underdeveloped western part and reduce her sole dependence on the Strait of Malacca for transporting her exports and imports.¹⁰

CPEC is a national project and its economic and political impacts can be analysed considering the country as whole. A review of the relevant literature reveals that despite some serious work on assessing the social, economic, and geo-political impact of CPEC on Pakistan and the region, CPEC is comparatively a new development and the body of academic literature that discusses CPEC is also in its infancy. Therefore, more work with a robust and systematic approach is required to evaluate the possible advantages and foreseeable ramifications of this mega enterprise. While examining CPEC at national and regional level is undoubtedly critical and warrants rigorous research, as it almost covers the width and breadth of the country, it is

equally crucial to appraise the discernible efficacy of CPEC on each specific region and province of Pakistan.

The discourse on CPEC is incomplete without discussing Gwadar, as the very concept of the project has germinated after thorough consideration of geo-strategic importance and immense economic significance of the port city. Gwadar deep-sea port has already been built, where, expectedly, an array of economic activities will take place with ample potentials, affecting the economy of Pakistan in general and Balochistan province in particular. Therefore, carrying out a comprehensive study to assess the possible prospects and implications of CPEC on Balochistan and specifically on its social and economic development is warranted. This study, therefore, aims to assess this vital question. The key and overarching research question and theme of the study is: what will be the prospective economic implications of CPEC on the economy of Balochistan; will it be a game changer for the social and economic landscape of the province, or will it just be a corridor that merely passes through it without any tangible economic impacts?

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: the subsequent section outlines some of the salient features of the economy of Balochistan. The third section attempts to analyse whether CPEC happens to be a mere transit route that passes through Balochistan without tangible economic significance, while the fourth section of the paper delineates the expected potentials and challenges of CPEC for Balochistan. The Fifth section discusses the geo-economic imperatives of CPEC for Balochistan, which is followed by the conclusion.

The Economy of Balochistan: A Bird's Eye View

Balochistan is geographically the largest Pakistani province (almost 45 percent of the total territory of the country) and least populated (only 5 percent of the country's total population). The province has natural resources, but its infrastructure is least developed and its people are the poorest in per capita income terms compared to other provinces of the country. There are many reasons why the Balochistan lags so far behind the rest of the country, as is evident from its economic, social, and political indicators. Illiteracy is high because opportunities to educate the children are limited. Poverty is rampant as very limited employment opportunities exist because of lack of physical and economic infrastructure for investment and growth. More than 76 percent of the rural population in Balochistan lives in absolute poverty¹¹ and unemployment is also staggeringly high.¹² Unemployment in Balochistan is high because successive governments have failed to build physical and economic infrastructure necessary for economic development that can create employment opportunities and help in reducing poverty. Currently, the public sector is the major employer. Traditional sectors like mining and small farming cannot absorb the unemployed lot, and successive federal and provincial governments have failed to initiate a vital industrialisation process that could generate enough employment.

In terms of economic structure, Balochistan is markedly different from other provinces of Pakistan. While the rest of Pakistan is labour-abundant with redundant labour force, Balochistan, with relatively smaller population

and a large surface area with strong economic potential, can easily accommodate its indigenous labour force. While it is true that agriculture sector, like in the rest of Pakistan, continues to attract interest in Balochistan, its potential is circumscribed by the scarcity of water.¹³ A greater part of Balochistan is not connected to the Indus River System to irrigate its vast and fertile land. The province performs far worse than the national average of Pakistan.¹⁴ For instance, per capita GDP in Balochistan in 2014-15 was Rs.31,000, while for the same fiscal year the per capita GDP in Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) was Rs.54,672, 69,417, and 53,000, respectively.¹⁵ The labour productivity in Balochistan is lower than other provinces of Pakistan. Hence, the poor living standard in the Balochistan, to a large extent, is a reflection of unemployment and low productivity. An average worker in Balochistan produces 1/3rd of the average worker of Sindh province, and the same average worker is around 25% as productive as an average worker in KP and Punjab.¹⁶ This suggests that a worker in Balochistan (a shepherd, a fisherman, a farmer, or a daily wage labourer) produces goods and services equal to \$1 or Rs.110 per hour.¹⁷ Although in per capita terms Balochistan historically did not lag far behind KPK and the Punjab—because of its sparse population and vast resource base—the change in per capita GDP in Balochistan is far lower than other provinces. For instance, from the year 2000 to 2008, the per capita GDP in Balochistan has shown a marginal increment from Rs.31,086 to Rs.32,452, and declined to Rs.31,000 in 2015, as shown above. Whereas during the same period Punjab's per capita GDP has increased from Rs.40,537 to Rs.49,808.¹⁸ Hence, it may be plausible to argue that the

economic growth of Balochistan remained almost stagnant, while all other provinces could maintain a medium growth rate.¹⁹ This situation, therefore, led to drift the province away from the social and economic trends of the country. Since the mid-1970s, its share of the country's GDP has dropped from 4.9 to less than 3 percent in 2000.²⁰ The province has the highest infant and maternal mortality rate, the highest poverty rate, and the lowest literacy rate in Pakistan.²¹

CPEC and Balochistan Province

As stated earlier, of the \$62 billion Chinese investment in Pakistan, 61 percent is allocated to power projects, the majority of them are located outside of Balochistan, except a \$600 million worth of 300 Megawatt imported coal based power project in Gwadar and \$1,090 million worth of 1,320 Megawatt coal-fired power plant at Hub.¹ In other allied projects, the province has so far attracted around \$980 million investment including a technical and vocational training institute (\$10 million)² and a hospital in Gwadar, called the Friendship Hospital (\$100 million)³ at Gwadar. Other projects include new Gwadar International Airport (\$230 million), Gwadar East-Bay Expressway (\$140 million), necessary facilities of fresh water treatment, water supply and distribution (\$130 million), development of a free economic zone (\$32 million), Khuzdar-Basima Road (\$110 million), etc.⁴ In such a scenario, a valid question that may be asked is whether CPEC is just a transit route that passes through the province

¹ <http://cpec.gov.pk/energy>.

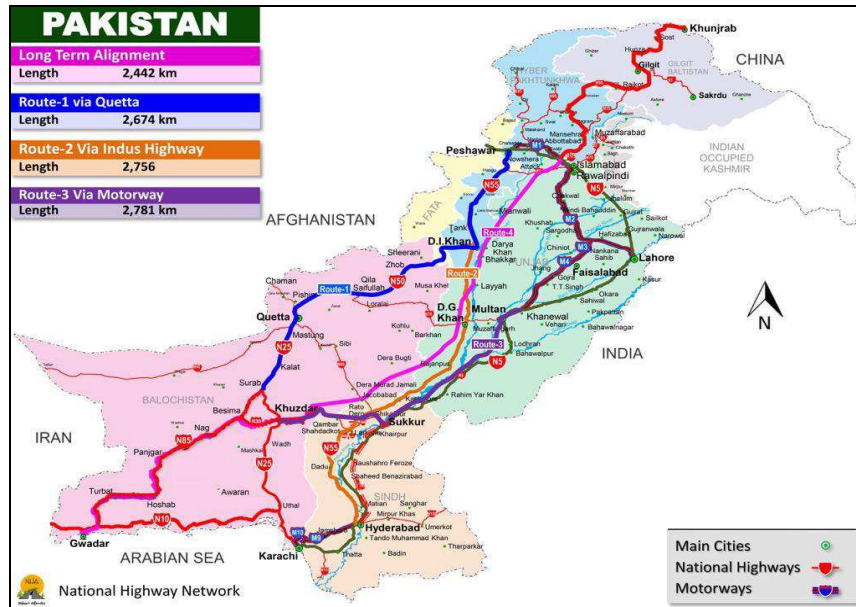
² <http://cpec.gov.pk/project-details/39>.

³ <http://cpec.gov.pk/project-details/38>.

⁴ <http://cpec.gov.pk/gwader>.

without adding much economic substance to it. It is important to mention that Gwadar is essentially the tail of CPEC, connecting Kashgar in China through different communication networks. Therefore, the vitality of its deep seaport for trade between the Middle East, Africa, and Europe with the western region of China is accentuated by the fact that it will reduce the distance from the Western Chinese city of Kashgar in the Xinxiang province to the port city of Gwadar in Balochistan. This new inroad trade route will reduce the distance from 16,000 km to around 2,500 km, and will connect the western China to the Middle East.²²

Figure 1: CPEC Highways/Motorways Planning



Source: Planning Commission of Pakistan, 2017.

As shown in Figure 1, all three routes of the corridor that begin from Gwadar and pass through the breadth of Balochistan virtually cover all regions of the province. For example, while the Coastal Highway connects Gwadar to Karachi passing through towns and cities of districts Gwadar and Lasbela, the main road network artery from the port city to the up country, connects western, south-western, and midland regions of the province to Ratodero, Sindh, D. I. Khan, KP, and to the northern region of Balochistan through the western route. It, therefore, can be said with certainty that the corridor fulfils Balochistan's decades-long requirements of road and other related infrastructure development. Albeit some of the less-developed regions—districts Kharan, Washook, Awaran, etc.—do not make a part of the main corridor. They will, however, be connected

to the mainstream network through allied highways. For instance, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, while inaugurating the Hoshab-Gwadar section of the road under CPEC on 3 February 2016 announced a 250 km length of highway from Hoshab to Bela, District Lasbela, passing through the length of District Awaran.²³ A similar highway is underway to connect Kharan, Washuk, Nushki, and Chagai districts to the main corridor from Besima, a small town in Washuk district. So, in this way, Balochistan will be knitted-up together and further connected to the national mainstream through various highways and subsidiaries of the corridor.

Now a pertinent question that warrants a rational justification is that although Balochistan will have a fine road infrastructure and connectivity through CPEC roads and network projects —by the virtue of Gwadar being at the extreme southwest of the province—will it be just a passing corridor or it will be a harbinger of economic activities brining about socioeconomic changes to the province? Cynics, some academics and political leaders from Balochistan being the prominent ones among them, are of the opinion that CPEC with its present design—where the greater part of its investments are planned and being executed out of Balochistan—is hard to bring any improvement to the economic and social landscape of the province. Hence, to them, CPEC would be a mere corridor and a transit route for the province where goods would be transported to and from the port city to the up country and the western region of China. The key concern of such quarters emanates from the fact that in the initial \$62 billion Chinese direct investments and loans destined to various projects, Balochistan gets two infrastructure projects, apart from some projects designed

for Gwadar city, as discussed earlier in this paper, and six Special Economic Zones, including the Gwadar Special Economic Zone.²⁴ It is imperative that the federal government has a clear vision or serious interest in the economic development of Balochistan in relation to CPEC. If not, CPEC might end up being a corridor without much economic significance for the province. The 653 km Makran Coastal Highway completed in 2004 stretched from Uthal, District Lasbela, to Gwadar and up to the Iranian border is a classic case in point. Although it connects the entire Gwadar District, as well as a part of Lasbela, to the biggest metropolis of Pakistan, Karachi, so far it has failed to bring any significant economic change to the southern region of Balochistan. Traditional source of livelihood of District Gwadar is fisheries, which witnessed no noteworthy improvement for the last decade that could be attached to the development of the Coastal Highway. The socioeconomic indicators in the district remain as abysmal today as they were in 2004-05. For example, Social Policy and Development Centre's estimates show that the incidence of poverty in district Gwadar was 47.6 percent in 1999 whereas the Social Policy and Development Institute and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund's estimates present the district with 45.2 percent poverty in 2013, failing to make any marked improvement in reducing poverty.¹¹ This is because neither the federal government nor the provincial government has come up with a concrete and sustainable plan and strategy for the coastal development accompanying the Coastal Highway.

Similarly, the sceptics suspect that CPEC, lacking any distinct and viable economic package specifically for

Balochistan, would not be able to help the province in rectifying its worst affected social and economic sectors. So the prevailing perception amongst a wide range of people in the province is that CPEC and its allied projects may bring more prospects to the rest of country than Balochistan. To them, CPEC is likely to remain a mere corridor supplementing no major economic substance and social change to the province. Thus, if CPEC is merely a transit corridor instead of being an economic one, its potential for fostering any kind of economic development in Balochistan will be severely limited.⁴ However, such a perception needs to be viewed with a pinch of salt.

Whereas it may be true that in preliminary \$62 billion investment, around 61% is allocated for energy projects and Balochistan's share in such projects is not significant. In addition, the provincial government apparently lacks any comprehensive vision to revamp and usher in a web of economic activities for Balochistan vis-à-vis CPEC developments, yet this study argues that the underlying dynamics of CPEC with its inherent economic pursuits have the potential of translating and changing the social and economic scene of Balochistan.

The Potential of CPEC for Balochistan and Challenges to it

Balochistan is a resource-rich region with a manageable population and high resource to labour force ratio. The province has the potential to create thousands of jobs and bring the currently staggering unemployment to the so-called natural rate of unemployment.²⁵ Development, indeed, is a complex process of induced structural change.

So, in order to develop, the province needs to have a development strategy aiming to change the economic landscape. CPEC with ample potential and opportunities is likely to provide an impetus to the development vision of the province and can provide a direction to which the provincial economy is aspiring to move.

Needless to say that viable industrial and trade development strategy is a prerequisite for economic growth and development. It is essential that the Government of Pakistan involves key business houses, both local and overseas, to design and evolve appropriate industrial policies, as otherwise CPEC will just remain a 'transit' route with no significant benefits to Pakistan's economy except providing a shorter transport route to China and her trading partners. Thus, CPEC must be realised as an economic corridor instead of being a transit route.

The economic corridors anywhere in the world are explicitly designed or aimed to support economic growth and promote development. Pakistan, given its multitude economic woes, needs to design and articulate programmes to stimulate industry, trade, and commerce so that it can get maximum gain from CPEC-related business opportunities.²⁶ Balochistan undoubtedly is one of the most important areas of Pakistan in relation to CPEC developments: Its geographical location makes it a great trade route, linking the deep-sea port of Gwadar with Xinjiang province of China, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian Republics. CPEC is rightly described not only as a set of roads and highways, but also a comprehensive package of development projects contributing to all sectors of the economy. The road and rail networks and infrastructure development in the province can

contribute to the economic development in the region in many ways. It can create an enduring economic opportunity for Pakistan, as well as for Balochistan province, and has the potential to transform the provincial economy in many ways and bring it at par with the national economy of the country.

The Government of Pakistan has planned to create nearly 29 industrial parks and 21 mineral processing zones in all four provinces under the CPEC umbrella, out of them 27 are granted the status of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Mineral Processing Zones.²⁷ In Balochistan Quetta, Dostan, Gwadar, Khuzdar, Uthal, Hub, and Dera Murad Jamali are identified for industrial zones, for the proposed Minerals Economic Processing Zones Khuzdar (chromite, antimony), Chagai (chromite), Qila Saifullah (antimony, chromite), Saindak (gold, silver), Reko Diq (gold), Kalat (iron ore), Lasbela (manganese), Gwadar (oil refinery), and Muslim Bagh (chromite) have occupied the list.²⁸ The indication of developing such economic zones is the clear manifestation of the fact that the Government of Pakistan has envisioned a comprehensive plan to boost the economic potential of all provinces including Balochistan. The government, however, needs to clarify how the recently created SEZs, with their corresponding tax regimes for CPEC, will affect the revenue-generation capacity and fiscal powers of the provinces, as after the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan, the provinces are more independent in managing their fiscal affairs and raising funds through different sources.

Probably, CPEC will happen to be a conduit predominantly for imports from the Gulf courtiers to the western region of China. Hence, in the light of the current

Chinese imports demand from the Middle East, we can analyse the potential of driving the industrialisation process in Balochistan province. For instance, in 2014, China imported nearly \$88 billion worth of oil from the Middle Eastern countries, of which \$76 billion worth of oil was primary and unprocessed products, which, in other words, indicates that nearly 85% of the oil imported by China from the Middle East was processed in China.²⁹ Similarly, in 2014, Pakistan imported \$5.6 billion worth of unprocessed fuel and lubricant products from the Gulf region.³⁰ Thus, even if China is to import only 10 percent of her total unprocessed oil from these countries through CPEC, it will considerably increase the flow of such products to Pakistan. Apart from this, in 2014, China also imported nearly \$17 billion worth of industrial supplies such as machinery and mechanical appliances, chemical and mineral products, vehicles, aircraft and vessels, textiles and articles, and miscellaneous manufactured articles from the Middle East, particularly from the United Arab Emirates,⁵ which is of course far greater than the \$2.4 billion imported by Pakistan in the same year.⁶

Since a bulk of the imports to western region of China that can be transited through CPEC will be intermediary goods and natural resources, it is imperative to develop industries around the corridor—specifically in and around the port city of Gwadar—that would rely on such products as their main inputs. The strategic location of Gwadar and its presence in Balochistan makes the latter an ideal place for petroleum refineries, automobiles, shipyard and

⁵ <http://www.mei.edu/content/uae%E2%80%99s-strategic-trade-partnership-asia-focus-dubai>.

⁶ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1246761>

shipbreaking, textile and clothing, steel and cement plants, and manufacturing industries for petrochemical intermediaries. Primary goods that may be imported to Gwadar by China can be processed in Balochistan and afterward transported to China and other trading partners. It will initiate economic activities that can contribute not only to overall economic growth and development of Balochistan, but also provide thousands of jobs to the local youth.

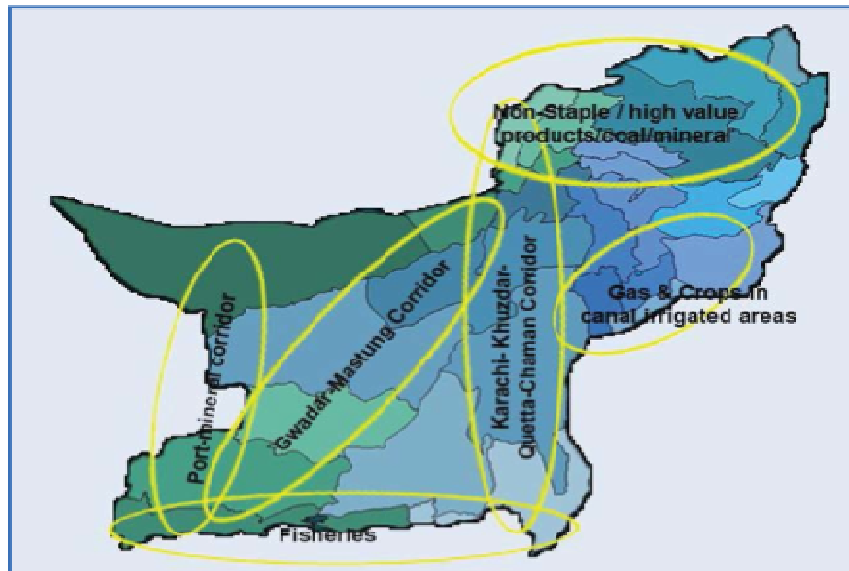
The physical and social infrastructure development in Balochistan has remained stagnant since independence of Pakistan. Currently, vast areas of the province are without physical and social infrastructure: roads, electricity, water supply, education, health, or any kind of employment opportunities or facilities are nonexistence in greater part of Balochistan. It can be said, though regrettably, that Balochistan is still reeling in horticultural and pastoral stage of growth, where livestock and minor crop subsectors command the largest share to the provincial economy, whereas the manufacturing and finance together account for only 9 percent to the provincial economy.³¹ The province faces major challenges in terms of physical infrastructure paucities and primary sector economy, which restrained the provincial economy to move onto secondary and tertiary sectors. Given the resource constraints, it is crucial to concentrate the development effort on selected sectors and areas, i.e., growth nodes and economic corridors that can create a pull effect for the rest of the sectors of the provincial economy. What follows in this study is an analysis of the proposed growth nodes and economic corridors vis-à-vis CPEC that can provide the necessary impetus for growth and development for the province.

The Government of Balochistan has identified 15 potential growth nodes, where industrial, social sector, urban, and agriculture/fisheries sectors' development can be focused around. The growth nodes may potentially be located at Quetta, Turbat, Gwadar, Khuzdar, Sibi, Qila Saifullah, Hub Chowki, Panjgur, Loralai, Kharan, Dalbandin, Nushki, Chaman, Zhob, and Dera Allahyar. Moreover, the government can develop at least five clustered growth nodes comprising the above locations and proximate towns considering the nearby cities as urban centres of these clustered growth nodes. The growth nodes—where the social, economic, and industrial development can be focused—are identified based on various criteria including location on junctions, population size and its growth rates, and mineral, fruit, fish, cereals, vegetable productions, etc. CPEC infrastructure and other related facilities could be utilised to connect these growth centres to the markets and ports, and establish a value chain that could support the economic activities in Balochistan.³² Considering the growth nodes, six potential economic corridors are classified in Figure 2.

- Corridor 1 is the coastal belt that covers the southern area of Balochistan—Districts Gwadar and Lasbela—accommodating the fishing industry. In the Figure 2, it is encircled as 'Fisheries'.
- Corridor 2 comprises the link between the copper/mineral belt in Chagai and Gwadar via Mashkel, Kharan, and Buleda—as shown in Figure 2 as the 'Port-Mineral Corridor'.
- Corridor 3 forms part of CPEC that covers

Gwadar Turbat, Panjgur, Besima, Khuzdar, and Mastung.

- Corridor 4 runs over the trade route along highway N-25 (the RCD road) that connects the port city of Karachi with Chaman on the Pakistan-Afghan border via Lasbela, Khuzdar, Kalat, and Quetta.
- Corridor 5 comprises gas fields and canal irrigated agriculture producing major food and cash crops. This covers the oil, gas, and coal rich districts of Dera Bughti and Kohlu.
- Corridor 6 comprises the north-eastern districts producing non-staple high value products, such as fruits, vegetables, wool, etc., and minerals, including coal, chromite, etc.

Figure 2: Potential Economic Corridors

Source: Chief Minister Policy Reform Unit, Government of Balochistan (2014).

The economic corridors characteristically emphasise Balochistan's tremendous industrial growth and trade potential. Yet, in order to exploit the potential of each corridor, besides a long-term development vision, a comprehensive road and rail network needs to be provided knotting the corridors and connecting them to the port city, to rest of the country, to Afghanistan and CARs, and to the western part of China. Interestingly, the proposed communication network of CPEC, covering a majority of regions and districts in Balochistan, will provide the necessary alignments, which is a prerequisite for the productive sectors to grow. Hence, the completion of CEPC-related communication network could create the required connectivity, enabling the economy of Balochistan for the productive exploitation of its vast and diverse resource base and promote output, trade, and development in the province.

Furthermore, CPEC comprises four phases of projects and schemes and currently it is in the first phase or 'Early Harvest' projects that are estimated to be completed in 2017-18: the other being the short-term projects (2020), the medium-term projects (2025), and long-term (2030). On top of other prerequisites, the potential corridors in Balochistan need massive investments. The public sector, given its limited finances, is unable to inject the required investment alone. The private sector investment, including FDI, has paramount importance in this regard. Some of the projects and schemes planned for medium- and long-terms phases under the CPEC umbrella will be attracted to these corridors. For this to happen, both the federal and provincial governments, alongside large foreign and local businesses, should encourage the small- and medium-sized enterprises and motivate the financial sector to provide the required finances. Considering this, it is, therefore, plausible to argue that CPEC will deliver the necessary infrastructure and economic impetus in which Balochistan can exploit and boost its economic potentials.

In order to gain maximum economic benefits from CPEC and aligned projects, however, some key measures need to be taken. An important measure is to invest in education to equip the local communities with the required skills and technical knowhow to gain from the opportunities that CPEC will present. Infrastructure development, logistics regulatory framework, and industrial parks and zones proposed for Balochistan will certainly demand skilled workforce. Moreover, education and training institutions will help in creating an indigenous human resource pool and enable the people of Balochistan to become stakeholders in

CPEC. This would lead to an enduring improvement and significant change to the social and economic status of the people of Balochistan, who would have to otherwise withstand harsh and impoverished living.

As discussed, the Economic Corridor passes through many of the major cities and towns of Balochistan, thus, it can be argued that CPEC's colossal projects not only have significant impacts in terms of employment generation in southern and northern districts, but could also have a multiplier effect on the disconnected regions of the province in relation to employment opportunities and other social and economic indicators. It is predicted that CPEC and its allied projects can potentially generate around 700,000 employment opportunities during the period of 2015-2030, which is considered to be short-term and medium-term periods in CPEC categorisation for Pakistan.³³ A sizable part of these job opportunities would incur in Balochistan, as the province accounts for a good share of CPEC projects. A study conducted by Haq and Zia³⁴ shows that most of the districts of Balochistan are ranked as poor and deprived in terms of social and economic wellbeing. In the first phase, 49 projects of various magnitudes are planned to be undertaken in all four provinces of Pakistan, out of which Balochistan would get 16 projects, the Punjab 12, Sindh 13, and KPK 13. The projects in Balochistan consist of Hub Coal Power Plant, Gwadar Power Plant, Gwadar International Airport, D.I. Khan-Quetta Highway (N-50), Khuzdar-Besima Highway (N-30), etc.⁷ Once these infrastructure, energy, and socioeconomic projects are complete under the umbrella of

⁷ <http://cpec.gov.pk/>

CPEC, they will have a significant impact not only on job creation, but also on the entire economic landscape of the province. As discussed earlier in the paper, Balochistan lags far behind other provinces and regions of Pakistan in all socioeconomic and welfare indicators. And the proposed CPEC projects for Balochistan could potentially open up a new vista of opportunity that would transform the social and economic scene of Balochistan and could help Balochistan in coming at par with other provinces.

Nevertheless, amidst prospects for development, the province has been dogged with a disgruntlement that has led to revolts and insurgencies stretched out over decades. The Baloch insurgents have serious reservations about CPEC and its aligned development. They fear that development of the Gwadar Port and greater economic activities resulting out of it would shift the demographic balance against the local Baloch and could convert them into a minority in their own province because of migration of workforce from other provinces. The resentment of Baloch separatists against CPEC poses a strong challenge to it, as sustainable development warrants a peaceful environment. As long as the people of Balochistan are not taken on board and their concerns addressed amicably, an enduring challenge looms upon the development of CPEC.

CPEC and geo-economic imperatives of Balochistan

The geographical location of Balochistan—placing it in the middle of Central, West, and South Asia—would always make it susceptible to the effects of regional and global geopolitics.³⁵ The maritime significance of Balochistan is

evident from the fact that its coastal belt can provide the shortest and most convenient sea access to the landlocked and resource-rich Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Afghanistan. As a significant international trade route and transit corridor and being resource-rich in oil, gas, metal, and maritime resources, Balochistan may provide the centre stage for regional and global geopolitics and geo-economics.

Besides its commercial and economic importance, the geographic location of Gwadar provides the port city with an immense geostrategic value. Given its geographic and geostrategic location, Gwadar has for long been considered to have the potential of exploiting the transit trade to and from the landlocked CARs, Afghanistan, and western China, by providing them the nearest access point towards the sea for their exports and imports. The completion of CPEC network, besides facilitating the transportation of goods back and forth from China to the Middle East and Africa, can help build trade and economic cooperation. For Balochistan, the economic gain from CPEC may also stem from the proximity of Gwadar port to the geostrategic shipping point of the Strait of Hormuz—from where billions dollar worth of oil and lubricants pass every day. Gwadar will emerge as a hub of trade and commerce once CPEC and its allied communication network are built and fully functional, connecting the port city to the rest of Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, and CARs. According to Gwadar Port Master Plan, by 2020 the port can capture 25 percent of the total international trade of Pakistan, 12 percent for Xinjiang province of China, 40 percent for Afghanistan, and 15 percent of the total trade of Pakistan with CARs.³⁶ The port can potentially contribute billions of rupees worth revenues

to the national exchequer and create thousands employment opportunities for the people of Balochistan. Additionally, Balochistan coast is conducive for building shipping industry. It is vital to establish the shipyard and ship breaking industry to gain maximum benefit from the maritime economics of the region. As discussed, Balochistan is full of all kinds of hidden treasures. These treasures cannot be exploited and utilised for the benefit of the people of Balochistan, however, due to lack of adequate political will and infrastructure deficiencies. Now, through CEPC, the required infrastructure development can be undertaken that could generate the resources necessary for economic development of Balochistan.

It is important to reiterate that CPEC, being a vital part of OBOR, is meant for China to strengthen its trade and commerce connectivity with various regions of the world, reviving the ancient trade routes between Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia, and China.³⁷ Whereas China's key focus in developing CPEC is to bolster its trade and economic connectivity, Pakistan will expectedly emerge not only as a major economic partner but could also play a central strategic role. The hub of this geostrategic vitality is Gwadar, as well as Balochistan as a whole, which is likely to become a key hub for international trade and commerce around the Indian Ocean and could become a major gateway for the Middle Eastern oil export to South Asia and western China, as well as Central Asian oil and natural gas export to the wider world.³⁸ With the planned inflow of CPEC-related FDI into the region, Balochistan would become a conduit of petro-chemical trade that would reinvigorate its otherwise weak social and economic

structure. This connectivity and access to regional economic markets could be a key stabilising factor for peace and tranquillity in Balochistan, which has been witnessing political discontent for long.

Bordering Iran and Afghanistan to the north and southwest and shoring up Arabian Sea to its south, the south-western province of Pakistan commands immense potential for border trade. Whereas, border trade with Iran and Afghanistan has been a great source of livelihood for the people of Balochistan, especially for northern (bordering Afghanistan) and western (bordering Iran) districts, establishing Free Trade Zones across borders and utilising the CPEC infrastructure to transport the processed commodities across the border and to other provinces of Pakistan and to western China can boost border trade in Balochistan.

The proposed oil and gas pipelines from Iran to Pakistan, which could be extended to Chinese western region and India, are expected to become an important component of CPEC. Since the proposed pipelines pass through the length of Balochistan, they could help provide the required fuel and energy for the proposed industries around CPEC.

Conclusion

The provincial economy of Balochistan is unique amongst the federating units of Pakistan, comprising over 44 percent of territory but least integrated into the mainstream economy, with rampant poverty and high deprivation. The province is marred with patronage-driven political economy and dearth of accountability. Around 80 percent of the

population is rural with an economy that is a typical manifestation of agro-pastoral structure. Balochistan lags far behind other regions in all socioeconomic indicators. Although nature has been gracious enough in filling its wallet with material and natural resources, the lack of political will, infrastructure deficiencies, and hostile local socio-economic structure has restrained the area from becoming the harbinger of growth and development. Although mineral resource base is the key sector of Balochistan, it remains underdeveloped and contributes only 1.4 percent to employment generation in the province.³⁹ Other growth potentials of provincial economy are trade and transit routes and coastal development. CPEC can potentially provide the prerequisites to boost these growth potentials. This can help in reinvigorating Balochistan's economic structure, mainly through developing mineral sector and other growth potentials and greater connectivity. This paper has argued that CPEC will likely change the economic landscape of Balochistan by providing adequate communication network and investments to its potential economic corridors. CPEC is in its early stage, though, and it is hard to confirm or even predict its actual social and economic impact on Pakistan, let alone Balochistan. Nevertheless, the paper has presented a scenario with the key potential areas that could gain maximum benefit from CPEC and usher in a growth and development process in the province. It needs to be acknowledged that given the level of weak and dysfunctional state of Balochistan's economy and dire situation of the social capital, one project, no matter how diverse and multifaceted it may be, cannot change the entire economic and social landscape. This paper has shown, however, that

CPEC, by virtue of being an economic and development corridor, can generate employment opportunities, help alleviate poverty, engage youth in entrepreneurial and commercial activities, maintain law and order situation, and improve overall social and economic outlook in the province. In this regard, the paper has argued that CPEC, though indirectly, can provide the incentives for regional stability and development opportunities in Balochistan province. And for this to happen, Pakistan needs to take comprehensive measures to enhance the capacities of the underdeveloped regions of the country including Balochistan. In this context, Balochistan in general and Gwadar in particular can emerge to be of great geostrategic significance, offering a remarkable boost to the economy of Pakistan and the whole region.

Amidst the uncertainty in regional and international geopolitics, however, such an ideal situation is by no means guaranteed. CPEC—being an integral part of greater Chinese OBOR project and the Chinese expansion to West Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia, Western Europe, and Africa—is indeed not seen by other regional and global hegemonic powers in a positive light. The US, with traditional presence and deep interest in the region, as well as India, Iran, and certain Middle Eastern countries, is having deep apprehensions against growing Chinese influence in the region and could make CPEC a hard undertaking. Thus, what is required is a farsighted and prudent consideration and in-depth analysis of CPEC and OBOR with their greater implications on geopolitics and economics. The Government of Pakistan and other key stakeholders of the project should devise a comprehensive and realistic policy, taking into

account the potential threats that could come in the way of the smooth materialisation of CPEC.

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