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Editorial Foreword

Here is the much-awaited **inaugural issue** of the *Journal of Japanese Studies: Exploring Multidisciplinarity* (JJSEM). It is a multidisciplinary, international journal of the scholars of Japanese Studies – the Japanologists. The Journal aims to produce, reproduce, and disseminate knowledge about various aspects of Japan.

The multidisciplinary of the Journal is reflected in the discipline-wise ranges it covers – economy and economics, politics, society, history, art and culture, religion, anthropology, architecture, archaeology, demography, and many more. The Journal’s approach is to encourage and promote the multidisciplinary of Japanology in all her dimensions – diverse in width and breadth, diverse in themes and thoughts, diverse in scholar’s country of origin and place of work, and diverse in identity as academic or practitioner.

This historical inaugural volume of JJSEM is an assembly of 31 scholarly articles and two book reviews written by relevant experts-Japanologists from eleven countries around the world (alphabetically) – Australia, Bangladesh, India, Hungary, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, and the United States of America.

The articles in this volume are broad-ranging. Therefore, for operational convenience, articles in this issue are grouped under broad disciplinary areas: Economy, History, Politics, Art-Culture-Language-Literature-Education, and Book Review. We know that this classification is not perfect, and we believe that a more appropriate typology will evolve in the process.

The accompanying volume contains six articles on the **Economy**, implying Japan’s Economy. They include three articles on the most contemporary and contentious issues related to COVID-19 and post-COVID Japan, namely Political economy of shocks and therapy (Professor Abul Barkat); Social impact (Dr Abdullah-Al Mamun); and Revival of economic growth (Nashia Zaman). The other three articles of especial utility are Determinants of the cultural diversity of the hospitality industry (Professor Dr Ying Zhu and Professor Dr Takamichi Mito); Japan-Bangladesh Bilateral (primarily economic) relationships (Lopamudra Ghosh); and Learning from corporate governance (Shiblee Noman and Sheikh Rashid Bin Islam).

This volume contains three articles under the theme- **History**. These articles cover various research areas less explored in the past. They include topics like- the Epidemics amid the Japanese occupation in the Philippines (Professor Roman R. Sarmiento Jr II); the approach to study *Japonisme* in the late 19th century (Professor Dr Yuki Meno); and *Bosozoku*-Violent speed tribes (Ahmad Shadaan).

Politics is a crucial area of articles in this volume. A total of eight articles under politics explore various subjects of interest. These include India and Japan's security challenges viewed from the US's response to 'rise of China' (Dr Shamshad A. Khan); India-Japan partnership and Northeast India (Dr Rajaram Panda); Challenges of Japan's shifting foreign policy to South Asia (Md. Saifullah Akon, Dr Debasish Nandy, and Alik Naha); Myanmar's role in India's Look East Policy (Dr Thi Thi Soe San); Prospects of the Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relationships (S.M. Rabby Raj); Japan-Bangladesh defence cooperation (Tanvir Habib); Shintoism- Substratum of Japanese Nationalism (Dr Dinamani); and Challenges of Japanese response to China's economic rise (Dr Ziyu He).

Regarding the number of articles, the broad group “**Art-Culture-Language-Literature-Education**” occupies a large part of this inaugural volume. It covers 14 articles with five on Religion, two on Language, two on Japan from women's lens, one each on- Ceramic Art, Transgenerational trauma in literature, Youth, Women's empowerment, Basic education. The five scholarly articles on the various aspects of **Religion** include the following: Iconographical similarity between the Gods and Goddess of Hindus and Buddhists in Japan (Dr Mayna Talukdar); *Shikoku*- Japan's authentic Buddhist pilgrimage (Professor Dr Him Lal Ghimire); New panorama of Japanese Religion (Dr Mohammad Jahangir Alam and Abdus Samad); Paradoxes of Zen Buddhism and Zen Koan (Dr Ravi Kumar); and Origins of the Universe in Shintoism (Md. Abu Taher). **Language** issues are covered in two articles: Teaching the passive voice of Japanese to Sri Lankan learners (Preethi Dinusha Pinnaduwa); and Compound Verbs in Japanese and Bengali (Sudip Singha). The other essential articles of interest in this broad group are Meiji Era's *Takaukibori* technique in Makuzu Kōzan's Ceramic Art (Dr Dilruba Sharmin); Bengali women's reflections on early 20th century's Japanese society and culture (Dr Lopamudra Malek); Transgenerational trauma in Ichiyo Higuchi's *Warekara* (Zsolt Nyeste); Meritocracy to Parentocracy- A theoretical dilemma in Basic Education (Dr Md Jahangir Alam); *Hikikomori*- Youth living shut-in (Pratyusha Majumder); A contemporary Indian expatriate view of Japan (Dr M.V. Lakshmi); and Comparing women empowerment in Bangladesh and Japan (Farida Yeasmin Banna).

This volume contains two substantive **book reviews**. The book by Hirabayashi Hiroshi, *India: The Last Superpower*, is reviewed by Dr Gitanjali Sinha Roy; and the co-edited book by Akihiro Ogawa and Philip Seaton, *New Frontiers in Japanese Studies*, is reviewed by Dr Md. Jahangir Alam.

We are greatly indebted to all the reviewers for carrying out the arduous review task with the utmost professionalism. We thank all the authors for their hard work and compliance with the demand from the editor. As the editor of this complex endeavour of editing the *Journal of Japanese Studies: Exploring Multidisciplinarity* (JJSEM), I thank all the members of the Editorial Board and Editorial Advisory Board for their guidance and trust in me and for giving me relative independence to devote my all-out efforts to make it a success. We are highly indebted to Md. Arif Miah of Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) for his tireless efforts in collating the articles and tracking the whole process under his guidance. We are thankful to all the faculty and the staff members of the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka, for their high sense of ownership of the Journal. We acknowledge the editorial associates from the Department of Japanese Studies – Dr Abdullah-Al-Mamun, Dr Md Jahangir Alam, Dr Dilruba Sharmin – for the necessary assistance at all the stages.

We owe an outstanding debt to the Japan Foundation for the grant support provided to the Department of Japanese Studies, the University of Dhaka under the project: Publication Grant for “The Journal of Japanese Studies: Exploring Multidisciplinarity (JJSEM)”.

We hope that the scholarly articles in the Journal will be of high utility to broaden the multidisciplinary knowledge base of the Japanologists and those who want to broaden their horizons of learning about Japan in the changing global context.

— Abul Barkat

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Post-COVID-19 Japan: A Political Economy Treatise on Shocks and Therapy

Abul Barkat*

Abstract– Pandemic is a rare than usual event, and therefore, the shocking impacts of pandemic fall under the category of “uncertainty” than “risks”; “uncertainty” is improbable and, therefore, not amenable to predictability. This paper aims at understanding the political economy essence of the shocks experienced by Japan during the post-COVID-19 pandemic and devise plausible therapy to address those shocks. The paper follows a logical order: it starts with a delineation of the foundational methodological principles of political economy, followed by an analysis of the rise and fall of Japan’s developmental miracle. It then traces the nature of critical shocks faced by the Japanese economy and society due to COVID-19. We found five specific interrelated and interdependent shocks of the social body – the “multiple organ social-economic-physical complications” (MOSEPC) – (1) diseases of falling GDP and growth, (2) diseases of rising real unemployment, (3) diseases of increasing inequality, the concentration of wealth in few hands, multidimensional poverty, and creation of “new poor”, (4) diseases of deteriorating physical and mental health- depression, distress, destitution, deprivation, stress, family disruption- dissolution-rift-conflicts, and (5) diseases of increasing disrespect to people’s fundamental rights. Finally, the paper proposes a “V-plus shaped therapy” for Japan as a way out from the multidimensional shocks of COVID-19. This paper argues that the proposed “V-plus shaped therapy” could be helpful, as a socio-economic policy vision, for most countries affected by the COVID-19 during the time of concurrent economic slowdown. The “V-plus-shaped shock therapy” for Japan necessitates adopting four different interventions simultaneously, namely the austerity-led “expenditure cutting”, “debt restructuring”, “redistribution of wealth from rich to poor”, and “printing money if necessary”. The appropriate mix of interventions to reach a good equilibrium of deflationary and inflationary cycles would matter the most.

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Keywords Economic development of Japan. Japan's economic growth. Political economy. Macroeconomy and institutions. General welfare and well-being. Financial markets and Macroeconomy. Macroeconomic policy. Business cycle. Occupational choice. Labour discrimination. Inequality and poverty. Political processes- rent-seeking. Social economics. Economic methodology. COVID shocks. Post-COVID therapy. Post pandemic Japanese economy and society. Heterodox approach in understanding economy. Economic methodology.

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1. Introduction: Methodological basics of political economy analyses

Most social, arts and humanities, natural, soft or hard sciences are prone to deep-rooted linguistics politics coupled with “convenient definitions” of things and categories. According to this philosophical premise, a few principal points need to be mentioned before delving deep into the particular issue of “Post-COVID-19 Japan”— as a matter of methodology. Some of them- without much elaboration- are as follows:

- (a) There is no “economy” per se – it is always “political economy”.¹ There is no economics without politics and no politics without economy. Economics, in the ultimate analysis, is a political argument. All economies can be seen as two economies—first, the official economy or the statistical economy that serves the interest of the dominant power. The Official economy based on officially provided statistics intends to hide reality to a large extent. Institutionally, power implies all three broad elements— the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. Second, the actual economy reflects the ground reality and does not correspond much with the official economy (for details, see Barkat, 2017:71-85).

¹ Today's “economic science”, in its origin, was known as “Political Economy”. All the writings of the 17th to 19th century's leading classical economists carry the title ‘Political Economy’– ‘*The Political Anatomy of Ireland*’ (published in 1691) and ‘*Political Arithmetic*’ (1690) by William Petty, ‘*An Inquiry into Principles of Political Economy*’ (1767) by James Stuart, ‘*A Treatise on Political Economy*’ (1803) by Jean-Baptiste Say, ‘*A Treatise on Political Economy*’ by Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), ‘*Principles of Political Economy of Taxation*’ (1817) by David Ricardo, ‘*New Principles of Political Economy*’ (1819) by Leonard Sismondi, ‘*Principles of Political Economy*’ (1848) by John Stuart Mill, ‘*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*’ (1859) and ‘*Das Capital: Critique of Political Economy*’ (1867, first volume) by Karl Marx (1818-1883) (see, Barkat, 2020b:5). A greater detail about the pluralistic essence of these schools of political economy can be found in Barkat, 2018. Organised economy cannot be isolated from power; it is integral to state and government. Economy- under any system based on exploitation- is always designed to serve the interest of the dominant power- the exploiters. Political economy, therefore, is about ownership, control, and management of surplus by the exploiting classes which are created by those who are exploited. These are the key arguments for Ha-Joon Chang (2014) to conclude that, “Economics is a political argument” (p.401) and “Political economy: a more ‘honest’ name” (p.377).

- (b) Irrespective of government, the prime propaganda is related to worshipping Gross Domestic Product (GDP), economic growth, per capita GDP, per capita income, and technology. They do it maintaining their intent and convenience. The intent and conveniences are evident when we consider the following: (a) GDP (outputs and not prices; GNP deals with prices) is not a good measure of economic performance and people's well-being; (b) GDP as a measure is akin to human security, environment, and sustainability; (c) GDP may go up but the green GNP may go down; (d) GDP understates the black money (which is concentrated in the upper echelon of the class ladder); it also understates the outcome of work in the informal sectors and the unpaid labour of women in the society; (e) GDP may increase with higher proportion of population in prison; (f) per capita GDP is a notorious measure in hiding the reality of those in the lower echelon of the class ladder- as mean hides the truth; (g) there is no strong relationship between higher economic growth and higher standard of living of the poor, because 'trickle down' does not work where most of the benefits of growth reach the 3% at the higher echelon of the class ladder- the wealthy; (h) increase in growth increases GDP, that accentuates inequality, and median income goes down; (i) under capitalism, higher growth enhances the relative gains of those having most capital, leading to higher inequality. It is eloquently analysed by Thomas Piketty, who wrote, "the private rate of return on capital, r , can be significantly higher for long periods of time than the rate of growth of income and output, g . The inequality $r > g$ implies that wealth accumulated in the past grows more rapidly than output and wages. This inequality expresses a fundamental logical contradiction. The entrepreneur inevitably tends to become a rentier, more and more dominant over those who own nothing but their labour. Once constituted, capital reproduces itself faster than output increases. The past devours the future" (Piketty, 2014:571); (j) (the past fifty years of the economic history of South Korea, China, Taiwan, Japan show) high savings did not require high inequality that one could achieve rapid growth without a substantial increase in inequality (Stiglitz, 2003:79); and (k) higher economic growth is almost always associated with higher environmental damages and degradation.
- (c) There is no "Welfare State" except in theory.
- (d) Power is always illegitimate unless its legitimacy is proven, and the burden of proof lies with the power holder.
- (e) "Democracy" is a highly contentious subject. Once upon a time, it was defined as "Of the People, By the People, For the People"– it has now turned into "Off the people, Bye (Good) the people, the people". It is now "Of the 1%, By the 1%, For the 1%" (Stiglitz, 2011). Democracy is an unrealised dream or unrealisable dream.

- (f) According to Thucydides, the discussion of equal rights among unequal people is futile. There can never be any meaningful outcome of discussing rights between the “powerful” and the “powerless”. They both have rights: the “powerful” has the right to exert power on the powerless and do-undo anything – anytime, and the “powerless” has the right to “obey the dictates of the powerful”. The *maxim vile* of power serves the ‘masters of mankind’- the merchants and manufacturers, as maintained by Adam Smith, the father of classical economics. The multi- and transnational corporations (especially the military-industrial complexes) have become the ‘masters of mankind’ in the contemporary world.
- (g) There is no such thing as “pure capitalism”, and it is always a “State Capitalism”. Here lies the essence of real capitalism. It is eloquently presented by economist-cum-practitioner and philosopher of a transitional economy, Grzegorz Kolodko, as follows: “It is not true that a completely uncontrolled (“free”) market serves the best interests of a free society. Indeed, there is nowhere a market that is entirely free in this sense. The state must intervene to subordinate market forces to the need of society. Market forces must serve society, not the other way round” (Kolodko, 2002:355).
- (h) There is no such thing as a “free market economy”. A free-market economy presupposes perfect competition, which exists only in theory, not real life. In real life, that exists by the name of “free market economy” is an economy run by the “syndicates” – by a few, by corporations, by the rent-seekers- who do not create wealth themselves but grab wealth created by others. It is precisely why every 20-30 years, the government hands over taxpayers accumulated money to run the “free market economy”.
- (i) There is no such thing as the “invisible hand of the market” (as coined by Adam Smith²), which has the potential of self-correcting or self-regulating the market. There would have been no market distortion or “shocks” if there

² Due to the unending debate, confusions, misunderstanding and distortions surrounding the indiscriminate use of the phrase ‘invisible hand’-coined first by the leading classical economist and libertarian philosopher Adam Smith –it is worth reminding the true historical context and the essence of the terminology Adam Smith used the phrase “invisible hand” twice in his works, first time it was used in his classical book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (published in 1759), and then, in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations* (published in 1776). In *Moral Sentiments*, his point was as follows: Suppose some landowner accumulated almost all the land and everybody else had to depend on him for survival- this would not matter very much because of the natural sympathy of the landowners for other people which is the core of human nature – he would make sure that the goods of his possessions are distributed fairly equal so it would end up with a fairly egalitarian society as if by *invisible hand*. The other place where Adam Smith used the phrase “invisible hand” was his book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations*, in which the essence of his relevant point was as follows: Suppose,

had been any “perfect” free market. The so-called “free market” is neither “free” nor “poor-friendly”. It is crucial to internalise the following propositions about market and market economy: “Markets, by themselves, even when they are stable, often lead to high levels of inequality, outcomes that are widely viewed as unfair” (Stiglitz, 2013: xlii), and “the power of markets is enormous, but they have no inherent moral character” (Stiglitz, 2013: xliii). It is essential to remember that the neoclassical and neoliberal economists “are dangerous counsellors for turbulent times because they promise things unmanaged markets cannot deliver. The conclusions deriving from their closed worlds are seriously misleading if applied to open worlds and can lead to large mistakes in policy. If economics is to be useful today, it needs to modify its belief in the self-regulating market. However, maintaining that market competition is a self-regulating ordering principle is wrong. Markets are embedded in political institutions and moral beliefs” (Skidelsky, 201: 192).

- (j) There is no such thing as “homogenous people”. People- in a society based on the exploitation of man by man are always heterogeneous. Heterogeneity is reasoned by class structures and the associated caste, creed, religion, ethnicity, occupation, geographic positioning, social standing, cultural entity, and positioning in the ladders of politics-power-government-state. People are divided into the majority and minority, centre and periphery, dominant and dominated, employers and employees, exploiters and exploited. This dichotomy is fundamental.
- (k) The majority of people everywhere, in essence, are “unperson” (a term coined by George Orwell in his dystopic novel *Nineteen Eighty-four*) or “unpeople” (a term used by Noam Chomsky 2003, 2005, and Noam Chomsky & A. Vltchek 2013). These are the people who are not counted and are out of the book, whose voices are mute and never listened to. They are, in essence, not “citizens”; they are “subjects”.

in England, the manufacturers and merchants sold their goods abroad and import from abroad and make money- they would make money but the people of England would suffer; however the probability is high that it is not going to happen because they are going to have enough concern for their own society that they will be willing to sacrifice their profit for general good so as if by *invisible hand* will save people from the savages what is now called globalization. Therefore, Adam Smith’s concept of human nature assumed all traits of basic enlightenment, in which the core of human nature enshrines sympathy, mutual support, concern for others, not hate everyone else, and alike. On the contrary, by misinterpreting Adam Smith’s invisible hand, the Nobel Laureate in Economics, James Buchanan argued that, every human being’s highest aspiration is to ensure that everyone in the world is his slave.

- (l) We know that “risks” and “uncertainty”- both exist in life. There is an epistemology of “risks” and “uncertainty”. The essence of the epistemology of “risks” and “uncertainty” is as follows: “risks” refer to usual events (mediocristanic, in which no single observation can meaningfully affect the aggregate), and therefore, are probabilistic, and, in turn, they are amenable to computation, measurement, and predictions; on the contrary to “risks” - “uncertainty” refers to rare events (extremistanic, in which a single observation can conceivably impact the total), and therefore, are improbabilistic, and, in turn, are not amenable to computation, measurement, and prediction; “uncertainty” is the black swan (for details, see Taleb, 2010: xxviii, 128, 272, 301-304). This “black swan” trait of uncertainty is fully applicable to our future associated with the impacts of COVID-19.
- (m) Increasing inequality and the rich-poor gap are inherent to the capitalistic system. Inequality promotes gaps between rich and poor. It is more so in capitalistic economies guided by the neo-Liberal doctrine, which assumes that markets are self-regulating, fair, colour blind and gender blind (Hamilton and Strickland, 2020). Under the neo-Liberal framework, economies everywhere are rigged against working people.
- (n) COVID-19 pandemic has compounded already existing inequality everywhere. The most recent research study on inequality conducted by Oxfam International (2021) reports the following: coronavirus has exposed, fed off and exacerbated existing inequalities in wealth, gender and race (Oxfam International, 2021:54). Worldwide, billionaires’ wealth increased by a sluggish US\$ 3.9 trillion between 18 March and 31 December 2020; their total wealth now stands at US\$ 11.95 trillion; the total number of people living in poverty could have increased between 200 million and 500 million in 2020 (Oxfam International, 2021:12).

Therefore, in social and economic life – what we see opening our eyes is just the “surface of things” or the “appearance of things” – and not the “essence of things”. It means that what we see on the surface (i.e., the appearance of things) may be a distorted form of the truth. Therefore, to understand the real essence of things, we must go beyond the external forms and search for the internal traits of things; and then synthesise both.

2. Japan’s economy and society: Before COVID-19

2.1 Rise of a developmental miracle

Japan is one of the largest and highly developed countries globally, with such leaders in precision technology as Sony and Toyota.

In 1945, Japan had just surrendered from the Second World War. Upon surrendering, the United States, with a few hundred thousand military personnel, were engaged to occupy Japan. The goal was to oversee the demilitarisation of Japan and transition into a kind of democracy. President Harry Truman appointed General Douglas MacArthur in charge of this operation.

Japan was in turmoil after Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been bombed into shreds. Many people were homeless. There were mass food shortages.

General MacArthur's first objective was to establish a reliable Food Network. He achieved this by receiving donations from various charities and loans from the US government. Timing-wise it coincided with the US economy's only surplus economy globally, implying exports were higher than imports. The next phase of General MacArthur was to win over support from the Japanese Emperor, Emperor Hirohito. MacArthur won the support of the Emperor, and Japan transitioned relatively smoothly into a democracy. A new Constitution of Japan was chalked out in 1946. Many industries were privatised and still tightly regulated by the government. On 10 April 1946, the Japanese people elected their first Prime Minister under the new constitution and leadership. The culture of Japan liberalised, and aspects of society like women's rights soared in the early 1950s.

The 1950s marked a turn for the Japanese economy. It began to industrialise, and new technologies were introduced, which helped all industries, including farming. Japan started achieving its developmental new heights by promoting infant industries using nationalistic policies related to tariffs, subsidies, and restrictions on foreign trades (Barkat 2015:22). Here, it would be instructive to mention the Toyota Lesson at length:

“Toyota started as a textile machinery manufacturer. It then moved into car production in 1933. Toyota did not perform well. Therefore, to save Toyota, with money from the Bank of Japan, the Japanese government, in 1949, kicked out General Motors and Ford. Nearly 65 years back, Japan exported its first passenger cars to the US market. However, unfortunately, the product failed, and the car was withdrawn from the US market. Subsequently, the government had given the carmaker every opportunity to succeed. It had ensured high profits at home through high tariffs and draconian controls on foreign investment in the car industry. Had the Japanese government followed the free-trade economists (today's neo-Liberals) back in the early 1960s, there would have been no Toyota's luxury brand Lexus—an icon for globalisation. It took Toyota more than 30 years of protection and subsidies to become competitive in the international car market, even at the lower end of it” (Chang, 2008: 19-21, 92, 212; Barkat 2015: 20-21).

It may be argued that the most critical policy factors during the 1950s-60s high-growth era of Japan were, among others, the following: post-World War II aggressive industrial policy with infant industry protection strategy; government influence over the price and direction of bank lending to key sectors through development banks specialising in long-term financing; building industrial foundations based on restrictive policies towards the foreign direct investments (permitted FDI in specific sectors; prohibited more than majority ownership in critical sectors; made mandatory the “local content” requirements in subsidiaries of TNCs); and implementation of stringent capital control measures (for details, see Chang and Grabel, 2005:10-11, 113, 139-140, 159-160).

By the 1960s, a transformation took place in the Japanese economy, transforming towards a consumer economy. Thanks to heavy government investments in education and social welfare, Japan transformed into a highly educated and productive workforce. It became a hub for developing electronics, automobiles, steel and other high tech devices. In this process, Japan became a highly successful international trader and achieved a trade surplus, meaning exporting more products than importing. The demand for Japanese products soared, and the economy skyrocketed.

In the 1960s, Japan attained an economic miracle in just 20 years. Japan went from a poverty-stricken, war-torn country under the United States military occupation to one of the most highly developed and prosperous countries the world had ever seen. In this process, between 1955 and 1973 (18 years), the average annual growth rate was 9 per cent. It was the ‘golden period’ in Japan’s economy. By 1973, Japan reached around 75 per cent of the US-GDP- astonishing for a country half the population of the USA and smaller than the state of California.

Japanese economic growth rate caused fears among Western leaders. The fear was about Japan’s overtaking the world’s largest economy- the economy of the United States. However, this did not happen as Japan’s economy in the 1970’s slowed significantly. Starting in the 1970s, Japan’s economy faced many challenges — many of the once-dominant Japanese industries, especially manufacturing, began to decline.

The international trading scene began to shift, and the OPEC oil embargo (in the early 1970s) hit the Japanese economy hard as they were highly dependent on foreign oil. All of these factors contributed to the stunting of the Japanese economy. Despite these setbacks, Japan’s economy remained strong, though it did not see its growth in the 1950s or 1960s. The economy of Japan still grew throughout the 1970s. By the mid-1980s, the GDP per capita became higher than that of the United States. Japan also became the world’s largest creditor nation.

However, by the 1990s, Japan's housing bubble burst and ultimately led to a recession which caused a great stagnation in its economy. People started purchasing less, which increased the price of goods. Deflation kicked in, which further caused people to cut back spending. This vicious deflation cycle has been one of Japan's policymakers' leading causes of concern.

Japan- the Asian archipelago – is home to one of the oldest populations. Japan's population size today is about 126 million people (as of 29 October 2021- as per Worldometers), but it is forecasted to fall below 106 million people by 2050. The population in the age group 65 and over constituted about 30% of the total population and is projected to increase until 2040. It only worsens the economic situation, including the supply of the labour force.

2.2 Fall of the miracle

What prompted the fading of the Japanese economy, which was about to overtake the US economy, as the number one economic powerhouse? One of the best examples of fading and fall was that the Bank of Japan (Japan's Central Bank) was forced to buy up to 70% of government debt and became the biggest shareholder of corporatised Japan (Joeri, 2021a, ; now onward referred to as Joeri, 2021a).

The Japanese miracle started to fall in the 1980s when it maintained the superpower growth trajectory. The fading and erosion started in 1979. It coincided with the timing of the Second Oil Crisis, which has caused the Iranian Revolution (1979) and the subsequent war between Iraq and Iran. Like most industrialised nations, Japan lowered its interest rates to save its economic fallout. It started practising easy monetary policy (technically known as “quantitative easing” or “helicopter money”). The ultimate result was setting the base for grave asset bubbles of all time. However, it was not instantly apparent because nationwide bubbling takes a long time to develop, and it might start in the form of a productive economic boom (Joeri, 2021b, <http://www.moneymacro.roks/2021-03-22-economy-japan>; now onward referred to as Joeri, 2021b).

The massive investments in research and development (R&D) were made in the early 1980s. It was partially made possible by low-interest rates and a little-known secret monetary technique – “window dressing” or “window guidance” (Joeri, 2021a). The Bank of Japan, unlike the Western central banks, had an innovative way of creating credit in the strategic industrial sectors. The mechanisms of its working were relatively straightforward. The Bank of Japan (BoJ) devised a quota system for the Japanese biggest banks. Under this system, the BoJ informed the biggest banks that it had created a certain amount of grants for the steel industry, automobile industry, and shipbuilding industry. The system was straightforward

but secret because the technique of window guidance was never really picked up by mainstream Western economists (Joeri, 2021a).

The United States was fearful about Japan's overtaking the US economy as the number one economic superpower, and it compounded with the destruction of the American car manufacturing industry. The Republican President Ronald Reagan, responding to the US worker's concern about job loss, promised to mitigate the trade deficit with Japan. In 1981, the US President made the first step by limiting the number of cars imported from Japan every year. Then, in 1983, a high tariff of 45% was imposed on Japanese motorcycles, reportedly to save American motorcycle icon Harley Davidson (Joeri, 2021b).

However, something remarkable happened in 1985- the year of the so-called Plaza Accords. European (the UK, Germany, and France), American and Japanese politicians agreed that global trade was imbalanced; the dollar was too expensive compared to the British Pound, French Franc, Deutsche Mark, and Japanese yen. In compliance with these accords, the Bank of Japan appreciated the yen and depreciated the dollar by selling massive amounts of its dollar reserves. It worked (Ito, 2006; Ito & Hoshi, 2020; Hoshi & Lipsy 2021; Joeri, 2021a, b).

Following the Plaza Accords, the rising yen against the US dollar proved troublesome for Japanese exporters. More so, the Japanese consumers saw their relative wealth skyrocket thanks to cheaper imports. However, as a countermeasure to address the upward pressure on the yen, the Bank of Japan further lowered the interest rates. It caused one of the craziest nationwide bubbles, with borrowing even cheaper. The low-interest rates contributed to the late 1980s bubble when property and stock prices skyrocketed.

A carefully conducted research by Hiroyasu Uemura reports the impacts of the Plaza Accord on the Japanese economy. It is worth quoting at large:

“The appreciation of the yen accelerated very rapidly after the Plaza Accord, so Japan could not depend so much on foreign demand for economic growth and began to depend more on domestic demand. It was made possible by the extremely loose monetary policy pursued by the Bank of Japan to overcome the *yendaka* (high yen) recession. This extreme monetary relaxation caused a rise in asset prices and promoted a high investment rate by lowering the cost of finance. Japanese companies focused on foreign and domestic markets and targeted increasing consumption. The ‘Bubble Boom’ promoted this change: the rapid increase in land and stock prices was widening ‘assets differentials’ between households. Consequently, consumers whose assets were increasing rapidly in value initiated the mass consumption of high-priced goods” (Uemura, 2000: 154-155).

The Bank of Japan was not ignorant about the possible consequences, and the relevant records mentioned possible risks and uncertainties associated with the bubble. Nevertheless, the response was late. In 1989, the Bank of Japan raised interest rates (Ito, 2006; Joeri, 2021a). Moreover, that finally popped the bubble marking the peak of the Japanese stock market, property market, and the solid Japanese economy itself.

By then, the Japanese miracle economy had turned into a stagnated and deflationary economy; however, the Bank of Japan did not realise it. In the next three decades, deflation was the interaction of multiple economic mechanisms. These mechanisms can be divided into three periods that largely overlap with the three following decades of deflation in the 1990s, inflation expectation traps in the 2000s, and the population decline in the 2000-10s (Joeri, 2021b).

The 1990s- the first decade of Japanese deflation was also dangerous. Because it was characterised by a volatile combination of debt deflation and a banking system on the verge of complete breakdown. In mitigating debt deflation, the primary mechanism was as follows: a debt-fuelled housing bubble that has just worked; with house prices falling, most people are left with both a colossal mortgage and a huge devalued house; this house can no longer be sold to repay it entirely. It means if people want to move, they will be forced to repay their debts through belt-tightening and buy less stuff. It implied a decline in the overall demand for stuff. However, the supply of stuff was still the same. After all, all the factories were still in place, and many workers were looking for jobs. Thus, since the overall supply of stuff was much higher than the overall demand for it, on average, the price of stuff dropped. This deflation occurred when people were highly indebted; deflation made it even more challenging to repay their debt. While the value of their debts remains constant, people could earn an income that would spiral downwards. As a result, the struggling borrowers spend even less, implying a further decline in incomes making repayment more challenging, and further aggravation of inflationary burden follows. In this situation, the central bank forcefully decreased interest rates to help the struggling borrowers get out of the deflationary spiral to break this vicious cycle. Bearing this in view, the Bank of Japan cut interest rates in 1991. The Bank of Japan failed to realise the depth and consequences of the bubble- it was too little and too late.

Throughout the 1990s, the debt deflation continued. In response, the Bank of Japan kept cutting rates slowly, vainly trying to break the vicious deflationary cycle (Joeri, 2021a). It was just the beginning of a deeply rooted problem that created an imbalance between banks and the economy. It caused the economy to falter by making it less safe for banks to lend to the companies. In addition, less credit for companies means less investment. It was the right time for the Bank of Japan to take speedy action to recapitalise the banks to facilitate lending. Injecting

billions of yen into faltering financial firms raises moral issues of the rationale behind governments rescue of banks. It was evident in the intense public backlash against bank recapitalisation, which made other rescues feasible.

During November 1997- the banking sector was characterised by a slow downward spiral. It was the beginning of Japan's banking crisis, and it coincided with the massive Asian financial crisis (which started in July 1997). Japanese yen seemed to mitigate the storm relatively well, credited to Japan's massive foreign currency reserves built up using the proceeds of Japan's consistent trade surpluses.

Nevertheless, on 26 November 1997, the phone rang at the Ministry of Finance from the Bank of Japan. The message was simple: customer ques formed in front of the banks- a symptom of a full-blown banking downturn. It was deeply problematic since the Bank of Japan could not cut interest rates further; they were already 0%. Japanese officials were desperate to get rid of the panic. They instructed the banks to let in as many customers as possible. However, this policy move did not work. The media was already aware of the customers' ques before the banks, and however, the news media abstained from publishing this panic report. By the afternoon, customer ques in front of the banks disappeared- the panic was over. It, however, did not mean that a financial crisis was averted.

Seven major financial institutions failed in 1997-98- the banking crisis only came to an apparent halt. Disrespecting public pressure, several financial institutions were saved with taxpayer money. As Japan entered the 21st century, the banking crisis finally got rid of the debt legacy of the asset bubble, that deflation was finally over, and the Japanese banking sector was ready to support a thriving Japan. However, demand found itself again in a deflationary spiral, but with excessive debts in the private sector gone. The Bank of Japan responded to these at least for two reasons (Joeri, 2021b). First, while the excessive debt problem in the private sector had finally been solved, the way it had been solved by bailing out the banks meant that now a lot of that leftover debt found itself on the government balance sheet. Second, deflation itself is a crucial problem- it rewarded saving and not spending. People could buy more stuff with their money by refraining from spending; therefore, they would spend less money. However, that was highly problematic because people lost purchasing power. It is why most central banks aim to create a condition for sustained mild inflation rather than complete stability of prices. As per the Japan Central Bank, Mild inflation would be helpful for the private sector, and government to pay off their debts. At the same time, it would motivate people to spend their money rather than hold on to it. In this context, the Bank of Japan resorted to inflation to encourage spending. Here it is to note that "the Bank of Japan made a mistake of tightening aid

deflation in August 2000. Adoption of quantitative easing in March 2002 was significant, but could not prevent the economy from sliding into deflation and economic stagflation in 2001 and 2002” (Ito, 2006:125).

There was still deflation; after all, this debt-deflation mechanism had all but disappeared (Joeri, 2021a). The theory of inflation that the central bank turns to first is the Phillips curve, which implies a relationship between inflation and unemployment. The relationship is if we have low unemployment - if we have high inflation, we have low unemployment and vice versa. The primary idea of the Phillips curve is twofold: (1) low unemployment simultaneously means much demand in the economy, and (2) production cannot employ enough people to meet that demand. Thus, both wages and the costs of all goods rise versus, of course, inflation. According to this theory, even that supply cannot expand quickly enough, and inflation mainly occurs in fast-growing economies³. The logical variable to look at next would be unemployment during the early 2000s.

During the early 2000s, unemployment rose to roughly 5%, relatively low compared to other countries. However, considering the interest rate at 0%, it was pretty high for Japan. Under this situation, the Bank of Japan started monetary experimentation. After abandoning “window guidance”, it came up with another monetary instrument- the “quantitative easing” (QE). The main idea here was twofold: (1) the short term interest rates could not be much lower than zero, and (2) the long term rates are higher to compensate lenders for the increased risk of default, which could be driven down further by using newly created reserves to buy bonds. Although quantitative easing is viewed as quite usual, it was radical for Japan. However, the Bank of Japan stressed stopping the programme immediately once deflation turned into inflation.

Nevertheless, while unemployment dropped, inflation did not come. Japanese inflation revolved around 5% every year, and therefore, the Japanese labour unions justified demand was to have a 5% wage increase to keep up with inflation. It, in turn, led to increased costs for businesses who would remain profitable increased their prices by 5%, meaning that the following year’s also followed a 5% inflation. Working-class people demanded that same 5% wage increase (Joeri, 2021b). It was self-fulfilling prophecy inflation because the actual inflation at the end of the year depends on today’s inflation. It is why the Bank of Japan attempted

³ The problem with the theory of Philipps curve is that it cannot explain what happened in the 1970s in most of the Western world. Wages and prices were rising fast- there was high inflation- but unemployment was also rising and output was not growing very fast. The trade-off between inflation and unemployment was lost. Economists do not agree of why this happened. Almost all economists believe that there is no Philipps curve in the long term, but that it does exist- with some modifications- over the short term.

to manage inflation expectations and not inflation itself. However, credited to the debt deflation in the 1990s, Japanese workers were used to mild deflation. They expected this to continue. However, due to the magic of self-fulfilling expectations, it did. Not surprisingly, the Bank of Japan was willing to experiment with something as radical as quantitative easing during this period. It intended to break through that self-fulfilling deflation cycle where it was willing to innovate once more, and what happened is: around 2006, it finally seemed to work as mild inflation

The outcome was — that Japan got rid of the quantitative easing experiment and assigned it to the dustbin of history. And then, Japan was hard hit by the global financial crisis, which originated not in Japan but the United States. However, Japan's economy contracted by more than that of the United States itself (Joeri, 2021b). It was unexpected since Japanese banks, still scarred from their experience of the 1997 banking crisis, had not participated in the global financial boom. Therefore, unlike their European counterparts, they escaped relatively unscratched. Japan, however, was relying heavily on exports, particularly cars.

During this time, Japan had substantial trade surpluses, and the Bank of Japan tried hard to increase inflation expectations. Japan ended another decade with a recession and dipped back into deflation. However, this time, the recession was brought on by foreign problems, but that did not make it less a problem for the Bank of Japan. It also made clear to the Japanese electorate that radical change was imminent.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, in his 2012 speech, mentioned that “Japan's economy was about to break free from chronic deflation”. He assumed power promising radical economic change, popularly known as Abenomics (for details, see Hashi and Lipscey, 2021). Abenomics consisted of three arrows. The first arrow comprises monetary policy¹, implying a continuation of the past but amplified to the extreme. The propositions were if interest rates are stuck at zero, no problem, make them negative; buy more short term government debt, long term government debt, corporate debt through the Bank of Japan; enter the stock market. In Abenomics, the quantitative easing in Japan has been so extreme that the Bank of Japan started owning roughly 70% of all government debt (Joeri, 2021b). In comparison, the Bank of England owns roughly 30% of government debt after the corona crisis. The Bank of Japan recently announced that it is willing to buy up to 15% of long term corporate bonds. Also, due to even more radical stock buying programmes, they are now the single biggest shareholder of Japan, owning roughly 7% of the Japanese stock market. The Bank of Japan entered fully into the quantitative easing business at the beginning of the 21st century.

The second arrow in Abenomics aims to increase government spending, which is an integral part of the fiscal policy. Japanese government debt approached a shocking 245% of GDP, making the Japanese government the most indebted in the world. Most of the debt is owned by the Bank of Japan and the people of Japan. Shinzo Abe also increased taxes on consumption goods in 2014 and 2019. These consumption tax increases are infamous because it was implemented -the economy got trapped in recession.

The structural reforms constitute the third arrow of Abenomics. The structural reforms in Japan meant allowing more shareholder activism to increase competition among corporations, tax cuts for corporations, and deregulation. It also meant forging a considerable number of trade deals for the corporations, which is nothing but giving undue gifts such as tax cuts. The tendency was not to invest that money, instead hoard it or directly turn it over to their shareholders, who then hoarded it since 2015. It ended so unproductively that corporations, each year, saved up to 5% of their earnings (Joeri, 29021b). It is simply the 'rent-seeking capitalism' backed by neo-Liberal economic ideology.

Households, since then, have increased their savings by 4% every year. Under these circumstances, the economy needed to spend that stimulus to reactivate the household and corporate sectors rather than save it. Therefore, during Shinzo Abe, inflation was higher than in the previous decades, and it never reached the desired 2% level. Compared to 2012, the consumption level was barely any higher in 2020. So something went very wrong with Abenomics.

It is a matter of economic common sense that while increasing interest rates can be highly effective to cool down the economy, lowering rates to stimulate productive growth is harder for the first arrow- monetary policy. The argument is that if there is no demand among firms to invest more, one can lower interest rates. However, they will most likely use this opportunity to fund higher dividends- essentially a pay-out to wealthy investors with cheap debt. One cannot be sure that people will not just pay these out in dividends to shareholders due to lowering the taxes. Moreover, shocking results are expected when increased government spending with increased consumption taxes is combined.

It would be appropriate to mention one major theory about Japanese deflation here. It is related to Japan's demography. Japan's population is ageing and shrinking fast. Japan's population growth reversed right around with the implementation of Abenomics. It had a decisive impact on the economy of Japan. After all, fewer people working means less awaiting income, less demand for products and increased automation to replace the workers who now enjoy their pensions. It is no wonder that it was hard to get rid of deflation. The economic performance of Japan under Shinzo Abe was not that bad considering the

shrinking population, the GDP per Japanese citizen- if corrected for a trained and skilled population. It has been quite similar to other industrialised nations. So it makes sense that to defeat deflation, repopulation policies are needed.

Moreover, to fight a decreasing workforce, Prime Minister Abe tried to increase women's participation. He tried it both on the fronts of the labour market and fertility. He invested a lot to build many new day-care centres. He expanded parental leave. He attempted to get more immigrants to work in Japan by introducing residency for skilled workers and a guest working programme for unskilled labour. However, he understood well that reversing a robust demographic trend is almost impossible.

On the grounds of health, Shinzo Abe left Japanese politics in 2020. However, his party is still in power. So it is most likely that most of his policies will continue.

However, if Japan does not couple quantitative easing (QE) with increased government spending, it would take one asset out of the economy and replace it with another (Joeri, 2021b). It will lower interest rates on the bonds. However, it will not generate inflation by enhancing people's purchasing power. However, it is more likely to increase asset prices, which helps further inflate the massive savings of Japan's corporations and households but will not get them to spend and generate inflation. So if the Japanese government decides to generate inflation through monetary policy, it could consider quantitative easing for the people. It will mean that the central bank will create money and give it to people or couples massive QE with massive fiscal spending.

If Japan decides in favour of the inflationary fiscal policy, it should make sure that money ends in the hands of those who spend it, typically those at the bottom of the class ladder.

Finally, the third arrow— the structural reforms. Surprisingly, some of the measures implemented tax cuts for the corporations, those already hoarding all the wealth and tax hikes for consumers who need to spend more. It could have yielded better outcomes with some inflation coupled with increased wages to improve Japanese workers' bargaining power. This structural reform could have been combined with a central bank-funded basic income.

When it comes to the issue of repopulation, it is most likely that the most convincing explanations pointed to an insecure work environment for men and too few opportunities for women to have both a career and have babies. Also, while increasing immigration might help- Japan cannot do this too rapidly without risking great social tension.

The economy of Japan is not performing as bad as some thinks. However, reasons are there that people fear low to no growth. Young people in a low to no growth

economy can be strenuous and insecure. On the other hand, an ageing population means that the young people will have to support more and more elderly Japanese economically. It implies an increase in the dependency ratio in an economy with an already high dependency ratio.

2.3 Rising poverty in a faded economy

The Japanese economy started fading even before the COVID-19, and it was fading, accompanied by rising poverty. As mentioned in Section 2.2, after about two decades of economic stagnation and recession, Japan's economy started fading, with rising inequality and multidimensional poverty.

Even in 1987, Japan's economy was the envy of other nations. The economy rose from the ruins of World War II to become the world's second-largest economy. Japanese worked hard in electronics and many others, leaving only one day to go out and buy things that halted in the 1990s when it started experiencing a prolonged recession. Economists have dubbed it the 'lost decade' in the year since Japan has experienced sluggish growth.⁴

By the mid-1980s, China had overtaken Japan to become the world's second-largest economy³.

As explained earlier, to tackle the stubborn economic stagnation and low inflation, Shinzo Abe introduced his signature economic policy- Abenomics. As already mentioned, these came in monetary easing, fiscal spending and structural reforms of Japan's labour force, shrinking and ageing.

Japan started facing a population decline in 2011. Since 2019, the birth rate (number of babies born declined by 5.9%) was low, with around 500,000 more deaths than births. Naturally, the unemployment levels were low with an ageing population and a shrinking workforce.

Despite a tight labour market, the purchasing power of Japanese workers has remained stagnant. In fact, the average wages in Japan have remained below US\$ 40,000 since 1991. The roots of such unusual market behaviour lie in Japan's unique employment system, built on principles to promote loyalty between employers and employees. Employees sign life-long contracts with companies and are motivated to remain because of a wage structure prioritising seniority of merit. This practice dates back to World War Two and has become ingrained in the Japanese culture, especially in larger companies.

⁴ In fact, in terms of GDP in PPP\$, China had overtaken the US economy by 2014. It is projected that by 2030 the Chinese GDP will be 50% higher than the US GDP.

While this life-long work contract game made sense in the post-war period when there was a shortage of skilled labour, this relatively stable but rigid employment system emphasises job security rather than productivity and performance. As a result, Japanese firms were reluctant to increase employee salaries, especially during economic downturns, because they were expected to retain the employees for an extended period. The dependence of the ageing population also meant that senior executives were unlikely to move anytime soon, providing little to no career progression and wage increases for younger employees. To address these labour woes, Abe tried to reform the country's labour systems, such as relaxing immigration laws, easing Japan's tight and harsh work culture and encouraging more women to join the workforce. While Abe managed to increase female participation in the workforce to an all-time high, many were on low paying odd jobs. Among senior and leadership positions, only 15% were held by women. The lifetime employment scheme also discouraged firms from hiring women full-time to avoid commitment costs such as pension funds. Some Japanese companies started converting their full-time employees into part-time workers to maintain their competitive edge. In 2019, non-regular workers rose by 2.1%, outpacing the 0.5% growth among regular employees, despite record employment under Abenomics. Japan's poverty rate is the second-highest among seven nations at 15.7% and above the OECD average. At the same time, large Japanese firms have benefited under Abenomics due to the weak yen and a booming stock market, and these corporate profits did not trickle down to households.

Whoever is the country's next Prime Minister, Yoshihide Suga, is likely to carry on where Abe left off. Abe may be gone, but Abenomics appears to stay. Whether it will lift Japan out of its decade's long doldrums and reverse the poverty trap remains to be seen.

Before stepping into the next section on related shocks and therapies, it would be of appropriate use to know the following eight things about Japan's Political Economy:

1. The key to generating growth is more robust domestic demand consumption and investment. Moreover, on both grounds, there are reasons to be conditionally optimistic. Consumption demand is predicated on higher wage growth, Japan's labour market is very tight, and corporate profitability is at a record high. Moreover, these are conditions for higher wage growth, leading to higher consumption on investment, cash-rich corporates, easy financing conditions, and ongoing corporate governance reforms.
2. Japan's public debt stands at an unprecedented 245% GDP with low and stable interest rates. Moreover, the well-known homebuyers of Japanese investors have kept the situation under control. However, there is no

guarantee that low-interest rates will remain forever. There will be high pressures from population ageing on spending, and investor sentiment can shift abruptly.

3. Japan suffers from a profoundly ingrained deflationary mindset.
4. Japan's multidimensional poverty rate is rising.
5. Japan faces a formidable challenge of a declining population and labour force. The solutions to this challenge are faster productivity growth and higher labour force participation rates. Theoretically, Japan may do better with greater use of foreign labour, especially in areas with major shortages and deregulate its agricultural and services sector.
6. Japan is such a patriarchal society where working women- as compared to men counterparts- are in low paid odd jobs. Women are substantially underrepresented among institutional elites: they constitute about 15% of the ministers, 10% parliamentarians, and 4% of the members of the Board of the largest publicly listed companies (Savage, 2021:221).
7. Japan's "life-long employment contract with the large corporation" system emphasises job security rather than productivity and performance. However, it is also true that cooperation and loyalty solidified primarily due to such institutions as lifetime employment guarantee and company welfare schemes (Chang, 2008:199; Barkat, 2015:20).
8. Japan's work culture is tight and harsh. The issue here is not that "culture makes all the difference" (as claimed by Landes,1998); it is more about "does culture influence economic development?" (most likely rightly raised by Ha-Joon Chang, 2008, and Samuel Huntington, 1996). On this issue, three things are worth mentioning: (a) cultural differences matter in development; however, everything depends on what people do with the "raw material" of their culture; (b) different cultures produce people with different values, which manifest themselves in different forms of behaviour (Chang, 2008:185), (c) culture is the *result*, as well as the cause, of economic development (Chang, 2008: 196).

3. Post-COVID-19 Japan: Essence of shocks and therapy

This section presents the analyses of broad issues related to the shocks and therapy related to Post-COVID Japan. Because of the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the faded Japanese economy - the related shocks are much beyond the macroeconomic, relocation and reallocation shocks. In a capitalistic systemic framework, Japan has followed an arrowed pathway in its recent economic development: Government → corporation → people. Japan

attempted to adjust large shocks, including various relocation and reallocation shocks in the past. However, not with much success because it primarily relied on corporations to help their workers cope with economic shocks. When a significant economic shock hits corporations, the government helps them so that they can stay alive and protect employment. This approach is problematic: it prescribes concentration of the cost of adjustment to disadvantaged groups and creates zombie firms. The therapy might address the shocks and what could be shocking in therapy.

It is worth questioning that no one is sure if we are in the post-COVID-19 period or after COVID-19. So what we can meaningfully talk about is not what is going on today. The more meaningful could be to delve deeper into the issues related to what might happen with the Japanese economy and society after going through this pandemic⁵.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all the countries globally, and Japan was no exception. There is no doubt that COVID-19 had diverse effects on the Japanese economy and society. Most economists argue that the shocks attributable to COVID-19 in Japan are macro and microeconomic, reallocation and relocation, and supply and demand. However, the COVID-19 shocks are much more profound than these- a deep social shock of unprecedented nature.

Japanese economy faces massive shock, which requires reallocation or restructuring. Japan's record to adjust to large reallocation shocks in the past is not

⁵ At the very onset of COVID-19, not much could be predicted about the possible impacts of the pandemic on society, economy, culture and governance. However, in case of Bangladesh, after just three weeks of officially declared first COVID-19 death (on 8th March 2020) and after four days of officially declared lockdown (on 26th March 2020), the author prepared a vision-framework on COVID-19, which was presented to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh on 31st March 2020. The paper argued two broad areas to be dealt with: (Area 1) address public health uncertainties by developing mechanisms to prevent and manage COVID-19, and (Area 2) address possible devastating concerns related to people's lives and livelihoods attributable to the lockdown by designing means and ways to save people from possible famine (for details, see Barkat, 2021d:115-124). The author conducted another study after two months of the lockdown. This latter study found many revealing statistics about the immediate unprecedented negative social and economic impacts of COVID-19-led lockdown. The study reports that in just 66 days from the onset of the lockdown (i.e., between 26th March and 31st May 2020)- the following changes took place in the Bangladesh society and economy: the class structure has changed creating a total of 6 million people-in-poverty (in a country of 170 million population) with 34 million "new poor"(people who were not poor before the lockdown); all forms of inequality-wealth, asset, income, health and education- aggravated; in terms of employment- the economy fell down to reach 41% (as compared to pre-COVID status); GDP fell down by 65%; the share of GDP-loss by sectors was 56.9% in service, 34.2% in manufacturing and 9% in agriculture; the most hard hit was people in the informal sector- most of who were in the micro and small enterprises (for details, see Barkat, 2020a:128-176).

great. Japan faced similar shocks and did not do quite well in the past. One of the main problems was that - Japan primarily relied on corporations to help their workers affected by the economic shocks instead of helping the workers directly at the individual levels. Thus, when the corporations are hit by a significant economic shock, in order for the corporations to continue to help their workers, the government helps the corporation stay in business and protect employment. Protecting employment is a good thing, and there is nothing wrong with the government trying to do that. However, the problem is that the Japanese government decided what usually protects the corporations first to protect the workers they hire. This approach has serious problems: (a) protecting the corporations to protect employment concentrate is a cost of adjustment to some limited number of groups, (b) creating something called zombie fraud, which affected the Japanese economy or the economy's performance.

The impact of COVID-19 on human health is universal- the degree and severity vary by country. For Japan, the health impact of COVID-19 on human health was relatively less pronounced than many other comparable strong economies. If we compare the number of cases of COVID-19, or the number of deaths in Japan, to other major advanced countries, Japan looks quite good (Table 1). However, it is all relative.

Moreover, the situation in many European countries has been severe as well. However, compared with those countries, the healthcare impact on Japan was minor. Even though Japan has its share of cases, Japan escaped the dire health outcome compared with other countries.

Table 1: Cumulative numbers per million population as of 22 June 2021

Countries	Cases	Deaths	Tests
Japan	6,227	114	125,689
USA	103,398	1855	1,502,457
Spain	80,489	1,725	1,095,533
UK	68,011	1,876	2,931,531
Italy	70,450	2,108	1,159,379
France	88,021	1,693	1,393,725
Germany	44,389	977	750,091

Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>

However, Japan got hurt and hurt badly in terms of the economy. The real GDP growth rate has dropped by 30%, and it might drop further if the new wave prolongs. The magnitude of the recession for Japan is a little bit smaller compared with the US and European countries. However still, this is an unprecedented recession in the post-war period.

Moreover, as we know, Japan is under a new emergency situation to restrict many economic activities. So the Japanese economy is shrunk by 30%, with possibilities of further drop. This is known as ‘uncertainty’ (and not just ‘risk’, as presented in Section 1), which is not amenable to any best guess projection or prediction.

So, even though the healthcare outcome of COVID-19 was relatively small compared with other countries economy got hurt. Business Condition Watch Survey (BCWS) done by the Japanese government (now with the Cabinet Office) asks ordinary people all over Japan to judge where the economy is going, where the business is going- if it is improving or business condition is deteriorating, and then they combine all those answers and create a diffusion index (DI). The DI shows how is the economy – if the economy is improving or deteriorating. The BCWS shows a sharp decline in DI, implying economic condition deteriorating. The diffusion index value is consistently below 50 means 50% of all people believe the business condition is not improving. So, when the diffusion index is above 50, more people view the economy as improving. Furthermore, more people view a declining economic situation if that diffusion index is below 50%. So, the findings of DI indicate that people view that the business condition in Japan is still deteriorating, implying the Japanese economy has been hard-struck by COVID-19.

There has been a considerable decline in that level of output after the COVID-19, which is pretty much comparable to what happened right after the global financial crisis in 2008. So, the Japanese economic situation has been quite seriously damaged. So looking at the macroeconomic indicators, we see the severe impact of the COVID-19 on the Japanese economy.

However, let us stress that the COVID-19 is beyond a macroeconomic and relocation shock. So the impact of the macroeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 has been different, depending on which industry look at and what kind of business we look at. So it hits some industries or businesses harder than the other industries. However, COVID-19 has created new opportunities for new businesses at the other extreme. We all can understand this from our daily life; many things have changed after the COVID-19. Each of us has a favourite example, what changed, but what we are doing now is a critical change after the COVID-19; we have been forced to live life online. After the pandemic, we have been experiencing many changes — remote online seminars, online education, online food delivery, e-commerce. We have moved everything online, and it is most likely that online education will stay even if this pandemic situation is over.

Many companies are now more serious about the end of *hanko* and the beginning of digital transformation. During the pandemic, some anecdotes, like people in

accounting, have to come into the companies to put stamps. Now that may be changing. There are other significant regulatory changes as well. Remote medicine has been approved, at least temporarily, and probably for a long time; fast approval process for drugs, and so on. We are experiencing many changes, and the many changes are yet to come. We talk about the “new normal”. However, it is almost certain that the future will be different from the past in terms of almost all aspects of life and livelihoods, the profitability of certain businesses, and the type of goods or services people demand. So we must expect major restructuring and reallocation of resources in the economy. In that sense, COVID-19 is a phenomenon much beyond macroeconomic shock.

Barrero, Bloom & Davis (2020) examined US corporations’ forecasting. The study used the data from a survey of business uncertainty and calculated the difference or the extent of reallocation that the corporations are expecting. So they ask how much employment they expect to increase in three months or decrease in three months. They calculated something called “excess reallocation”. The “excess reallocation” is defined as the growth of an expected number of jobs or job gains at firms that plan to increase employment.

Moreover, excess reallocation is defined as the gross change in jobs. It means both gains and losses in jobs. However, if we add those up minus the absolute value of the net change, it is obtained by summing over the forecast. So what this does is calculate the extent of the job or relocation that is unnecessary. For example, if there is a net job gain of 3 million and a loss of 1 million, the net job gain is 2 million. Socially speaking, this is a miscalculation. Because in reality, in order to achieve a net gain of 2 million, all we need is a job gain of 3 million and a job loss of zero. In reality, what happened is that to have a net gain of 3 million jobs, 3 million jobs were created and 1 million jobs destroyed. It means these 4 million jobs were either created or lost. So that 2 million jobs, the rest of 4 million jobs is, in a sense, kind of an excess of the reallocation. So that is the idea behind excess reallocation, probably a better way to explain what exists reallocation: job destruction or job loss backed by new jobs and new job gains. Therefore, whichever interpretation we make, it is the same thing; the excess relocation is a perfect measure of the extent of relocation.

Moreover, the US study found that during the COVID-19 crisis, the net creation of jobs is expected to decline. It means, overall, the jobs are expected to be lost. However, excess reallocation measure jumps up. The reality is that during the pandemic, many corporations eliminated jobs, but at the same time, many corporations created jobs.

Furthermore, this is necessary because the COVID-19 was a relocation shock that some firms have to decline, and they need to reduce employment. However, in

some other companies, the business continues to grow. It means- Offline off and Online on. Some companies benefit from this change. Some even become trillionaires - Amazon, Microsoft, Toshiba, Siemens, and many others. There may be some other companies who newly enter the market to take advantage of the new opportunities. However, enough companies are actually gaining adding to the jobs.

Today, almost all of us have become accustomed to the zoom meeting system. Zoom is a company in California that benefited a lot from the change brought about by the company due to the pandemic. So let us say they had been adding more people to their companies. So there has been much change in the business opportunities created after the pandemic. Moreover, they do the same type of relocation, access relocation, measure sales, and find all the companies expect to reduce sales. However, some companies are increasing at an unprecedented high rate in sales at the cost of reducing sales in most companies.

Let us see the stock market index. The Tokyo Stock Exchange calculates the industry index, and they calculate the stock price index for each industry and each of these stock prices are normalised to be 100. Figures in the significant Stock Exchange that all stock prices started to fall during the pandemic. However, the decline was much more significant for some industries than for some other industries. For some industries, the stock prices recovered from the bottom. For some industries, these stock prices are well above 100, which means they recovered the losses during the pandemic. By looking at the Figures, it is evident that while the stock prices recovered, the difference between industries seems to have increased over time. Many financial experts maintain that the stock prices reflect the economy's future; how much the companies will make. So, we can consider this as future expectations that investors have in the second year and a proxy for the Japanese economy's future. Worldwide, perhaps the most talked-about subject today is— what to do to recover from the ills of and destructions done by COVID-19?

At the outset, I would like to clarify that my take on this subject of “shock therapy” is altogether different from most others. Why?

First, to recover developed economies from the devastating impacts of COVID-19, many economists and social scientists representing the libertarian or liberal or liberal-left camps forward suggestions toward “managing capitalism” or “fixing capitalism”. These fixers of capitalism coined a few terms, namely the “new normal” or “new reality” or “great reset”. Some even came up with “good capitalism” and “bad capitalism” concepts. Some argue that reaching a “new normal” will require repairing crony capitalism and transforming it from “bad capitalism” to “good capitalism” (for details

about all these, see Barkat, 2020a: xli-xii). A few even prescribe that everything will be fine if the oligarchy's power (i.e., the concentration of power and profit in few hands) is regulated in favour of have nots; however, they keep mum about what will happen if that does not work. Having said above, it may be argued that the very economic system of capitalism based on exploitation-greed-profit-private unaccountable power do not possess the inner strength to transform "bad capitalism" into "good capitalism". The question is not about "bad" or "good" capitalism; it is, in essence, about capitalism *per se*. The system of capitalism on the ground possess, among many others, at least following two problematic traits: (i) "Capitalism is failing to produce what has promised but is delivering on what was not promised – inequality, pollution, unemployment, and, *most important of all*, the degradation of values to the point where everything is acceptable, and no one is accountable"(Stiglitz, 2013:xlviii), and (ii) " Capitalism – together with a money-oriented democracy – creates a self-destructive dynamic, which risks simultaneously destroying any semblance of a fair and competitive market and a meaningful democracy" (Stiglitz, 2019:31).

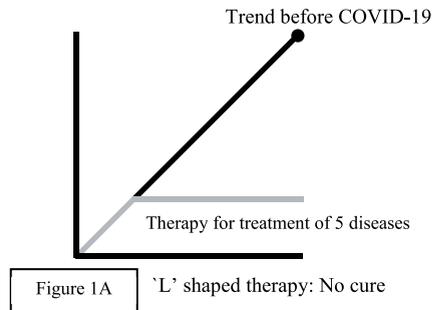
Second, it makes no sense to argue that COVID-19 alone has destroyed everything and is responsible for the great depression/recession/slowdown, social, economic, cultural, and political. It is because, had there been no COVID-19 pandemic, the economic depression/recession/slowdown would have happened due to the very nature of the long-term business cycle (LTBC) under the capitalistic mode of production. Under such a system –due to the very nature of LTBC – great depression/recession/crisis is inevitable every 20-30 years. From that standpoint, it should have happened in 2018-19. And it happened. However, at the same time, worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic came to reign not leaving. This simultaneous double burden of economic crisis and pandemic – has never happened before in human history. So, is the cause for grave concern (not the opposite).

Third, the inevitable great economic and social depression, recession, slowdown, crisis simultaneously accompanied by COVID-19 caused the rise of "unprecedented in human history multiple organ social-economic-physical complication (MOSEPC)". This MOSEPC includes at least five diseases: (1) diseases of falling GDP and growth, (2) diseases of rising real unemployment, (3) diseases of increasing inequality, the concentration of wealth in few hands, rising multidimensional poverty and creation of "new poor", (4) deteriorating physical and mental health – depression, distress, destitution, deprivation, stress, and (5) diseases of increasing disrespect to peoples fundamental human rights. Here, "society" is the suffering patient, and the "state-government" is the doctor.

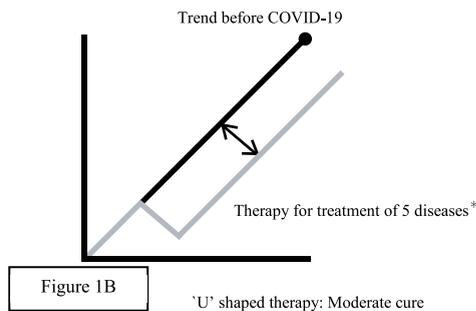
Fourth, all the above five diseases originated as a combined effect of LTBC of capitalism (or at least an exploitation-based society) and COVID-19 pandemic – are interrelated and interdependent. Therefore, the therapy based on diagnosis – the “shock therapy” shall be designed and implemented accordingly. We know about three shock therapies – having various degrees of strength to recover from the MOSEPC – the ‘L’ shaped (Figure 1A), the ‘U’-shaped (Figure 1B), and the “V-shaped” (Figure 1C) (for details, see Barkat 2020a:196-207). For everywhere, including Japan, I argue that the “V-shaped shock therapy” (Figure 1C) be pursued, intended to “almost full cure” of the society with her people and economy. However, the most ideal would be to pursue the “V-plus-shaped shock therapy” (for details, see Barkat 2021 a, 2021 b, 2021c). It is because, as argued in section 2 that it is wrong to assume that everything was right before the COVID-19: everywhere inequality was high; money-wealth-power was highly concentrated; power – everywhere was run and dictated by the Zombie corporations – rent-seekers; nowhere in the world- -democracy is the *kratos* of the *demos*; multidimensional poverty was in the rise.

Fifth, implementing the proposed “V-plus-shaped shock therapy” for Japan necessitates adopting four different interventions simultaneously, keeping the need for good equilibrium in view. The interventions and their possible impacts would be as follows: (1) “cut spending”- austerity measure will lead to deflation, and unemployment may rise. The austerity-led intervention has the potential to generate short term gain, but it will not work in the long run; (2) “restructure debt”- in which “one size fits all” policy would be counter-productive. Here, large scale cash incentives to the zombies may lead to wastage and misallocation of resources. The loan restructuring or debt restructuring will cause contractions of expenditure or price, and therefore, should be pursued with other policies to get to the necessary equilibrium. However, providing well-designed grants (and not loans) for the micro and small entrepreneurs hard hit by COVID-19 would be much more productive; (3) “redistribute wealth from rich to poor” will be the most urgent to reduce rising inequality and multidimensional poverty. It is to stress that a successful redistribution of wealth from rich to poor could be instrumental in increasing the wealth of a nation from the wealth of rent-seeking individuals, which actually destroys the nation’s wealth. Several mechanisms may be adopted to gain from this intervention (redistribution of wealth from rich to poor), including the tax on excess profit, higher rates of wealth tax, higher rate of progressive tax, tax reduction for the people in the lower echelon of the class ladder and the older people, creation of “National Wealth Fund” to address the issue of mitigating inequality, lead the creation of “Global Wealth Fund” through

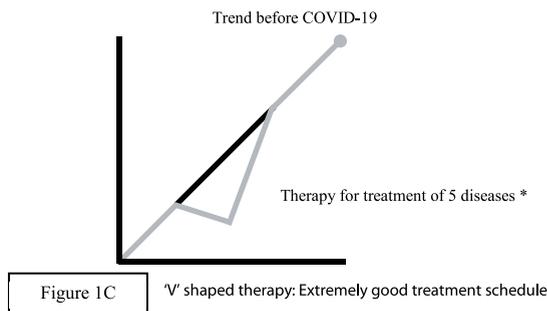
Figure 1: Multiple organ socio-economic depression and complications due to COVID-19: Shocks and Therapy



* diseases: (1) diseases of falling GDP and growth, (2) diseases of rising real unemployment, (3) diseases of increasing inequality, concentration of wealth in few hands, rising multidimensional poverty and creation of “new poor”; (4) diseases of deteriorating physical and mental health– depression, distress, destitution, deprivation, stress, family disruption–dissolution-rift-conflicts, (5) diseases of increasing disrespect to people’s fundamental rights.



* diseases: (1) diseases of falling GDP and growth (2) diseases of rising real unemployment, (3) disease of increasing inequality, concentration of wealth in few hands, rising multidimensional poverty and creation of “new poor”; (4) diseases of deteriorating physical and mental health– depression, distress, destitution, deprivation, stress, family disruption–dissolution-rift-conflicts, (5) diseases of increasing disrespect to people’s fundamental rights.



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imposing 0.35% tax on International Traded Goods (Tera tax) and 0.01% tax on Global Financial Transactions (Tobin tax); and (4) “print money if necessary”- it will be opposed by most economists on the plea of inflation. However, if a country prints necessary money for productive pursuits (including large scale public works), the possibilities of inflation would be minimal. In designing the shock therapy, it would be critical to internalise the following economic policy premises – experimented and proven to be true: wealth tax reduces inequality; money laundering and black money increase inequality; tax reduction on the rich and wealthy do not increase growth; reduction of taxes at the bottom of the social ladder increases employment and income of those at the bottom (Barkat,2021d:119). In the ultimate analysis, what would matter most, is the appropriate mix of interventions to get to a good equilibrium of deflationary (responsible for currency crisis) and inflationary cycles.

Sixth, while I am not against the “process of things” (while it is essential), I strongly suggest that the Japanese government (and all other governments) should change the traditional mindset of governance. When taking broad policy decisions to address MOSEPC due to the COVID-19, this mindset transformation implies more emphasis on “not on the process of things” but “on the outcome of things”. From a socially responsive economic policymaker’s point of view, it is critical to internalise at least three commandments: (a) “a good decision is based on knowledge and not on numbers” (Plato, 427-347 BCE), (b) a sound economic policy is the policy whose social impacts are positive (Joseph Stiglitz), and (c) “good policy today requires not just a ‘right analysis’ of the economic problem, but a strong social imagination” (Skidelsky, 2021:192).

Let us turn again into reallocation and relocation shocks. The relocation shock requires economic restructuring. Economic restructuring means old and inefficient production arrangements or corporations or the production units destroyed and replaced by new and efficient production arrangements. Therefore, some jobs will be lost; some jobs will be created, some new jobs will be created. Joseph Schumpeter denoted it as “creative destruction” (Schumpeter, 1987). Creative destruction involves the reallocation of workers, and the workers need to move from failing companies to new farms or growing farms. However, the questions remain open as to how such relocation will work? What will happen to those who do not have enough skills compatible with the new job market? Who is going to import new entry skills? What will happen to the employed not in a decent job? What will happen to the older people who worked before? How would the micro and small entrepreneurs survive? However, to get out of this COVID-19 recession and redo the economic growth, Japan needs to adjust to this reallocation shock.

Nevertheless, Japan has not done that very well. It is also evident from the response to the 2008 recession. It is to mention that when Japan faced a big macro-economic shock and reallocation shock, its growth rate seemed to have fallen each time in the past. However, the trade growth rate trend grows past the level of the GDP seems to have lost forever, and even the growth rate seems to have reduced again. So, Japan never went back to the past trend. The big question is, what would be the consequences if the same thing happened in Japan after the COVID-19. The last 40 years' history of the Japanese economy shows that Japan failed to go back to the original trend each time Japan faced a significant economic shock.

The other critical question is: How does a new and efficient production arrangement consider the impact on the environment? The overuse of non-renewable energy would inevitably cause catastrophe, which may be worse than the COVID-19 – the “respiratory pandemic”. On this, wise decisions have to be taken by the state, which the large corporation – the Zombies- might vehemently oppose. “Polluters pay” principle is a worse policy, justifying pollution. Her people's mobilisation, consent, consciousness, and concerted actions might work the best.

We have seen that a lifetime appointment system characterises the Japanese labour market. The companies do not fire the workers, and the workers do not quit. They work for the same company until the mandatory retirement (between 60 and 65). Moreover, because the corporations under the lifetime employment system cannot adjust the labour force when the economic shock hits them, the Japanese government spends a lot of “gratis-money” to bail out the corporations to continue to employ their workers. It is one of the most critical failures of the economic policy in Japan to adjust to the economic shocks. This policy serves the unjust interest of the Zombie corporations, who are protected but never increase the real wages. This policy is basically a system of enriching the rich at the cost of punishing the poor.

More so, under the above policy regime, employees do jobs safely. However, many people are outside this protection of the lifetime employment system. Moreover, they tend to suffer during the economic shock because their jobs are unprotected. Therefore, the government approach to protect the companies protect employment does not work for workers outside the traditional lifetime employment system. The whole thing is problematic because by protecting the companies, including those highly profitable companies, the power policy creates a problem by creating zombie farms.

The COVID-19 shock is worse than many of the shocks that Japan experienced in the past because the COVID-19 shock itself tends to harm workers outside the

lifetime employment system. A study by Takami Tomihoro reports that many regular workers are in inflexible and ordinary industries where the impact of COVID-19 is more pronounced than in the flexible ones (Tomihoro, 2021:1-10). Only a small portion of regular workers- 17.2% are employed in the social industry and have no flex jobs, and it is where the COVID-19 shock is felt most. But for the non-regular workers – 44%, almost half in social industry and no flexible jobs. It means that no regular workers are already outside the lifetime employment system.

Furthermore, COVID-19 shock hit most non-regular jobs than regular workers. So, in a sense, they are doubly hard hit by COVID-19. In addition, the female workers tend to be in the social industry and have no flexible jobs. These women are hurt more (Zhou, 2021). If we look at the non-farm employment, although employment declined, the decline is more pronounced for female workers than the males. Also, the job destruction was more for females than the males. Therefore, the cost of job loss was concentrated more on the women. There is a stark difference between regular employment or Saiki time and non-regular employment. The regular employment did not change very much, but non-regular employment was reduced. In terms of the size of the companies, if we look at the large companies who still have a more lifetime employment system, especially the male employees have not lost their jobs. However, the small and medium companies' job reduction was more prominent. So this shows not only the COVID-19 shock, but also it is a reflection of the Japanese employment system in which some employment is protected but most who are outside the lifetime employment system are hard hit. Protecting the companies instead of protecting the individual workers – as an official policy helps the zombie companies and not the people.

Since the 1990s, many Japanese banks have been undercapitalised. They wanted to hide the non-performing loans by shifting them to non-performing companies — the Zombies. They discourage the growth of productive firms and hurt economic growth. Moreover, this is another problem of policies to protect corporations instead of individual workers. During the COVID-19 government undertook some policies to protect the corporation's old policies to save the corporations again by giving them subsidies to continue their business and/or providing loans through government financial institutions and private banks with zero interest rates with no collateral, and no repayment guarantee. In this way, the government protects the Zombies directly. The government's policy is to avoid too many bankruptcies during a COVID-led state emergency. Based on empirical data on bankruptcy in Japan — it could be concluded that this is nothing but “bankruptcy protection”, which incentivises bankruptcy.

Under the COVID-19 crisis, Japan's bank loans increased by 40 trillion yen in the last half a year or so in the last three or four months. So this shows, on the one hand, the government policy to encourage the Japanese banks, including government financial institutions, to help some be "more effective". However, at the same time, these are loans, not gifts. The corporations have to pay back those loans in the end, and it can create excessive debt or too much debt and create a "debt overhang problem". Experience shows that "debt overhang" impedes economic restructuring, ultimately ending with "debt cancellation".

4. Conclusion

The political economy analyses of causes of economic and social decline and the possible impacts of the COVID-19 on the social and economic fabric of Japan, it would be imperative to draw the following conclusions as to the nature of shocks and possible therapies for Japan (also applicable for other similar countries):

1. Japan is passing through the pandemic with relatively less health harm than many other countries. However, the damage to the economy and society goes much beyond macroeconomic, relocation, and reallocation shocks. Japan's handling this shock is a case of relative failure because the government rely too much on asking Zombie Corporations (those who take credit from banks and usually do not repay, then comes a recession/crisis when they get loans and subsidies, and again they do not repay- this perpetuates) to help their workers, and not help the individual workers directly. In the name of protecting workers – the government, in reality, nourishes the Zombie corporations. The policy is to enrich those already rich at the cost of punishing the poor.
2. The essence of the shocks (and not the appearance of shocks) can be termed a "Multiple organ socio-economic crisis and complications" (MOSEPC). It is a social-economic-political disease— a structural disease. It is a combination of five interrelated diseases, namely, (1) diseases of falling GDP and growth, (2) diseases of rising real unemployment, (3) diseases of increasing inequality, the concentration of wealth in few hands, rising multidimensional poverty and creation of "new poor"; (4) diseases of deteriorating physical and mental health— depression, distress, destitution, deprivation, stress, family disruption—dissolution-rift-conflicts, and (5) diseases of increasing disrespect to people's fundamental rights. All these shocks are interrelated and interdependent. All shocks are not of equal value in terms of depth and possibility to cure. The

determining shock or the core social disease to be cured would be the shocks producing and reproducing inequality and multidimensional poverty⁶. Here, it could be of profound significance to listen to an ancient philosopher, Plato (427-347 BCE), who said, “there should exist among citizens neither extreme poverty nor excessive wealth, for both are productive of great evil”. The resolution of shocks related to various types of inequality has the inner strength to cure all other shocks to a large extent.

3. The best therapy to address the shocks is a “V-shaped therapy”. Because the “V-shaped therapy” intends to bring back the economy and society to the before-COVID situation. Before COVID, the society and economy were not ideal with rising inequality, over-concentration of money-wealth-power into the hands of a few, and rising multidimensional poverty and deprivation. The best solution to cure all the five multiple organ diseases and shocks would be implementing our proposed “V plus-shaped therapy” (treatment protocol). Implementation of this “V plus-shaped therapy” is an issue of political will, and it should be borne in mind that the best economic policy generates positive social impact.
4. Japan’s “V-plus-shaped shock therapy” will necessitate implementing four different interventions in tandem. The interventions with their possible impacts would be as follows: (a) “cut spending” – this austerity measure will lead to deflation, and unemployment may rise, and therefore, would generate short term gain only; (b) “restructure debt”- in which “one size fits all” policy

⁶ It is no wonder that understanding the causes and consequences of inequality has become a major issue of interdisciplinary discourse in social sciences. It is eloquently presented by Mike Savage, who wrote, “And indeed, many social scientists have seen the issue of inequality as one that allows them to make common cause. More than any other social science issue, it has generated the kind of intense cross-disciplinary synergy that cuts into an emerging interdisciplinary space. A cursory tour of leading figures who have energized the debate on inequality would include such economists as Tony Atkinson, Amartya Sen, Joe Stiglitz, and Thomas Piketty; such gender scholars as Bell Hooks and Dorothy Smith; such sociologists as John Goldthorpe, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michael Lamont; such legal and critical race scholars as Kimberle Crenshaw and Patricia Williams; such epidemiologists as Michael Marmont, Richard Wilkinson, and Kate Pickett; such political scientists as Robert Putnam, Kathleen Thelen, and Paul Pierson; such geographers as Danny Dorling; and such social policy researchers as John Hills. And so on — this list is not intended to be exhaustive, and my apologies to those who are not on it. My point is that in a short period of time, the issue of inequality has come to straddle specific disciplines and has inspired social scientists to work together in an unprecedented way” (Savage, 2021:8).

would be counter-productive. Here, large scale cash incentives to the zombies may lead to wastage and misallocation of resources. The loan restructuring or debt restructuring will cause contractions of expenditure or price, and therefore, should be pursued with other policies to get to the necessary equilibrium. However, providing well-designed grants (and not loans) for the micro and small entrepreneurs hard hit by COVID-19 would be much more productive; (c) “redistribute wealth from rich to poor” will be the most urgent to reduce rising inequality and multidimensional poverty. Among many mechanisms, the most critical could be imposing a tax on excess profit, higher rates of wealth tax, higher rate of progressive income tax, tax reduction for the people in the lower echelon of the class ladder and the older people, creation of “National Wealth Fund” and “Global Wealth Fund”; and (d) “print money if necessary”. The most crucial would be to design and implement a mix of interventions to get to a good equilibrium of deflationary and inflationary cycles.

5. Novel Coronavirus is currently causing mayhem all over the globe. Historically, every epidemic or pandemic has been instrumental in shaping and reshaping the social-economic-political and cultural life. Typhoid knocked down Alexander the great; Bubonic plague seems too fast track the downfall of the Byzantine Empire; Measles and smallpox likely did the same to Roman Empire. The likelihood is high that COVID-19 will be instrumental in changing people’s lives, livelihood, society and politics.

In 399 BC, the great philosopher Socrates sitting in jail before taking Hemlock, said, *“I will become very sleepy, then I will take my last breaths”*. Before that, *“I thought I would like to share something with you... Philosophers tend to think that they know lot about the world, but me, I really do not think that I know anything at all”*. He said, *“The best way to test truth is to ask a series of challenging questions”*. He continued, *“True wisdom is the knowledge of how little you actually know”*. Then he said, *“Asking questions may be the best way to get to the truth, but it is also a fast way to make enemies”*. More so, for the social policymakers, it is of profound significance to internalise the essence of what the ancient philosopher Plato (427-347 BCE) has said, *“The cure of many diseases is unknown to physicians because they are ignorant of the whole...For the part can never be well unless the whole is well”*. Thus, the social and economic shocks and therapies associated with the COVID-19 are concerned – it is the right time for academia and policymakers to ask challenging questions keeping a holistic view in mind, irrespective of possibilities of creating many enemies. Here lies the responsiveness and essence of free-thinking academia.

Acknowledgements—Some of the critical ideas about the nature and pattern of COVID-19-driven shocks and therapies for Japan was presented first by me, on 23 June 2021, as a keynote speaker in the assembly of the E-Studium Generale organised by the Department of Japanese Studies, School of Strategic and Global Studies, Universitas Indonesia (SSGS/UI). I am grateful to Professor Dr Athor Subroto, Director of School of Strategic and Global Studies, Universitas Indonesia (SSGS/UI) and Dr Shobichatul Aminah of SSGS/UI, for their all-out support extended in organising the assembly of Japanologists. I gratefully acknowledge the organisers of the 2021-Western Conference of the Association of Asian Studies (held on 9 October 2021) for giving me the unique opportunity to present another keynote paper on the subject, though more refined than the earlier one. Subsequently, the Bangladesh Economic Association, in her XXIst Biennial Conference, invited me to present the sole plenary paper on COVID-19: Shocks and Therapy on 26 December 2021, for which I am grateful to the Executive Committee of the Bangladesh Economic Association. I owe a great debt to all the research colleagues at the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) for their thought-provoking questions raised and unstinted support provided at each stage of this research endeavour.

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Post-Covid-19 Japan and Social Shocks

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Shamsunnahar^{**}

Abstract – There has been a severe erosion of social life in Japan owing to COVID-19. However, the existing literature does not provide enough evidence regarding various social shocks arising out of the Covid-19 and its impact on the society and life of the people. Thereby, applying the document analysis strategy, this research assesses the impacts of the pandemic on Japanese society, examining very recent data and attempting to minimise knowledge in public health studies, sociology, psychology, and Japanology. This research suggests that the outbreak of Covid-19 seriously impacted Japanese people's physical and mental health, and domestic violence and suicide rate have increased significantly. Nonetheless, this study supports Barkat's (2021) proposal of V+ shape therapy for the recovery of the Covid-19 related social shocks.

Keywords Impact of COVID-19 in Japan. Public health in Japan. Public policy. Human development.

JEL Classification I18 · O151 Introduction

1. Introduction

Due to the upshot of the COVID-19, Japanese society is experiencing many social shocks that have shaken the existing social order. Ostensibly, Japanese society has resisted some of the shocks by dint of its very deep-rooted enduring cultural elements and initiatives are taken by the government. However, the ways and means of lasting recovery remain imprecise.

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‘Shock is an event that can trigger a decline in well-being, which can affect individuals, a community, a region, or even a nation. It refers to a risk that causes a ‘significant’ negative welfare effect and leads to undesirable welfare outcomes’ (World Bank, 2000-01; Heitzmann, Canagarajah, & Siegel, 2002; cited in PEP-UNDP, 2011). When the shock affects social life, it is called ‘Social Shock’. Several issues generate social shock, such as stress, anxiety, depression, crime, eviction, deterioration, disrespect, disruption and violence (PEP-UNDP, 2011). Although each country is experiencing social shocks because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the nature and gravity are perhaps different from one country to another. Moreover, the governments’ importance to social shocks and management varies (Nicola et al., 2020).

It has been revealed that the pandemic has significantly impacted Japanese people not only economically but also in many aspects of social life, particularly mental and physical health (Tanoue et al., 2020; Ueda et al., 2020; Nagasu et al., 2021; Makizako et al., 2021), human rights (Matsuda et al., 2021; MARTIN, 2021), domestic violence (Suga, 2021; Suga 2021a), economic insecurity and reduction of purchasing power (McIntyre & Lee, 2020; Kobayashi et al., 2021; Tsurugano et al., 2021; Yatsuya&Ishitake, 2021), education, leisure and recreation (Usami et al., 2021; Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021; Tahara et al., 2021), suicide (Osaki et al., 2021; Nomura et al., 2021). However, seemingly minor academic works have been conducted to understand the length and breadth of the impact of Covid-19 in the social life of the Japanese people. This study attempts to understand further the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on Japanese society and outlines recommendations for recovery from the social shocks.

2. Literature review

Academia has studied the impact of Covid-19 from many different perspectives across the countries. However, a literature review shows that impact on physical and mental health, medical services, family, society, economy, livelihoods, education and institutions have been studied the most. Nonetheless, as the main focus of this study is to understand the impact of Covid-19 on social issues, this review carefully excludes impacts of pure economic issues, education, health services and institutions.

It appears that people with pre-existing mental and physical health conditions have experienced higher anxiety and depression in Covid-19 than people with no pre-existing mental and physical health conditions (Alonzi et al., 2020). Female gender-related psychological problems, for example, coryza, dizziness and myalgia and lack of health-related information, contributed to higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress (Wang et al., 2020). The vulnerability of people

with psychological problems in Covid-19 has frequently been reported in recent literature (Cullen et al., 2020). It is identified that factors such as higher education background, people aged below 30 years, single and separated status, contact with Covid-19 patients and feelings of discrimination are the causes of adverse mental health at the time of this pandemic (Wang et al., 2021). Likewise, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic symptoms have been identified as the main element of psychological disorder; in most cases, the severity scale is mild-moderate (Talevi et al., 2020). However, a study in China finds moderate to severe impact of Covid-19 on people's mental health (Wang et al., 2020). The study also finds that mental health parameters have varied from country to country in the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, anxiety, stress and depression were higher in Thailand than in Vietnam (Wang et al., 2021).

Moreover, mental health decline has been a severe issue in the USA and Canada (Alonzi et al., 2020). The study argues that people with mental health issues usually have a lower life expectancy, and Covid-19 may adversely impact them (Cullen et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it is suggested that post-pandemic management of stress and anxiety is crucial to avoid permanent post-traumatic stress disorder (Cullen et al., 2020).

A study conducted in Pakistan reveals that children have experienced uncertainties, stress, fear, change in routine physical and social isolation, and more parental stress (Imran et al., 2020). Refusal of activities by children and the impact of the family conflict has also been unveiled by the literature (Khan et al., 2020). Therefore, studies suggest allocating more resources to improve children's mental health and well-being (Imran et al., 2020). It is found that the mental health condition of homeless people has worsened in Covid-19, including chronic mental health, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder (Khan et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies have found that Covid-19 has seriously affected institutional and interpersonal trust, and the factors such as economic insecurity and health concern have contributed to this (Daniele, 2020).

Studies also conclude that impacts of Covid-19 have been spread over income, gender, racial and ethnic inequalities (Kramer & Kramer, 2020) which will eventually interrupt the overall equilibrium of the society. Covid-19 has exacerbated pre-existing social conditions such as inequalities and disparities that directly impact the social order increasing the number of marginalised populations (Qian & Fan, 2020). It reveals that Covid-19 has impacted many areas of social life, for example, income, living, education and membership of associations and clubs (Qian & Fan, 2020), which resulted in social shocks. Several studies report that due to the responsibility to ensure healthcare services to Covid-19 patients, healthcare workers are at serious risk of developing mental

and physical health consequences (Shaukat et al., 2020). This risk factor is limited to the health workers and threatens his family.

However, precedence is there that public health emergencies and pandemics exacerbate different forms of violence against women and girls (UNICEF, 2018; Amadasun, 2020). With no exception, domestic violence has increased worldwide during the Covid-19 pandemic. In New York, domestic violence cases increased 30% from April 2020 to April 2019 and cases in the UK increased 700% in a day because of the lockdown (Viveiros& Bonomi, 2020). Furthermore, the number of visitors to New York City's domestic violence resource website increased three times in the pandemic than the normal situation and visits per day reached 115 between March 18 to April 5 of 2020; previously, it was 45 per day (UN Women, 2020). After the lockdown in March 2020, domestic violence cases increased to 30% in France (UN Women, 2021). Domestic violence and demand for emergency shelter have increased in many countries, including the UK, USA, Canada, Spain and Germany. Domestic violence-related emergency calls increased in Argentina, Cyprus and Singapore by 25%, 30% and 33%, respectively (UN Women, 2021) and domestic violence helpline calls increased 300% in the city of Vancouver, Canada, at the time of the lockdown (UN Women, 2020). A higher rate of domestic violence has also been reported in Japan (Suga, 2020).

Several existing pieces of literature published at the time of the pandemic highlighted the violation of human rights (Huffstetler, 2021). Violation of the migrant worker's rights was also unveiled by many studies (Kumar & Choudhury, 2021). Unfortunately, some countries, such as Brazil, enforced strict policies against foreigners, which were utterly a violation of fundamental rights (Amorim, 2021). Reportedly, many western countries and the USA applied measures that violated foreigners' rights. Violations of rights of different forms have been reported across the countries, for example, Mexico, African nations and Germany (Sánchez, 2020; Amadasun, 2020; Arnold, 2020).

This literature review has inspected recent publications regarding various social shocks caused owing to Covid-19. However, the reviewed literature does not present enough evidence about the social shocks caused due to Covid-19 across the world, especially in Japanese society. Moreover, the existing literature neither provides much insight about the deterioration of physical and mental health and family level disruption in different countries and Japan because of Covid-19 nor the disrespect to people's fundamental rights in the pandemic. Thus, this study strives to minimise gaps in the existing literature by answering the following research question.

How have Covid-19 impacted Japanese people's social lives, particularly mental and physical health, family level disorder, and suicide?

3. Methodology

This study adopts a document analysis strategy and a web-surfing data collection technique applied to collect data. The thematic data analysis technique is followed to analyse data and develop themes. The data have been presented quantitatively under each theme. Very recently published online data is used to address the research question. The data sources include UN Women, Statista, Ministry of Justice, Japan; UNICEF, Journal article, Japan-based online newspaper articles- The Japan Times, Nippon.com, NIKKEIASIA, and others- BBC, CBS NEWS, socialprotection.org. The statistical data from different authentic sources have been used to improve the clarity of the analysis. Both generic and systematic searches have been conducted. The keywords for the systematic search in Google Scholar are (i) “Covid 19” and “Social Shock”, (ii) “Covid 19” and “Mental Health”, (iii) “Covid 19” and “Physical Health”, (vi) “Income Inequality” and Japan; and v) “Covid 19” and Physical Health & Mental Health. The Keywords for the Systematic Search in Science Direct are (i) “Covid 19” and (“family violence” or “family conflict” or “family disruption” or “family disorder”)- title, abstract, keywords: “Covid 19” and “family violence” or “family conflict” or “family disruption” or “family disorder”), and (ii) “Covid-19” and “Human Rights Violation”- title, abstract, keywords: “Coronavirus” or “Covid 19” and “Human Rights Violation”. Generic search has been conducted in Google Scholar with the input such as (i) Covid-19 Physical & Mental Health Impact on Japan, (ii) Covid-19 & Domestic violence in Japan, (iii) Covid-19 & Family disorder in Japan, (iv) Covid-19 & Suicide in Japan, (v) Covid-19 & Economic Insecurity in Japan, and (vi) Covid-19 & Socio-economic implication. The study has given serious attention to ethical issues, and the data sources have been verified to confirm the authenticity and reliability of findings. To the end, three themes have been outlined to respond to the research question: deterioration of physical and mental health, family level disorder, and trend of suicidal behaviour in the Covid-19 context.

4. Limitations of the Study and Scope of Future Research

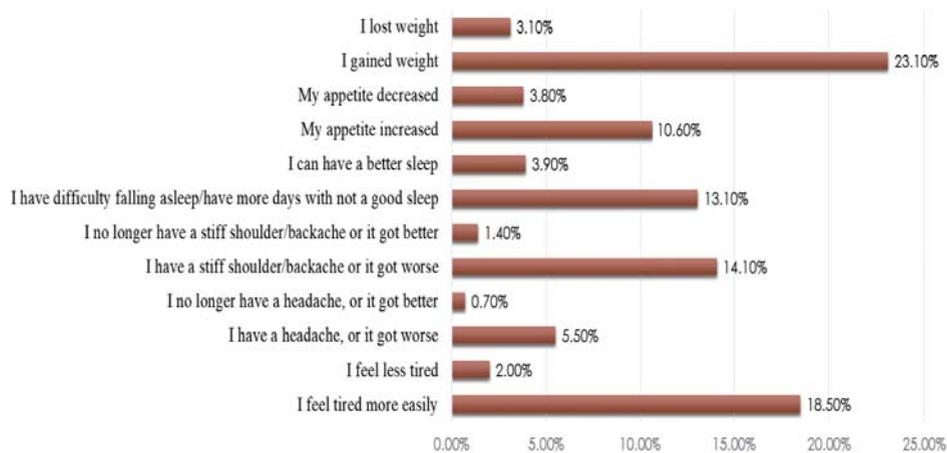
This study examines the impact of Covid-19 in the social life of Japanese people with a particular emphasis on mental and physical health, family level disorder and suicide, and other aspects of social life that have been excluded from the prerogative of this study. However, the study encourages future research on crime and delinquency, fraud, behavioural changes, and conflict in the Covid-19 context. Moreover, only secondary data have been used for this study; primary data could improve its rigour.

5. Analysis and Findings

5.1 Deterioration of physical and mental health

The lifestyle of the Japanese people has been significantly changed because of Covid-19. The movement restrictions resulted in reduced physical activities that ultimately contributed to health status. It is reported that in the middle of October 2019 to April 2020, per week physical activity time of Japanese people has been reduced to 32.4%. In the Covid-19 emergency period, community-dwelling older adults of Japan experienced a 40% decline in their physical fitness. Moreover, people aged 40 to 69 years who generally perceived a decline in physical fitness experienced a further decrease in physical activities in the Covid-19 period (Makizako et al., 2021). The Statista (2021) online survey of 5000 respondents reveals that more than 23% of Japanese people gained weight after the outbreak of Covid-19, whereas more than 10% said their appetite increased. 18% of the respondents stated they felt tired more quickly than on previous occasions. More than 14% of the survey participants mentioned that they had a stiff shoulder/backache or it got worse. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, 5.5% of the respondents said they had headaches or got worse.

Figure 1: Physical Health Status of the Japanese People amid Pandemic (As of June 2020)



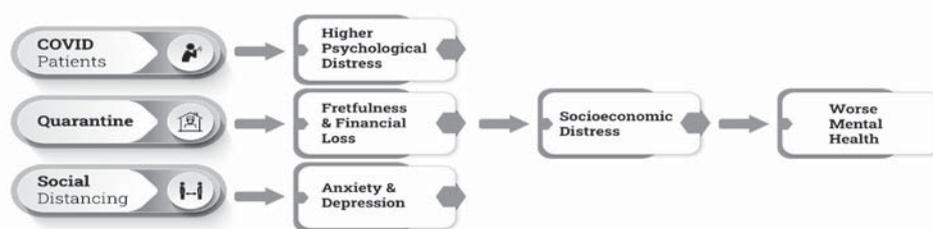
Source: Statista, 2021

The deterioration of the mental health framework has been developed examining Tanoue et al. (2020), Brooks et al. (2020), Ueda et al. (2020) and Martin (2021), where three factors have been identified as the leading cause of the deterioration

of mental health in Japan in the post-Covid-19 situation, and the factors are Covid-19 patient himself who suffers from higher psychological distress, quarantine effect and impact of social distancing (see Figure 2). Due to quarantine, Japanese people fall into fretfulness and financial loss. Because of social distancing, people in Japan suffered from anxiety and depression. All these factors generate socioeconomic distress and result in worse mental health.

A survey was conducted in 2020 to identify the contributing factors to severe psychological distress (SPD); out of 25,482 participants, 10% met SPD criteria. However, many factors have been identified that were associated with SPD during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the factors are fear of Covid-19, domestic violence, and caregiving burden (Yoshioka et al., 2021).

Figure 2: Deterioration of Mental Health

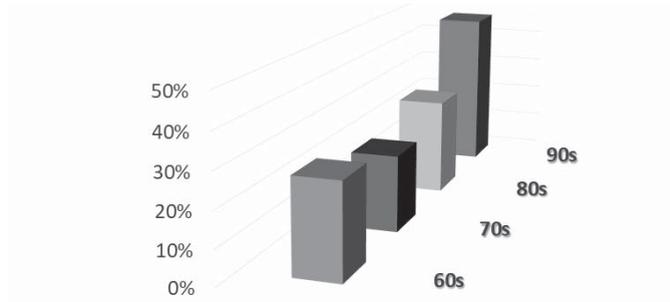


Source: Tanoue et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 2020; Ueda et al. 2020; Martin, 2021

27% of Japanese people above 60 years feel that they are becoming forgetful, and 50% of them pointed out that they have lost their vigour in life in Covid-19. 22%, 28% and 47% of people in their 70s, 80s and 90s, respectively, said that they went out of home once a week or less (Martin, 2021). Figure 3 demonstrates that dementia symptoms increase among Japanese people because of the pandemic. More than 40% of people aged around 90 years, around 30% aged 80 years, around 20% aged 70 years and more than 10% aged 60% have increased dementia symptoms (Martin, 2021).

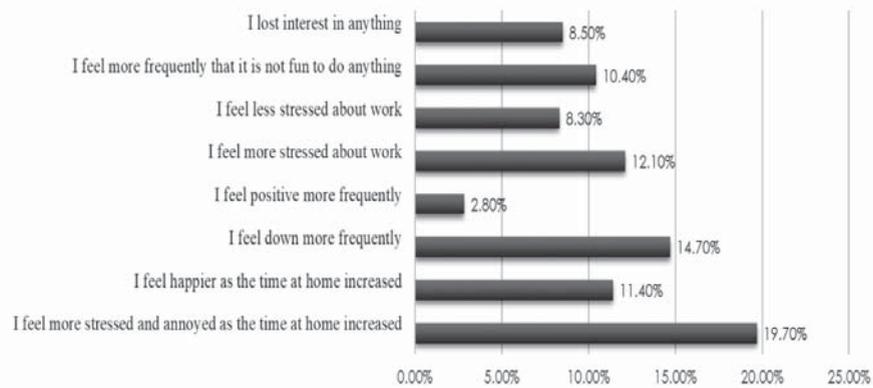
According to a Statista (2021) online survey of 5000 people, around 20% of Japanese people felt more stressed and annoyed as the time at home increased due to movement restrictions. 14.70% fell more frequently than the Covid-19 pandemic. It reveals that 12.10% of people felt more stressed about work, and 10.40% felt more frequently that it was not fun to do anything. More than 8.50% of the participants said they lost interest in anything. Conversely, 11.40% of the respondents felt happier as the time at home increased, and 8.30% felt less stressed about work in the Covid-19 period. Interestingly, 2.80% of the participants felt favourable more frequently at the time of the pandemic.

Figure 3: Trend of Developing Dementia Symptom among Older People



Source: Martin, 2021

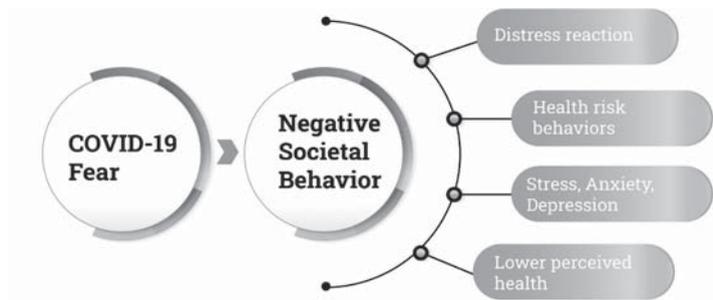
Figure 4: Mental Health Status of Japanese People amid Pandemic



Source: Statista, 2021

It appears in Figure 5 that deterioration of mental health impacted social behaviour negatively, resulting in distress reaction, health risk behaviour, stress, anxiety and depression and lowered perceived health (Shigemura et al., 2020).

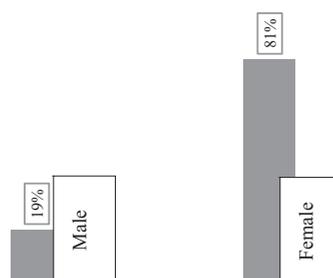
Figure 5: Deterioration of Mental Health: Social Behaviour Perspective



Source: Shigemura et al., 2020

A recent study considering academic institution closures finds that mental health inequality between gender groups and educational backgrounds has increased. Moreover, mothers' mental health worsened in the pandemic compared to other females. Interestingly, the mental health of males remains unchanged in the Covid-19 situation (Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021).

Figure 6: Deterioration of Mental Health: Gender Perspective



Source: Tahara et al., 2021

Another study unveils that women had higher anxiety in Covid-19 than men and lowered their daily activities. Moreover, the study finds that the mental health of female students has been severely affected due to the shutdown of the campus, and demographic characteristics have been identified as the critical factor to the effect (Tahara, 2021). The research concludes that depression and distress among Japanese people have increased from 2% to 9% in Covid-19, and at the time of the second wave in March/April of 2021, 1 out of 5 Japanese have experienced probable depression (Fukase et al., 2021).

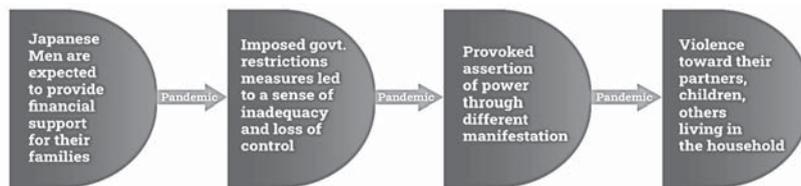
5.2 Family level disorder

Still, the Japanese family has remained the most influential socialisation agent to a Japanese national. Unique Japanese culture and customs have extensively been promoted and taught within the family system. Thereby, the disorder in the family system means a loss to the life of Japanese people. However, most Japanese families have undergone a stressful situation in the Covid-19 pandemic mainly because of the shutdown of the workplace, school and parks, playground and day-care facilities and restriction to attend social events, which resulted in higher domestic violence and suicide. Conflict and stress among family members also increased in home-sharing as workplace, classroom or care centre for elderlies (Shibusawa et al., 2021).

It is a predominant practice of the Japanese family system that men bear the responsibility of the financial support of all family members. It is perceived that the family's financial support is instrumental to men's domination over other

family members. However, due to the restrictions in Covid-19, men felt a sense of inadequacy and loss of control over many family matters. This uncertainty triggered the assertion of power through the manifestation of unacceptable behaviour that includes violence against partners, children and others living in the household (UN Women 2020a; Suga, 2021). These factors have been presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Disruption in Family Level during Covid-19



Source: UN Women 2020a & Suga, 2021

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, Japanese people stayed at home, which elicited much higher domestic violence than usual. Japanese Public Spousal Violence Counselling Support Centre (SVCSC) provided 13,272 consultations in April 2020, which was 1.3% higher than the same month of the past year (Asahi Shimbun Digital 2020 cited in Suga, 2020). It is worth mentioning that the SVCSCs are the public entities under the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office, which provide three types of services counselling, medical and psychological support and emergency support to the victims. To provide 24/7 effective counselling services to the victims of domestic violence via telephone and social media, the Japanese government introduced Domestic Violence Counselling Plus (DVCP) in April 2020. The DVCP, on average, provided 4400 consultations each month since the kick-off. Honouring the request of the All Japan Women's Shelter Network, the Japanese government stated on April 2020 titled 'On proper support for DV victims in response to COVID-19 infections' to ensure counselling services and other supports in the prefectural level (Suga, 2021). There was a common trend of complaints from the victims- 'my husband is working from home; children are not going to school; my husband gradually becomes distressed and physically violent to me' (All Japan Women's Shelter Network, 2020 cited in Suga, 2020). A study finds that children maltreatment due to Covid-19 has increased in Japan, and 18.3% of parents of a sample size of 5344 was involved in abusive behaviour against children. It also reveals that screen time enhanced and mental health became poorer because of Covid-19 (Yamaoka et al., 2021). Another study argues that measures taken by the government to control infection negatively contribute to the children increasing abuse and neglect (Usami et al., 2021).

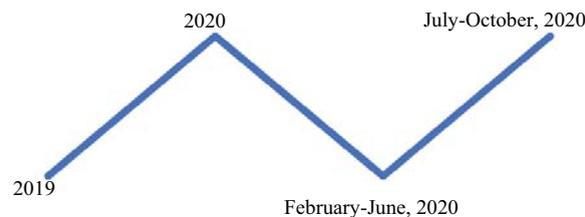
However, Japan government has taken some initiatives to manage the situation, and the initiatives include the introduction of the Public Domestic Violence Counselling Offices for Covid-19 Emergencies, DVCP, and counselling services for non-Japanese, agreement with private shelters, protection of victims, additional support and cash payment (Suga, 2020).

5.3 Trend of suicidal behaviour in the Covid-19 context

The suicide attempt in Japan in 2018 and 2019 was 0.9% and 0.8%, respectively. However, suicide attempts increased to 1.3% in 2020 because of Covid-19 (Habu et al., 2021). The study claims that the Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to the suicide rate in Japan. It suggests that the suicide rate increased in 2020 from 2016 to 2019, and a relative increase was found among men and women below 30 years and 30 to 49 years (Sakamoto et al., 2021).

Research findings show that seemingly for several factors, for example, subsidies from the government, reduced working hours and school shutdown, in the first five months of the pandemic suicide rate declined by 14%. However, during the second wave, particularly from July to October 2020 monthly suicide rate increased by 16%. A significant increase has been seen among females, 37%, and among children and adolescents that was 49%. It is understood that the impact of Covid-19 will exist in society for the long run; however, modifiers per se subsidies may not continue (Tanaka & Okamoto, 2021).

Figure 8: Increase and Decrease in Suicidal Behaviour among the Japanese People during Covid-19

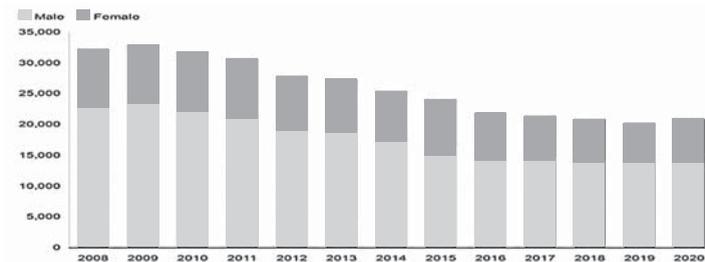


Source: Tanaka & Okamoto, 2021

A study has reported a new suicidal behaviour pattern during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study reports that the suicide rate in Japan for the first time in the last 11 years went up in 2020, where the suicide rate among males decreased a little, but the female suicide rate increased to 15%. Previously, a higher rate of male suicide was observed during the various national crises, such as the fall of the property bubble and the stock market or banking crisis in 2008. Nonetheless, Covid-19 shock is affecting the young generation, especially young women. A

total of 878 Japanese women committed suicide in October 2020, which is 70% higher than in October 2019. The Japanese newspaper reported that at one point in 2020 total number of suicide was 2199, whereas until then, the total number of deaths because of Covid-19 was 2087 (Wingfield-Hayes, 2021).

Figure 9: Number of Suicides in Japan 2008-2020



Source: Wingfield-Hayes, 2021

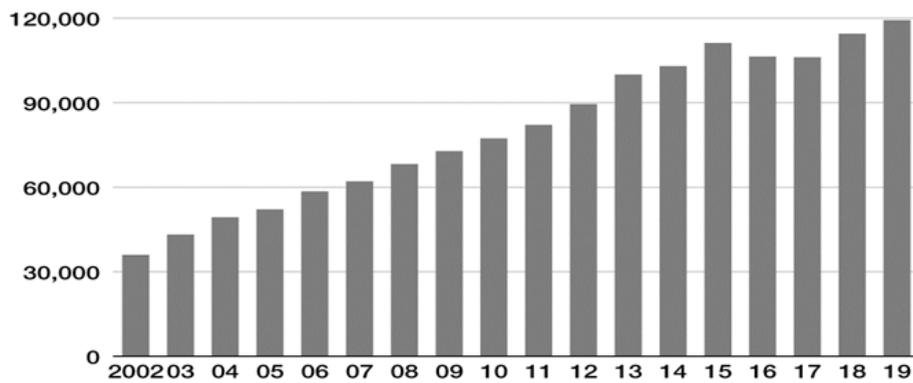
6. Way forward: The “V+ shaped therapy”

A mammoth task is ahead of the Japanese government to overcome the social shocks generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Existing literature favours ‘V-shaped therapy for overcoming the shocks as ‘V-shaped therapy intends to bring society back to its perfect order. However, Barkat (2021), in his work titled ‘Post-COVID-19 JAPAN: Shocks and Therapy- A Multidisciplinary Treatise of an economist-Japanologist’ proposes “V+ shaped therapy” for Covid-19 recovery as the Japanese society was not in perfect order before the pandemic because of inequality, over-concentration of money to a small group of people and multidimensional poverty and deprivation. Other existing literature also reveals that before Covid-19, Japanese society encountered some issues that conflicted with the thought of an ideal society. For example, income inequality (Steinmo, 2006; Jones, 2007; Ohtake, 2008; Oshio & Kobayashi, 2011; Oshio & Urakawa 2014), the higher price of consumer goods (Nikkei Asia, 2017; Ogura, 2017), the financial burden of care for older people due to declining income generation and increasing ageing population (Hayashi 2011; Harth, 2020), extreme work pressure, stressful life and worsening physical & mental health (CBS NEWS, 2017), family violence (Figure 10- Ministry of Justice, 2019) and suicide (Figure 11- Engelmann, 2018; Wingfield-Hayes, 2021).

Although the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims Act was enacted in 2001 to prevent domestic violence, cases increased in Japan before the pandemic (Ando, 2020). Data in Figures 10-13 show a rising trend in almost all counts of violence before COVID, namely domestic violence (consultations and arrests), spousal offences, and suicides. The number of domestic violence cases recorded in 2019 was 9,161 (Ando, 2020). It is expected that domestic

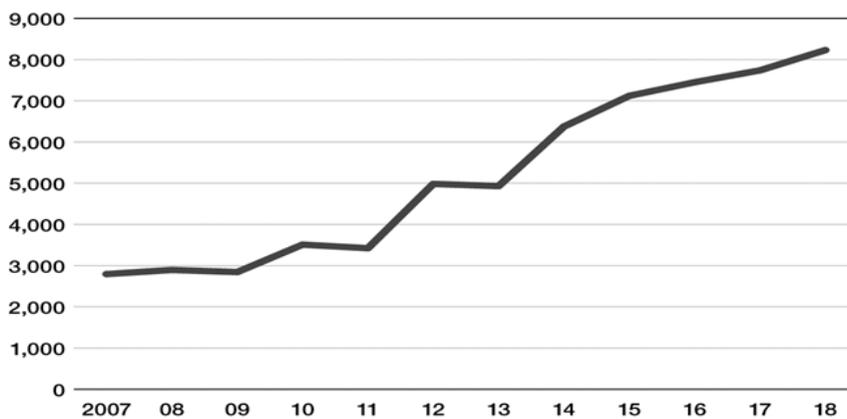
violence cases will continue to increase due to the pandemic. Domestic violence local consultation Centres in Tokyo received 23 phone calls in March 2020. Before the pandemic, the average number of calls was ten phone calls per month (Osumi, 2020).

Figure 10: Domestic Violence Consultations in Pre-COVID-19 Japan



Source: Nippon.com, 2021

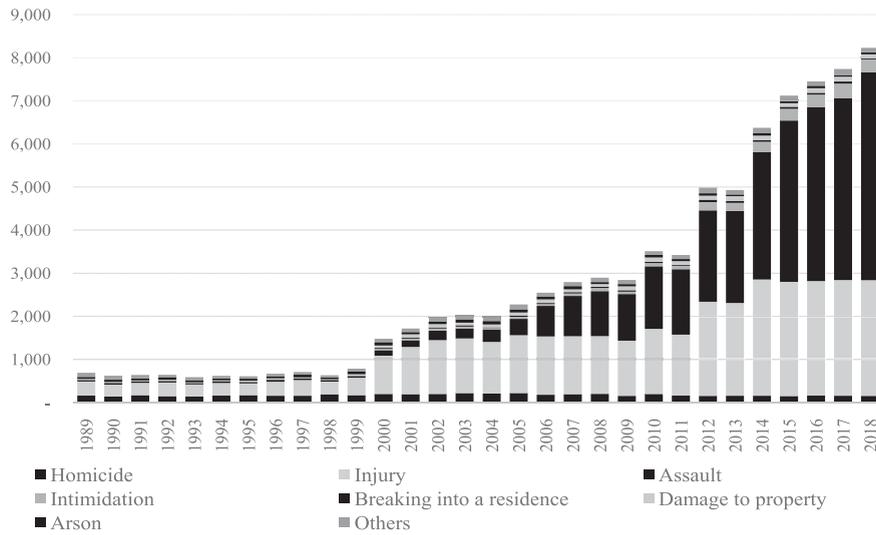
Figure 11: Domestic Violence Arrests in Pre-COVID-19 Japan



Source: Nippon.com, 2020

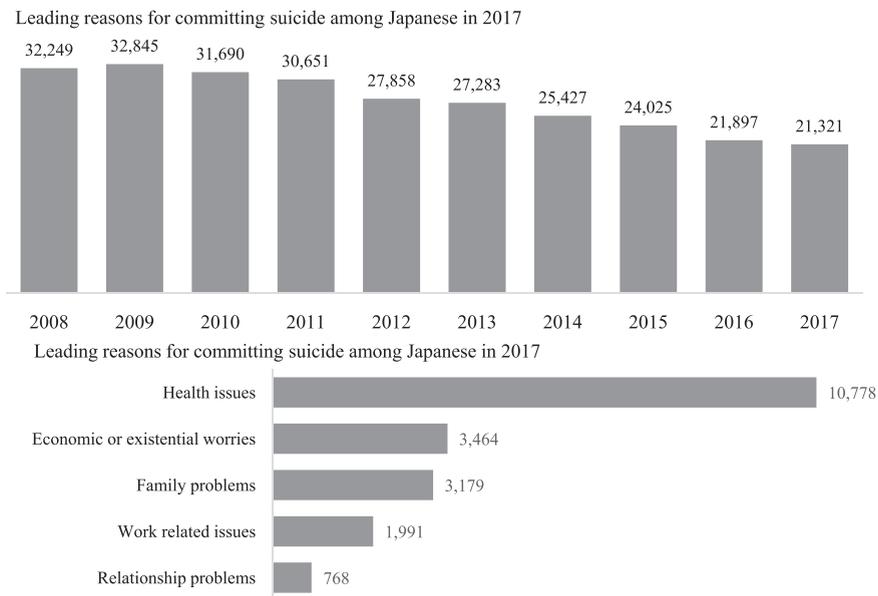
In this social context of Japanese society, this study supports the “V+ shaped therapy” of Barkat (2021) to recover social shock. In the recovery process, the determination of political leaders for the economic development capable of creating positive social impact is crucial. At the same time, the economic

Figure 12: Reported cases of spousal offenses in Japan, by types of offenses: 1989-2018



Source: Japan Ministry of Justice, 2019

Figure 13: Suicide Incidents in Japanese Society before COVID-19



Source: Engelmann, 2018

development outcomes have to reach people of all levels. Economic recovery from two-decades-long economic recession and further for COVID-19 economic shock with particular attention to the most affected areas and groups such as workers, SMEs, minorities, lower-income groups, and so on is significant. Pragmatic policy and institutional setup, such as Domestic Violence Consultation Plus, is fundamental to reducing stress, anxiety, and distress. Moreover, an effective suicide prevention mechanism has to be developed primarily for the vulnerable population to reduce their distress and depression.

7. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has hard-hit Japanese society, and significant damage has been done to people's physical and mental health, family system, and suicide. Society has never faced such disintegration after the Second World War. After the fall of the bubble economy, neo-liberalism policy was adopted and promoted by the government. However, recovery has not been made under the neo-liberalist approach. Inequality has increased, and the decline in income, the higher price of consumer goods, and extreme work pressure worsen physical and mental health. In this milieu, Covid-19 has made a double blow to society. Per week activity time of Japanese people has been reduced; therefore, 40% of people are expected to lose physical fitness and around 25% gain weight. Around 20% of people felt more stressed and annoyed due to the shutdown. People are losing their enthusiasm to work and frequently feel more down before the Covid-19 pandemic. Domestic violence has significantly increased, and consultation services have reached a record number.

Most importantly, the suicide rate has reached the highest level compared to the last eleven years. Therefore, political leadership has to play a significant role in addressing social shocks and bringing Japanese society back to standard. In this regard, 'V Plus-Shaped Therapy' proposed by Barkat (2021) can provide a solution for Japanese society's recovery from the Covid-19 related social shocks.

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Emphasising Selected Macroeconomic Indicators to Revive Japanese Economic Growth from Post-COVID-19 Shock

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Abstract – For its unique characteristics of the continuous revitalisation of its economy, Japan is widely known around the globe. Japan made significant contributions to the world developmental agenda in the post-World War II era. Covid-19 imposed both demand and supply shocks worldwide. Japan is not an exception. Using the Autoregressive distributed lag model for the time series data on Japan, the impact of some selected macroeconomic variables on the annual growth of gross domestic products of Japan was obtained in this study. In order to revive the economic growth, Japan needs acute concentration towards its domestic economy, especially to mitigate the post-COVID impact on Japan.

Keywords Net FDI outflow . Trade . Capital formation . COVID-19 .

JEL Classification F14 . F17 . F21 . O16 .

1. Introduction

Japan is the synonym of miraculous growth. During the rapid growth phase of the 1970s, Japan experienced double-digit growth of approximately 12% in 1969. In the 1990s, Japan had a bubble burst followed by its lost decades. In 2000, Japan had a recovery phase, and again in 2011, Japan faced a triple disaster. That is Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear melt-down (Zaman, 2019). Then Japan took its revitalising policy through the Abenomics program. Now Japan emphasises the 4th industrial revolution (Onday, 2019).

COVID- 19 severely affected all the countries around the globe. Japan is not an exception. Japan is unique for its high-tech products, especially electronic appliances, worldwide disbursement of ODA (Overseas Development Assistance), and true mutual friendship.

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Historically, Japan is widely symbolised as a donor country among the developing and developed countries simultaneously for participating in the world development agenda, poverty reduction strategy, and achieving developmental goals worldwide through the ODA disbursement (Sunaga, 2004). Japan is also reputed for its high-quality electronic appliances and durability (Wana Ismail, 2013). Export has significantly induced Japan's economic growth after the second world war. Using her comparative advantages, Japan almost reached the sky-rocket in its rapid phase of economic growth in 1970. Japan emphasises trade liberalisation to mitigate its drawback in the service industries. Though Japan is highly advanced in the manufacturing sector, there is still scope for improvement in the service and agricultural sectors (Esham et al., 2012).

The unprecedented impact of Covid-19 blended with the worldwide economic crisis is taking Japan to another phase of recession, and in order to recover, Japan needs to act cautiously to mitigate the multidimensional impacts of COVID-19. The policy that helped in post-WWII may not assist this time, as the situation of the developed countries is not as it was post-WWII. Therefore, Japan can only revive if she takes policy concentrating on the domestic economy acutely and then its spillover effect in the international arena.

2. Literature review

The state has a direct intervention and role towards the rapid Japanese growth. The effective policy to boost exports using the comparative advantage accelerates the growth of Japan. Miraculous Japanese growth was fuelled with the direct intervention of the state and its effective policy to boost its export by utilising its comparative advantages (Zaman, 2019). Rani & Kumar (2019) conducted a study to investigate the long-run association among variables like economic growth, the openness of trade, and gross capital formation for BRICS countries using autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL). They found significant long-run relations and causal relationships using the Granger causality approach among the variables.

The findings of Chirwa & Odhiambo (2016) study identified some key determinant factors of growth for both developed and developing countries. Trade, capital, and FDI are noteworthy, and trade has a robust and sizeable quantitative impact on income (Frankel & Romer, 1999). Solow (1962) stated that capital formation is necessary but insufficient for economic growth. The panel cointegration done by Uneze (2013) found bi-directional causality between high economic growth and capital formation. Due to higher economic growth, capital formation (either gross or private capital) increases and eventually, increased capital formation induces high growth. Sunaga (2004) stated that ODA is an essential pillar of Japanese foreign policy. In order to promote the global strategy for poverty reduction, Japan highly emphasises ODA disbursement. However, due

to the lack of proper implementation and other loopholes, the Japanese citizens have a pessimistic approach towards ODA disbursement.

Small and medium enterprises (SME) are the predominant sectors of Japanese economic growth. Since the Japanese economy accommodates around 99.7% of SMEs among all enterprises- the SME sector employs 70 per cent of the working population, and thus SMEs is proudly responsible for a larger portion of the total output of Japan. COVID-19 severely damaged the global SME sectors, and Japan is no exception. Despite the provision of emergency loans and credit to mitigate the primary impact on the SME sector, deviation from target achievement occurred due to the presence of moral hazard of both Bank and SME, risk-aversion attitude of potential investors, fund shortage for infrastructural investments because of low rate of return and associated risks (Yoshino & Hendriyetty, 2020). Covid-19 acts as both a supply shock and demand shock simultaneously. Both the attributes will affect international trade. From previous experience of the global recession of 2008-09, it was observed that global trade was slower than global growth. Therefore, it is expected that an amplified impact of Covid-19 will be seen in the upcoming days in the case of international trade. Covid-19 evolved from a contagious disease in the economy to medicine and economy (Baldwin & Tomiura, 2020).

3. Objectives

To determine the selected macroeconomic variables responsible for reducing the GDP growth rate of Japan. The growth of gross capital formation, foreign direct investment as % of GDP and trade as % of GDP contributed to the annual GDP growth over time is aimed to assess using the econometric Autoregressive distributive model (ARDL). Besides, a correlation matrix will be prepared to better understand these selected macroeconomic variables after vigorous diagnostic testing using time series data on Japan.

4. Methods

In order to detect the growth factors of Japan, time-series data from 1975 to 2018 are used in this study. Based on the availability of the required data properly to portray Japan from its rapid growth phase, data from the mentioned period is collected from the World bank database. ARDL model is used along with the error correction model.

Initially, some factors like Gross capital formation (annual % growth), Domestic credit to the private sector (% of GDP), Trade (% of GDP), Fertility rate, total (births per woman), Foreign direct investment, net outflows (% of GDP or *gcf_annualgr*, *dom_cr_priv*, *trd_gdp*, *fer_rate* *fdi_outflow* respectively are used to identify its contribution on the GDP growth (annual %). Finally, the statistically significant factors are considered for further explanation considering the econometric loopholes.

While using the time series data, it was attempted to check whether there are any issues related, serial correlation, heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity, non-stationarity among the explanatory variables. If the independent or explanatory variables are of integrated order zero or one (that is., I (0) or I (1)), then the ARDL test can be used. In case of any explanatory variables which are stationary at the second difference, then the ARDL model cannot be used. Thus, to find the short-run and long-run impact, the study used the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) to select the lag length of the ARDL model.

Thus, a model was run- the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model. The Breusch-Godfrey LM (Lagrange Multiplier) test tested whether there is any autocorrelation among the stochastic error terms of the regression model. On the other hand, the Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test tests heteroscedasticity, i.e., the unequal variance of the residual terms. The multicollinearity problem is identified using the Variable Inflation Factor (VIF) value.

When the mean and the variances of the stochastic error terms are not stationary, there is a unit root, and data need to be stationary to run the model for time series data. It is required to do an ADF test for unit root for each dependent and independent variable. After performing a unit root test, the irrelevant variables are dropped.

Using the obtained results, the post- COVID performance of selected macroeconomic variables of Japan is analysed. Some recommendations are given based on the empirical research findings.

5. Analysis

Table 1: Definition and measurement of variables

Variable name	Definition	Measurement	Data source
GDP growth gdp_gr	Annual growth of Gross Domestic Products	as % of GDP	WDI*
GCF growth gcf_annualgr	Annual growth of Gross Capital Formation	as % of GDP	WDI
FDI outflows fdi_outflow	Net outward FDI by Japanese investors	as % of GDP	WDI
Trade trd_gdp	Flows of merchandise exports and imports from and to Japan	as % of GDP calculated by (Export + Import)/GDP	WDI

Source: Developed by author

*WDI = World Development Indicators

Table 2: Unit root test

Variable name	Z(t) statistic	
	At level	At First Difference
GDP growth	-4.920***	
GCF growth	-4.725***	
FDI outflow	-1.641	-4.898***

Source: Author's calculation

Significance level: *** = 1%, ** = 5%, * = 10%

When the mean and variations of the stochastic error terms are not stationary, there is a unit root, and data need to be stationary to run the model for time series data. It is required to do an ADF test for unit root for each dependent and independent variable.

The null hypothesis assumes there is a unit root. If the null can be rejected, then the data is stationary.

ARDL test can only be done when data is in an integrated order of 0 or 1. Sometimes, it is required to take the first or second difference to get the stationary data. Otherwise, the variables need to be dropped.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test for unit root

Variable	p-value for Z(t)
<i>GDP growth</i>	0.0003
<i>GCF growth</i>	0.0006
Net FDI outflow	0.7759
First difference of net FDI outflow	0.0003
Trade	0.7341
First difference in trade	0.0000

Variable p-value for Z(t) *GDP growth* 0.0003 *GCF growth* 0.0006 Net FDI outflow 0.7759 First difference of net FDI outflow 0.0003 Trade 0.7341 First difference in trade 0.0000

The variables- trade and net FDI outflow are stationary at their first difference; they are integrated order of 1. In contrast, GCF growth is of integrated order of 0.

The variables- domestic credit to the private sector and fertility rate are dropped due to having unit root as they are stationary at their second differences.

Table 3: Diagnostic checks

Properties	Test name	Statistic
Serial correlation (Chi2 value)	Breusch-Godfrey LM test	1.06
Heteroscedasticity (Chi2 value)	Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test	1.34
Multicollinearity (mean VIF)	Variable Inflation Factor test	4.47

Source: Author's calculation

Significance level: *** = 1%, ** = 5%, * =10%

Thus, some diagnostics tests were conducted to run the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model.

Test for serial correlation

Breusch-Godfrey LM test for autocorrelation

lags(p)	chi2	df	Prob > chi2
1	1.060	1	0.3032

H0: no serial correlation

Null hypothesis: H0: no serial correlation

Through the Breusch-Godfrey LM test, it was found that there was no serial correlation.

Again, the Durbin Watson statistic is also a test for autocorrelation in a regression model's output. The DW statistic ranges from zero to four.

Usually, when the value of d-statistic lies between 1.5 to 2.5, then there is no autocorrelation.

Here, Durbin-Watson d-statistic (6, 48) = 2.287073

Thus, using both the Breusch-Godfrey LM test and Durbin-Watson d-statistic, it is found that there is no serial correlation among the sample used the time series data.

Test for heteroscedasticity

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test confirmed the homoscedasticity or no issues related to heteroscedasticity.

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity

Ho: Constant variance
 Variables: fitted values of gdp_gr
 chi2(1) = 1.34
 Prob > chi2 = 0.2470

Thus, no heteroscedasticity at a 5% level of significance.

Test for multicollinearity

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
dom_cr_priv	6.21	0.161140
trd_gdp	6.01	0.166339
fer_rate	4.83	0.207145
fdi_outflow	4.02	0.248465
gcf_annualgr	1.30	0.770204
Mean VIF	4.47	

If VIF < 10, then there is no multicollinearity problem among the explanatory variables. Since the Variable Inflation Factor value is less than 10, that is 4.47, indicating no multicollinearity problems.

Table 4: Correlation matrix

	GDP growth	GCF growth	FDI as % of GDP	Trade as % of GDP
GDP growth	1.000			
GCF growth	0.832 (0.000)	1.000		
FDI as % of GDP	-0.323 (0.025)	0.022 (0.882)	1.000	
Trade as % of GDP	-0.296 (0.041)	-0.136 (0.357)	-0.736 (0.000)	1.000

Source: Author's calculation
 Values in the parenthesis denote the standard error.

The above correlation matrix portrays the association between the variables. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of GCF growth and GDP growth is .832, and it signifies a high degree of positive correlation or association between the variables. A negative sign denotes a negative correlation, and a value higher than 0.5 signifies a high degree of association between the variables.

Table 5: Adjusted estimate

Properties	Value
GDP growth	-0.695*** (0.082)

Source: Author's calculation

Significance level: *** = 1%, ** = 5%, * =10%

Values in the parenthesis denote the standard error.

Adjusted estimate of the dependent variable (GDP growth) is estimated by correcting the ARDL model error. Error correction term (ect) indicates whether there is an error in the long-run relationship or any deviation from the equilibrium or not and whether that is corrected in the long run or not. Thus, in the long run, if the error correction term (ect) becomes significant, then there exists a significant long-run relationship among the dependent and independent variables. If any deviation occurs in the short run, that is also corrected eventually in the long run.

Whether any temporary deviation is corrected or not depends on the sign. A negative sign confirms the error correction in the long run, and a positive sign denotes that the deviation or the diffusion rises further. Here, the negative sign denotes that the deviation is corrected and comes back to equilibrium in the long run, and approximately 69 % correction takes place in the long run.

Table 6: Cointegration and Long-run estimates

Properties	value
GCF growth	0.521*** (0.057)
FDI outflow as % of GDP	-1.487*** (0.290)
Trade as % of GDP	0.159*** (0.050)

Source: Author's calculation

Significance level: *** = 1%, ** = 5%, * =10%

Values in the parenthesis denote the standard error.

LR: The effects of a 1% change in the level of the variable;

When there is a positive annual growth of gross capital formation, GDP growth also increases. t-statistic is significantly and statistically different from zero for this variable. Positive coefficient of the variable trade (as a % of GDP) also signifies that GDP growth increases when trade (as a % of GDP) increases. However, the net outflow of FDI has a negative coefficient which signifies that when the net outflow of FDI increases, then the growth of GDP reduces. All three variables are statistically and significantly different from zero.

If all the three explanatory variables are zero, then the growth of GDP reduces by 0.5 percentage points.

When GCF growth increases by one percentage point, the GDP growth (GDP growth) rate increases by 0.521 percentage points.

When FDI outflow as % of GDP increases by one percentage point at the level, GDP growth (GDP growth) rate reduces by 1.48 percentage points.

When trade as % of GDP increases by one percentage point, GDP growth (GDP growth) rate increases by 0.159 percentage points. The previous year value of trade has a reverse impact, whereas the value of trade for two lag years has a positive impact on GDP growth.

Table 7: Short-run estimates

Properties	Value
GDP growth	-.0348*** (0.065)
Trade as % of GDP	0.009* (0.052)

Source: Author's calculation

Significance level: *** = 1%, ** = 5%, * = 10%

Values in the parenthesis denote the standard error.

In the short run, the effects of a 1% change in the growth of the variable are obtained.

Table 8: Details of the ARDL (3,0,0,2) regression

Properties	Value
Sample	1975-2018
Number of obs	44
F (8, 35)	40.22
Prob>F	0.0000
R-squared	0.9078
Adj R-squared	0.887
Log likelihood	-47.194
Root MSE	0.793

Source: Author's calculation

Here, the Adjusted R-square is 0.997. It means 88.7 per cent of the variation in the dependent variables are explained by the independent variables, which also signifies the goodness of the fit.

ARDL (3,0,0,2) regression

D.gdp_gr	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	

ADJ						
gdp_gr						
L1.	-.6951856	.0822533	-8.45	0.000	-.8621687	-.5282025

LR						
gcf_annualgr	.5211517	.0567996	9.18	0.000	.4058423	.6364611
fdi_outflow	-1.486984	.2895107	-5.14	0.000	-2.074722	-.8992465
trd_gdp	.1588309	.0501581	3.17	0.003	.0570045	.2606573

SR						
gdp_gr						
LD.	-.348585	.0653555	-5.33	0.000	-.4812636	-.2159063
L2D.	-.1383989	.0532481	-2.60	0.014	-.2464984	-.0302994
trd_gdp						
D1.	.009527	.052503	0.18	0.857	-.0970599	.1161138
LD.	-.1311055	.047905	-2.74	0.010	-.2283577	-.0338532
_cons	.5026578	.696115	-0.72	0.475	-1.915846	.9105307

6. Findings

When net FDI Outflow (as % of GDP) increases by one percentage point at the level, GDP growth rate reduces by 1.48 percentage points.

Table 9: Relation of FDI Outflow (as % of GDP) and GDP growth rate for Japan

Variable	Year	Value	Change	Direction
Net FDI Outflow (as % of GDP)	1970	0.2 %	4.9%	Increases
	2019	5.1%		
GDP growth rate	1969	12%	11.73%	Decreases
	2019	0.27%		

Source: (CEIC, 2021)

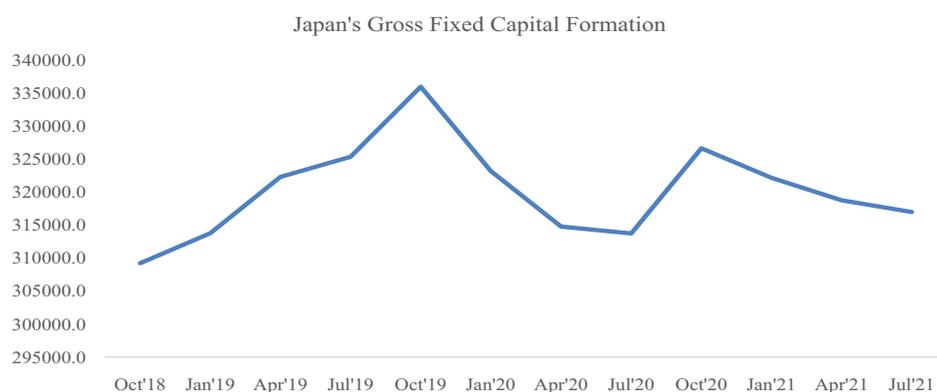
From 1970 to 2019, FDI outflow (as % of GDP) increases by 4.9 %.

From 1969 to 2019, the GDP growth rate reduces by 11.73%.

Since an increase in 1% FDI outflow reduces the GDP growth rate of Japan by 1.48% percentage point (Author's analysis using time series data).

Thus, a 4.9% increase in net FDI outflow (as % of GDP) reduces GDP growth by a 7.25 % point. Therefore, it can be concluded that, like many factors, the reduction in the GDP growth rate of Japan is attributed to the increase in FDI outflow (as % of GDP) significantly. Source: (CEIC, 2021)

Graph 1: Quarterly data of Gross fixed capital formation for Japan from October 2018 to July 2021.

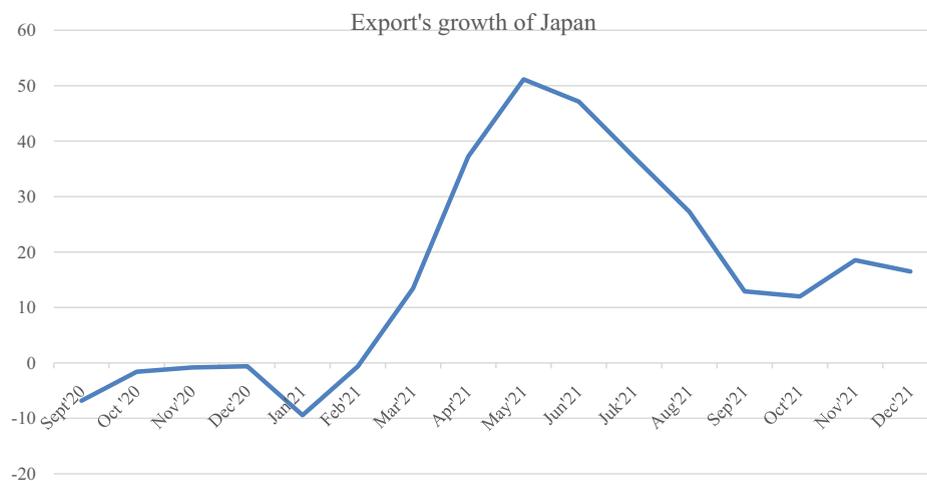


Source: (CEIC, 2021)

Since GCF also seems to be downward sloping. Thus, the reduction in GDP growth rate is also predicted and validated according to the findings.

Though in October 2020, GCF was increasing compared to April 20, but not as much as it was in July. That is why a V plus therapy (as argued by Barkat, 2021) could be of high policy utility for Japan. We need to surpass the pre-COVID situation and develop further to have an inclusive impact in the long run.

Graph 2: Monthly data for total export of Japan from September 2020 to Dec 2021.

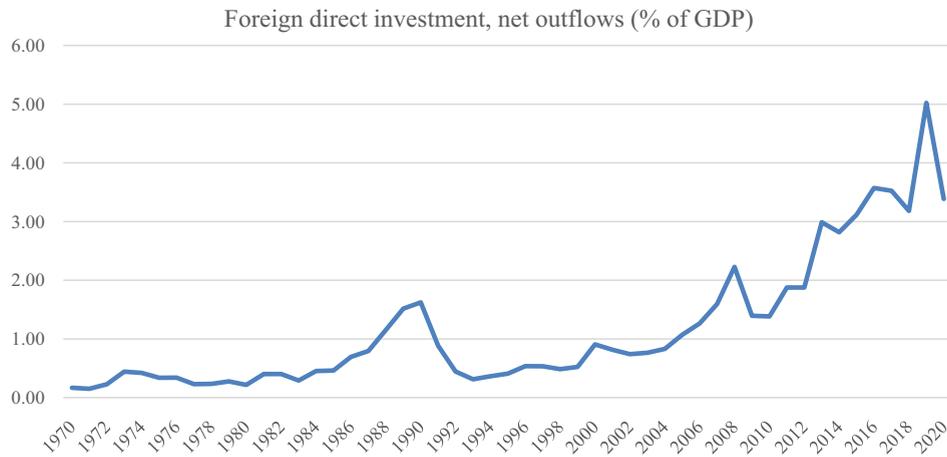


Source: (CEIC, 2021)

Export is still struggling. However, it seems that export increases for a while. However, it is not reflecting the recovery scenario. Since, during the global shut-down period of early 2020, overall export got severely affected like all other countries around the globe with that comparison, when Japan started its export, it seemed that the export was experiencing an upward trend. However, still then also, after May 2021, the export seems to have a downward trend, which needs to be addressed. Export is one of the crucial engines of economic growth irrespective of any economy, and for Japan, export historically played a prominent role in its developmental process (Zaman, 2019).

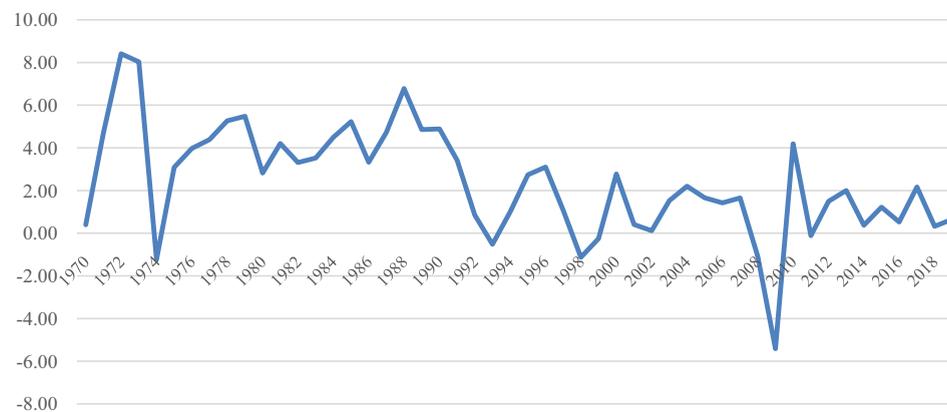
Comparative scenario of increased net FDI outflow (% of GDP) and GDP growth rate (annual %) for Japan

Graph 3: Upward trend of net FDI outflow of Japan from 1970 to 2020



Source: (WDI, 2021)

Graph 4: Downward trend of GDP growth (annual %) of Japan from 1970 to 2018 GDP growth (annual %)



Source: (WDI, 2021)

From the comparison of the net FDI outflow and GDP growth rate of Japan, it is seen that there is a reverse relationship between the two variables. The two variables' graphical representation also portrays that Japan has experienced a downward sloping GDP growth rate and upward sloping net FDI outflow over time. Net FDI outflow increase sufficiently is not responsible for reducing the Japanese GDP growth rate. However, evidence from the time series study shows that an increase in net FDI outflow necessarily attributes to the reduction of

annual growth of the GDP of Japan to some extent. FDI is a part of the national foreign policy of Japan. Undoubtedly, Japan historically contributed to poverty reduction, attainment of fundamental rights, physical and social infrastructural development of developing countries. The philanthropic investment of Japan saved and improved the quality of lives of many. However, sometimes, the recipient country does not have a positive outcome for a long time from the Japanese investment due to the marginal social cost imposed by the investments. Though, Japan is also benefitting through FDI both domestically and internationally in many ways like- increased export, diffusion of Japanese technology, culture and norms globally. However, it is high time that the Japanese government needs to re-think that the Japanese government needs to re-think the element of net FDI outflow in its foreign policy. Impact assessment of both donor and recipient countries are highly recommended to take the following steps. Since it is found that an increase in net FDI outflow of Japan reduces its annual GDP growth rate, once Japan can ensure a domestic economy with a strong base, Japan can again look outward for investment. The domestic economy needs the attention most.

7. Conclusion

Historically Japan has experienced a wave-like pattern in case of its growth. That is, it has both ups and downs at a regular interval. Whenever Japan revitalised and tried to recover, it faced any natural or artificial shock. Despite all the odds, Japan revived and contributed to the world's development phase with its own style of contributing, especially leading from the front through its science and technological development. Since post-World War II, Japan has played a significant role through ODA disbursement (overseas development assistance). Both developed and developing countries are benefited from the spillover effect of Japanese ODA. Japan itself also got highly benefited through it as ODA disbursement enhanced the domestic export of Japan to some extent. Due to many developmental projects of Japan and other countries, Japanese technology, merchandise products, automobiles got worldwide exposure. However, the ARDL econometric model found that, in the long run, the impact of net FDI outflow on Japanese GDP growth is negative. Like many other factors, net FDI outflow has a role in reducing the Japanese annual GDP growth rate. It is high time for Japan to assess the long-run impact of net FDI outflow from the donor and recipient country's perspective. Again, the way Japan recovered in the post-World War II era. Japan will not be able to revitalise in the post-COVID era with the same sort of policies since COVID has a drastic impact over all the countries irrespective of any indices. Thus, the post-COVID recovery of Japan will require a different and timely policy compared with that of post-WWII. To conclude, Japan is the

lighthouse, and it possesses every attribute to recover and grow continuously to contribute both in the domestic and international arena in its unique way.

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Determinants of Cultural Diversity Management in Japan: Case Studies of Hospitality Industry

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Abstract– Before the Covid-19 started in 2020, increasing international tourists were visiting Japan in recent years, and the hospitality industry has become a significant economic contributor to the national economy. Employing more non-Japanese employees has been a critical human resource (HR) strategy to cope with the increasing demands of foreign visitors. However, the strategy also challenges the existing Japanese company culture and management systems, particularly in cultural diversity management. This research focuses on the determinants influencing companies whether they choose to adopt effective cultural diversity management strategies. Using a multiple-case analysis of Japanese-owned and non-Japanese foreign-owned companies, we wish to fill the gaps in the research on cultural diversity management in a relatively homogeneous society such as Japan.

Keywords Cultural diversity management · Determinants · Hospitality industry · HR strategies · Japan · Multi-cultural workforce ·

1. Introduction

This article deals with the increasing need for developing effective cultural diversity management policies and practices in the hospitality industry in Japan. With an increasing number of international tourists visiting Japan every year before the start of Covid-19, the hospitality industry has become one of the most vibrant economic contributors to addressing the ‘country’s depopulating and ageing economy. It demonstrates the potential for further growth in the post-

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Covid-19 era. By employing more non-Japanese employees as one of the critical human resource strategies to cope with the increasing demands of foreign visitors and a labour shortage, many companies face challenges in reforming the existing company culture and management systems, particularly in the area of cultural diversity management.

So far, research on Japanese diversity management has focused primarily on gender equality and the ageing workforce, given the influence of economic and demographic changes in recent years (Courmadias et al., 2010; Hagiwara, 2015; Kemper et al., 2015; Magoshi & Chang, 2009; McDonald, 2003; 2009), and to a lesser degree on cultural diversity management (Ozbilgin, 2005). In addition, most existing diversity management research analyses the effects rather than the determinants of diversity management (McCrea & Zhu, 2019). Hence, this research focuses on the factors determining whether companies choose to adopt effective cultural diversity management strategies. A multiple-case analysis of Japanese and non-Japanese foreign-owned companies has been used to fill the gaps in the research on cultural diversity management in a relatively homogeneous society, namely, Japan.

According to the data published by the Japanese government, the total number of foreign tourists increased dramatically in recent years. For example, there were 31.19 million foreign tourists in 2018, an 8.7 per cent increase from 2017 and more than triple the total number of visitors in 2013 when the country recorded over 10 million visitors for the first time (JNTO, 2019). Before the COVID-19 pandemic started in early 2020, the number of foreign tourists had increased 4.6 per cent between 2018 and 2019 (JNTO, 2019). In addition, total spending by foreign tourists in Japan also increased by 17.8 per cent in 2017 compared to the previous year and then by 2 per cent in 2018, with the total value reaching Yen 4.42 trillion and Yen 4.52 trillion in 2017 and 2018, respectively (Invest Online, 2019).

In 2018, Chinese mainlanders were the largest group among the international visitors to Japan with 8.380 million (26.9% of total international visitors), an increase of 13.9 per cent compared to the year before. The second-largest group was South Koreans, with 7.539 million people (24.2% of total international visitors), an increase of 5.6 per cent. The other foreign visitors also increased in numbers: Taiwanese (4.757 million, 4.2% increase) and Americans (1.526 million, 11% increase) (JNTO, 2019).

In 2018, the total spending by international tourists in Japan recorded the highest amount at Yen 4.51 trillion (\$41.5 billion), with each tourist spending an average of Yen 153,000. Among these tourists, Chinese mainlanders spent the most, with a share of 34 per cent of the total, followed by South Koreans (13%) and Taiwanese (13%) (Japan Times, 2019).

Increasing foreign tourism can bring better economic prosperity to an ailing Japanese economy and add pressure on improving cross-cultural management and related services. Against such a background, this article focuses on one of the major issues confronting Japanese companies, namely adopting effective cultural diversity management to cater to diverse international visitors.

Japan has a long history and tradition of customer-focused service, as demonstrated by the motto *Okyakusama wa Kamisamadesu* (*Customers are gods*). However, now that Japan is receiving more visitors with different cultural backgrounds, there are increasing challenges to the existing confirmative service culture. The hospitality industry needs to internationalise and diversify its services and operations to meet its customers' different needs and expectations. The diversity of customers has led to growing fierce competition in the hospitality industry between Japanese and non-Japanese foreign-owned companies and among the indigenous companies in the provision of different products and types of services.

Local Japanese companies are confronted with increasingly diverse demands from international visitors, particularly those associated with effective cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding. Service quality is not just about following the traditional norm of 'customers 'first' but also about satisfying foreign customers' different expectations and preferences. Managers and staff members must understand and offer their services considering such diversity; they must possess comprehensive cross-cultural literacy and communication skills. One of the best ways to achieve these requirements is to develop a competent multi-cultural workforce with good multi-cultural literacy and communication competencies and effective cultural diversity management policies and practices. However, not all companies have adopted new ways of management, in particular in the cultural diversity management area, due to their organisational and environmental constraints. Therefore, it is crucial to tackling the following key questions in this research: 1) What factors (both internal and external) determine whether companies choose to adopt cultural diversity management strategies in the hospitality industry in Japan? 2) What are the processes and procedures for adopting diversity management policies and practices among these companies in Japan? 3) What are the benefits and challenges of employing a multi-cultural workforce among these companies?

2. Underpinning literature

With the influence of globalisation and the changing demographic composition of the workforce, workplace diversity has been seen as an increasing challenge but also an opportunity with both positive and negative effects on organisational

outcomes (Martins & Milliken, 1996; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O' Reilly, 1998). Concerning the positive effects, diversity increases the knowledge, perspectives, and ideas available as inputs into creative processes and decision-making, thus enhancing performance (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). As Cox (2001) suggested, increased diversity can give greater access to diverse markets. As for the adverse effects, diversity can increase conflict and reduce cohesiveness (Nishii, 2013; Maak & Pless, 2004). The critical issue is whether companies can adopt effective diversity management policies and practices to fully utilise the positive aspects and minimise the adverse effects. By creating an inclusive work climate, diversity management can benefit all and boost the positive attitudes and behaviour of all employees (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). In such an environment, an "individual's uniqueness is valued while the individual is treated as an insider (Maak & Pless, 2004; Shore et al., 2011).

So far, scholars have defined diversity as the difference in characteristics among members of a group or organisation (Olsen & Martins, 2012), and such differences can significantly impact group interaction and outcomes ('Di'Tomaso et al., 2007). However, the major focus of diversity management has been on diversity in demographic characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender and age (Olsen & Martins, 2012), with a fundamental concern for the effects (McCrea & Zhu, 2019), namely how to balance between increasing levels of diversity and maintaining/improving company competitiveness (Carstens & De Kock, 2016). Hence, different definitions of diversity management represent different managerial orientations. For example, earlier definitions were more general, such as Thomas's (1990: 112) definition of diversity management as "enabling every member of the workforce to perform to his or her potential". A similar definition made by Cox (1993: 11) was "planning and implementing organisational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximised while its potential disadvantages are minimised."

In more recent years, the definition of diversity management has become more precise, considering it to be a process rather than a matter of input (e.g. diversity interventions) and outcomes (e.g. better economic outcome) as well as having multi-level effects (i.e. individual, group and organisation). For example, Olsen and Martins (2012) define diversity management as the utilisation of HRM practices to increase or maintain the variation in human capital, to ensure this human capital does not hinder the realisation of organisational goals, and to ensure that human capital facilitates the realisation of organisational goals. In addition, Carstens and De Kock (2016) argue that a process perspective in diversity management could focus on creating and sustaining the conditions for effective diversity management. In other words, the authors emphasise 'good

‘practices’ directed at managing diversity in pursuit of optimal performance, so the success depends to a greater extent on ‘what you do’ than ‘what you have got’. Therefore, the later development of the concept and managerial practices within diversity management have provided a foundation for our research to address whether ‘good ‘practices’ have been adopted among hospitality companies in Japan (Carstens & De Kock, 2016).

Several conceptual models have been developed in terms of the positive contribution of effective diversity management. For instance, the Interactional Model of Cultural Diversity (Cox, 1993) suggests that an organisation’s diversity climate is determined by multi-level influences ranging from individual factors to organisational factors. In turn, an organisation’s diversity climate influences individual employee outcomes, which collectively affects organisational effectiveness. Another conceptual model, proposed by Gilbert et al. (1999), considers diversity management as a complete cultural change rather than an isolated component of policy design. Based on this approach, the senior management team must drive the cultural change process and treat diversity management as a strategic imperative for transforming the HR function. In turn, the result will influence ‘individuals’ attitudes and behaviours, thereby cascading down to affect organisational outcomes (Gilbert et al., 1999). Another approach by Shen et al. (2009) suggests that a ‘firm’s diversity management philosophy is vital, and such philosophy determines how and to what extent diversity management is practised through HR practices at the strategic, tactical and operational level. This approach emphasises the role of line managers as the drivers of the diversity management initiative at all organisational levels (Shen et al., 2009).

More recently, however, growing criticism has been voiced of these conceptual models, particularly regarding the lack of detail on the question of how effectively diversity management would manifest at the level of organisational practices. To address the limitations of the existing diversity management framework, Carstens and De Kock (2016) have developed a firm-level model for effective management based on competency modelling. This diversity management competency framework describes effective diversity practices clustered with 11 core diversity management competencies, including leading diversity, capitalising on diversity, fair practices, systemising diversity management, diversity measurement, diversity skills and promoting inclusiveness (Carstens & De Kock, 2016: 14).

On the other hand, the notion that diversity-related investments result in positive firm performance outcomes is termed “the business case for diversity” (Barnett et al., 2004; Bezrukova et al., 2003; Ford et al., 2006; Litvin, 2006). By following this logic, effective diversity management could improve firm performance through 1) better problem-solving, 2) increased creativity and innovation, 3)

increased organisational flexibility, 4) improved quality of personnel through better recruitment and retention, and 5) improved marketing strategies (Blake & Cox, 1991). In addition, diversity-related ‘routines’ as a way of managing a diverse workforce could also enable firms to create competitive advantage (Pfeffer, 1998). Such routines would manifest as practices that collectively constitute diversity management competency, and such competency could be seen as a ‘firm’s ability to effectively respond to opportunities and challenges that derive from a diverse workforce (Carstens & De Kock, 2016). This underpinning approach sheds new light on this current research regarding improving cross-cultural services by effectively utilising workforce diversity through diversity management policies and practices among Japanese and foreign-owned companies in Japan. Key elements of the core diversity management competencies provide critical angles for the fieldwork in Japan. These elements help identify whether Japanese-owned and foreign-owned companies are equipped with the capacity to manage cultural diversity and benefit from such diversity.

In addition, Olsen and Martins (2012) also focus on the diversity management approach manifested in organisational culture and practices by using instrumental and terminal values. The fundamental difference between the previous approach and the latter lies in the organisational attitudes towards diversity. In organisations where diversity management approaches focus on leveraging diversity to achieve business-related outcomes, diversity is considered an instrumental value because it is viewed as a means of achieving business success. However, if organisations view a diverse workforce as an objective without explicitly considering it as an instrument for achieving business outcomes, it can be said that they hold diversity as a terminal value. Sometimes, organisations may hold diversity as both terminal and instrumental values (Olsen & Martins, 2012). This underpinning literature also provides helpful direction for this research to determine whether Japanese and foreign-owned companies value diversity as a critical instrument for business success (instrumental value) or as an ultimate and desired goal (terminal value).

In more recent years, critics have pointed out that most existing diversity management research in general and diversity management research in the hospitality sector analyses the effects rather than the determinants of diversity management (Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017; McCrea & Zhu, 2019). McCrea and Zhu (2019) call for more research on unpacking the drivers of diversity management and probe how the environmental determinants, such as market conditions/competition, inter-organisational collaboration, and clientele diversity, affect diversity management adoption. Using one service sector, namely hospitals, as case studies, the study mentioned above found that hospitals in competitive markets are more likely to adopt diversity management strategies when they

engage in extensive service collaboration and serve a diverse population (McCrea & Zhu, 2019). This research inspires the development of the current research by addressing not only external environmental factors but also organisational factors determining whether hospitality companies in Japan choose to adopt cultural diversity management strategies, given the society is a relatively homogeneous one, and management systems have been developed in line with the so-called ‘Japanisation’ style and traditions (Cho et al., 2018).

3. Diversity management in Japan with an international perspective

Generally speaking, Japan has a relatively homogeneous population. Hence, Japanese researchers, governments and companies have paid little attention to cultural diversity management as a critical issue (Ozaki, 2017). As Ozbilgin (2005) points out, Japanese domestic diversity management research is inadequate for understanding diversity management concerns of different types of firms, including foreign MNCs, at the level of strategic decision-making. In recent years, the increasing pressure of a labour shortage due to the ageing population has led the Japanese government to introduce a series of measures to increase the labour force through the participation of women and senior citizens (aged 65 and above) in the labour market in recent decades as well as foreign workers in more recent years (Cabinet Office, 2018). As the third option of employing foreign workers in various sectors, recruiting foreign graduate students into the hospitality sector has become an important measure to address the issue of labour shortages. As a result of the increasing employment of foreign workers, cultural diversity management in both Japanese-owned and foreign-owned companies has become a pressing issue today for the survival and growth of some business sectors in Japan.

Nonetheless, overall diversity management has begun to be implemented by management specialists in Japan. So far, the Japanese government has tried to encourage diversification in the labour force through various means and has encouraged equal opportunities for women and LGBT, the disabled, and other social minorities through legislation and other means (Sakai, 2019). To this end, the Ministry of Economy and Industry has introduced an award nomination system for the top 100 companies which have adopted diversity management practices. However, upon examination, few cases appear to be dealing with cultural diversity management related to managing employees with cultural/ethnic differences. Given that little study has focused on emerging cultural diversity management in Japan (Sakai, 2019), the present research is preliminary investigations in this crucial area.

4. Research design and methods

Given the nature of the phenomenon being studied, in addition to the need to examine in detail contextual implications, a combination of case studies and in-depth qualitative interviews has been used as the enquiry strategy. Case studies enable a holistic understanding of diversity management within the relevant contextual environments, and in-depth interviews build interpretation through the detailed description from different angles (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 2004). A multiple case design has been adopted, which has enabled the exploration of the process and factors influencing the adoption and implementation of diversity management at the firm level. We sought to acquire insights into the different issues confronting management in general and HR management in particular.

In order to enhance the validity and reliability of the qualitative case study (Yin, 2008), the present investigation has collected multiple sources of data in the form of interviews, observations and internal organisational documents. Managers (including HR managers) and employees (foreign and local) from 10 hotel and department store sectors were selected and contacted from among a larger data pool of companies that have business connections with the second ‘author’s university. The interviews capture the detailed company background and the challenging issues of managing diversity facing both managers and employees in these companies. Table 1 presents the profile of these cases. The critical issues related to cultural diversity management in these companies are summarised in Table 2. Some interviews were undertaken in Japanese, and others were in English. Each interview was carried out with an interview guide that contained 17 questions. The interview guide was developed in both Japanese and English to choose the language they preferred. Each interview lasted about 1.5 hours.

In terms of the questions we developed for the interview, the first group of questions (Q1-Q4) focused on the business background such as business sector, years of operation, revenue, number of employees, foreign language capability, non-Japanese nationals as employees, percentage of business income/revenue from foreign visitors, the business trend over the last five years of receiving foreign visitors and the likelihood of this further extending to the next five years. The second group of questions (Q5-Q10) addressed issues regarding the challenges of cultural diversity management. These questions included the significant challenges in adopting cultural diversity management, the policies and practices being implemented to enhance employment diversity, and the responsible role of leading such a policy. The third group of questions (Q11-Q17) covered issues relating to the evaluation and future development of major issues such as the key opportunities and benefits of using people with different cultural

Table 1. Case study profile

ID	Business Sector	Years of Operation	Size (Annual Revenue and/or Employee No.)	Foreign Language Capability	Non-Japanese nationals as Employees	% of business Income from Foreign Visitors	Business Trends of Foreign Visitors as % of Total Business
C1	Foreign-owned hotel	20	Revenue: not disclosed; Employee: 400 in total.	Most employees can speak English.	20 non-Japanese nationals, including Chinese, Korean, American, French, and Turkish.	60% (mainly from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea & the US)	Last 5 years: 30% Future 5 years: 60-70%.
C2	Foreign-owned hotel	7	Revenue: not disclosed; Employee: 200 in total.	Most employees can speak English.	5 Chinese and 4 Korean with good Japanese, English and their own languages.	70% (mainly from the US, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong & Korea)	2014/15: More foreigners. Future 5 years: remain at 70%.
C3	Foreign-owned hotel	Changed owner 2 years ago	Revenue: 1.8 billion yen; Employee: 100 full-time; 100 part-time.	Many staff can handle simple English.	2 Chinese and 1 Korean with good Japanese and English languages and their own languages (i.e. Cantonese, Mandarin & Korean).	60% (mainly from Taiwan)	Last 5 years: 20% Future 5 years: 60%
C4	Foreign-owned fully-serviced high-end residence	15	Revenue: not disclosed; Employee: 21 full-time; 3 part-time.	All the employees speak English.	Singaporean, Taiwanese, Korean and Chinese with good Japanese, English and their own language.	94% (mainly from the US, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong & Korea)	100% foreigners all the time.
C5	Local hotel	58	Revenue: 28 billion yen; Employee: 300.	All the members can speak some English.	15 non-Japanese employees, including Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean with good Japanese, English and their own language.	85% (mainly from Hong Kong, Taiwan & Korea)	Remain at the same level as 85%.

Table 1 Continued...

C6	Local hotel	60	Revenue: 1 billion yen; Employee: 43 full-time; 70 part-time.	3 Japanese staff have good English. 3 Chinese, 4 Korean and 1 Sri Lankan with good Japanese, English and their own languages.	10% (mainly from Korea & Taiwan)	Last 5 years: 5% Future 5 years: 20%
C7	Local hotel	45	Revenue: not disclosed; Employee: 40 in total.	3 English speakers. 1 Vietnamese with Japanese, English, Chinese and Vietnamese languages.	15% (mainly from Taiwan, Hong Kong & Korea)	Last 5 years: 3% Future 5 years: 30%
C8	Local hotel	Hotel chain: 32 Branch: 11	Revenue: 0.58 billion yen; Employee: 13 full-time; 45 part-time.	1 semi-native English speaker; 3 receptionists can handle simple English. 1 Korean with Japanese, English and Korean language.	5% (mainly from Korea)	Remain at the same level as 5% in the past and future. Japanese guests prefer this hotel rather than foreigners.
C9	Japanese-owned international department store chain	>100	Revenue: not disclosed; Employee: more than 500 in this store.	Many staff can handle simple English. 20 Chinese and 10 Korean shop assistants with good Japanese, English and their own language.	80% (mainly from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea)	Last 5 years: 50% Future 5 years: 70 - 80%
C10	Japanese-owned department store	>50	Revenue: 20 billion yen; Employee: more than 200 in this store.	Many staff can handle simple English. 10 Chinese and 5 Korean shop assistants with good Japanese, English and their own language.	80% (mainly from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea)	Last 5 years: 50% Future 5 years: 70 - 80%

Table 2. The key issues related to diversity management in the sample companies

Key Issues	Responses
The contextual challenges	Increasing foreign visitors require adequate cross-cultural service by employing more non-Japanese employees. The increasing shortage of labour supply forces companies to recruit more non-Japanese employees.
How important is employment diversity	For some companies, employment diversity is very important since a diverse workforce can bring new ideas and different ways of delivering service with cross-cultural competency. It has not been seen as an issue (denial) for other companies.
The current organisational policy and practices regarding employment diversity	There are three types of organisational reaction: 1) proactive, 2) reactive, 3) denial.
Governance (i.e. who leads such policy implementation)	The HR head or senior management typically implement the policy in companies with a diversity management policy. Other companies do not have such a policy at all.
The primary benefit of employment diversity to the organisation	The major benefits can be divided into tangible and intangible benefits.
The major challenges of employment diversity to the organisation	Senior management's mentality and attitudes could be significant challenges and barriers to effective diversity management. Lack of government policy initiative on multi-cultural workforce-related employment diversity is also a challenging issue.

backgrounds, the types of people (e.g. cultural background, quality and competencies) the company would like to recruit, ways of helping these newly recruited employees to fit into the new cultural environment, expectations of the senior management concerning these recruits contributing, and plans for the future development of diversity management of the multi-cultural workforce. Participants were encouraged wherever possible to provide examples to elaborate their responses during the interviews.

Analytical strategies

We employed a thematic approach to analyse our data (King, 2004). Interview data analysis was supported by secondary data analysis of the 'firms' documents

provided by interviewees and observations on organisational processes, structures and relationships. This data triangulation enabled a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena studied.

The two authors translated the Japanese interview transcripts into English and analysed them in several iterations. In the initial iteration, the transcripts were reviewed with a broad view to exploring how organisations in general, and management teams in particular, respond to contextual influences, including the trend/importance of foreign visitors, employment policy of using foreign workers, and diversity management initiatives. Based on this broad analysis, the first author developed a template, checked and confirmed by the second author, to categorise critical themes in the research questions. Codes were developed to represent the key themes, ranging from broader ones, namely policy, market and economic situation, to more narrowly focused ones embedded in the broader themes, such as customer needs and cross-cultural service, managing a multi-cultural workforce, training and development of such a workforce, and the benefits and challenges of workforce diversity. The complete data sets have been analysed in the following iterations by identifying text relevant to the research questions, associating them with the corresponding codes, and organising the relationships according to these themes. Table 2 presents an exemplar summary of the codes and illustrative vital responses.

Case study profiles

As Table 1 demonstrates, among the 10 cases, three were foreign-owned hotels (i.e. C1, C2 and C3), one was a fully-serviced foreign-owned high-end residence (i.e. C4), four were Japanese-owned hotels (i.e. C5, C6, C7 and C8) and two were Japanese-owned department stores (i.e. C9 is an international chain and C10 is a popular local store, both are located in the Ginza shopping area in Tokyo). Many of these companies have a relatively long history, some spanning over 50, 60 and even 100 years. One company, C3, experienced a change of ownership two years ago but has been in business for many years. Generally speaking, foreign-owned hotels in our sample have much larger workforces with employees ranging between 100 and 400 compared with local Japanese counterparts, which indicated that their staff are mostly family members and part-time/casual employees. Two sizeable Japanese department stores employ approximately 200 and 500 staff.

In addition, most staff members working for foreign-owned hotels and residences speak English concerning foreign language capability. These companies also employ many non-Japanese employees, the majority of whom are recent university graduates, with nationalities including Chinese, Korean, Taiwanese and Singaporean, and who can communicate in Japanese, English and their home country languages. However, this is not the case among Japanese-owned

businesses where a small number of employees can communicate in English. Among the four Japanese-owned hotels (i.e. C5, C6, C7 and C8), a small number of non-Japanese employees are employed, including Chinese, Koreans, Sri Lankans and Vietnamese, who can communicate in Japanese English and their home country languages. As for the two large Japanese department stores, many staff can handle simple English. These stores also employ many Chinese and recent Korean university graduates as shop assistants, mainly dealing with foreign visitors, especially their home countries.

The majority of the sample companies heavily rely on revenue from foreign visitors, ranging from 60 to 94 per cent of their earnings. At the same time, a minority, namely the three local Japanese hotels (C6, C7, and C8), derive 5 to 15 per cent of their business revenue from international visitors.

Finally, the share of foreign visitors as a percentage of total customers has increased rapidly. The share has grown from between 20 and 30 per cent five years ago to the current levels (i.e. by the end of 2019) of 70 and 80 per cent for the majority of the samples analysed. The general background of the sample companies and the findings of this study are detailed below.

5. Findings

The findings are divided into the following five key aspects based on the data generated through the theme analysis. These key aspects are: 1) perception and responses to the challenges of market changes, 2) adoption of management policy to enhance workplace diversity, 3) diversity management practices through governance and procedures, 4) perception and understanding of the significant benefits of workforce cultural diversity, and 5) significant challenges of cultural diversity in employment. In addition, this study categorises the sample companies into proactive, reactive and denial groups for whether they are adopting and implementing cultural diversity management policies and practices.

Responding to the challenges of market changes

With increases in foreign visitors to Japan, the market situation of the service sector has been rapidly changing, and so is the importance of the 'visitors' spending to total business revenue. The hospitality industry faces the challenges of providing adequate and appropriate quality service to foreign visitors without too many barriers in cross-cultural communications and understanding. Contingent actions, such as prompt cross-cultural training of Japanese staff, cannot resolve such challenges quickly and effectively, but recruiting non-Japanese employees, mainly foreign, recent graduates in Japan or elsewhere, can meet the needs immediately.

The majority of the companies interviewed have recruited non-Japanese employees as part of the overall strategy to meet the increasing number of international visitors. As 'C1's manager claimed:

“Five years ago, more than 70 per cent of our customers were Japanese, but now more than 60 per cent are foreigners, in particular those from China, South Korea, Taiwan and other Asian countries. In order to meet such challenges, we have been recruiting Chinese and Korean speakers as full-time employees, and most of them are international university students who have graduated (from Japanese institutions) recently. Now, we have 5 per cent non-Japanese employees among our total workforce.”

Other companies, including C2, C3, C4, C9 and C10, have adopted a similar strategy to address the challenge by diversifying their workforce ethnically.

At the same time, another major market challenge in Japan is the shortage of labour. While there was roughly one open position for two applicants in 2010, the job situation in the Japanese labour market has become tighter, with 1.48 open positions per applicant in 2017 (MHLW, 2017). Therefore, an increasing number of Japanese employers, including SMEs, have started recruiting non-Japanese employees in recent years to meet their workforce demands. As 'C8's manager claimed:

“The current challenge is to secure enough staff. Staff diversity is not an issue, and the labour market is very tight, and we have fewer applications for our positions. As a result, we may have no option but to hire non-Japanese staff.”

Other companies, including C5, C6 and C7, provided similar answers as the primary reason for hiring non-Japanese employees. It is one of the few options available to solve the problem of labour shortages.

The above examples indicate that with the changes in market conditions in Japan, there is a general trend for a more significant number of companies to adopt workforce diversity as a critical instrumental strategy. The increasing workforce diversity provides conditions for adopting cultural diversity management strategies. However, the reality is not straightforward. Among our sample companies, foreign-owned hotels/residences and large Japanese-owned department stores see such opportunities and act accordingly. As for small Japanese-owned companies, they were employing non-Japanese employees purely to overcome the shortage of labour. Though there are some exceptions, most Japanese-owned small companies do not seem to have utilised the diverse background of foreign workers to improve their customers' different cultural,

religious, and other needs. These companies tend to employ foreigners as a reasonably-priced labour force for simple tasks such as cleaning and other domestic chores. This fundamental difference could lead to different policies and practices regarding cultural diversity management, which will be elaborated in more detail in the following sections.

Cultural diversity management policy as a way of enhancing workplace diversity

Adopting cultural diversity management policies to enhance workplace diversity is a rather recent challenge in Japan compared to the West since mainstream Japanese national and organisational culture has been embracing homogeneity and uniformity as a significant source of strength rather than a weakness for many years. This trend has been regarded as one of the critical characteristics of the Japanese management system (Ornatowski, 1998). However, given the changing market environment, workplace diversity has become an everyday reality in Japan, and companies can no longer ignore the challenges they face if they wish to survive and excel in the increasingly competitive marketplace. Proactive organisations, particularly foreign-owned companies and Japanese companies involved in international business in Japan and overseas, have gradually adopted and developed their cultural diversity management policies in recent years.

For example, 'C1's manager explained:

“As a US-based international hotel chain, our company has adopted its diversity management policy from headquarters and has modified it into our Japanese work environment, and our diversity management policy covers multiple issues, including gender, race, sexual orientation and disability.”

The manager of C9 (a large Japanese-owned international department store) also emphasised the importance of “treating employees with different cultural background equally in the workplace, realising the potential of newly-recruited non-Japanese employees and valuing their contribution to the improvement in cross-cultural services, given they serve foreign visitors very well.”

Generally speaking, the following pattern prevails among the sample companies: the headquarters of the foreign-owned companies have implemented cultural diversity management policies at their subsidiaries, and large Japanese-owned organisations have developed their own cultural diversity management policies according to the recent business changes and labour needs. However, in the case of small Japanese-owned hotels (e.g. C5, C6, C7 and C8), managers claim that there is no need to adopt cultural diversity management policies given the fact that they are Japanese companies and their employees should follow the Japanese way, though some non-Japanese staff are being employed. Once again, these managers

claim that cultural diversity management is not an issue their companies will consider.

Cultural diversity management practices through governance and procedures

The section above demonstrates that, except for four small-sized Japanese-owned hotels, other foreign-owned and Japanese-owned businesses have adopted cultural diversity management policies differently. However, the practices of these policies through governance, procedures and interventions are different among the sample companies. As for the governing structure, some companies have placed HR heads in charge of cultural diversity management implementation (e.g. C1, C9 and C10); others have allocated such tasks to general managers or deputy managers (e.g. C2, C3 and C4). Generally speaking, such differences are associated with the size of the business; in other words, larger companies with more employees have HR heads to lead the cultural diversity management implementation compared with relatively smaller companies that allocate such responsibilities to the senior leadership.

The procedures for forming and implementing cultural diversity management are also different among the sample companies. For example, multi-national hotel chains have adopted their ‘headquarters’ policy with some modifications, but Japanese-owned businesses have developed their own policy, considering the local laws and norms. In general, gender issues were given more attention as the focus of diversity management in the past, but gradually ethnicity and cultural issues have gained importance in more recent years given the further internationalised workforce. The general implementation procedure includes: 1) adding new policies on the employment menu, and 2) linking cultural diversity management with performance and training. C3’s manager explained:

“Our General Manager is Singaporean. So many policy initiatives, including cultural diversity management, have been implemented by the headquarters so far. Our middle and senior managers have been trained in Singapore, and they have learned and brought back all the policies and practices and implemented them in Japan accordingly. Given that Singapore is a very multi-cultural-oriented city, cultural diversity management is more advanced than in Japan. So we can learn a lot from them.”

C1’s manager similarly said:

“All new and old employees would get cross-cultural communication training as part of cultural diversity management initiatives, and this is not only good for customer service but also useful among managers and employees dealing with each other. Effective cross-

cultural communications and services are part of our performance evaluation items, and people do pay attention to these requirements.”

Hence, performance management and training are seen as effective intervention mechanisms for implementing diversity management.

The significant benefits of cultural diversity

The significant benefits of cultural diversity include meeting the needs of increasingly diverse customers and addressing the workforce shortage, as mentioned earlier. However, companies have more tangible and intangible benefits if they can effectively manage and utilise workforce cultural diversity. For example, a number of our sample companies achieved positive outcomes by “using non-Japanese employees to translate business flyers and catalogues into the Chinese and Korean languages rather than the traditional way of using Japanese and English languages only.” (managers of C9 and C10).

In most international hotel chains and department stores, Chinese and Korean-speaking employees have been deployed at front desks and information counters to provide adequate service for check-ins or sharing information for shopping. C9’s manager claimed that “this solution naturally helps us build the “company’s human capital with cross-cultural capability as a tangible asset as well as create a positive image, reputation and brand as an intangible asset.” Other benefits include different ways of thinking, doing, and delivering, which will further increase customer satisfaction. For instance, one Chinese employee in C10 mentioned that “Chinese visitors travelling in Tokyo feel at home when they are greeted by us with the same cultural and ethnic background and speak in their mother tongue.” Such a state of affairs adds more value and may succeed in having customers back for future business.

The significant challenges of cultural diversity management

There are several issues related to the significant challenges of cultural diversity management. One key issue is associated with a cultural clash, given that the Japanese culture and management systems are robust and have been dominating business operations for a long time. Under the influence of globalisation and foreign influence, particularly from the West, ‘Japan’s traditional norms have been gradually changing. For instance, merit-based contracts and promotion systems have challenged the long-term seniority-based wage and employment system. However, these changes have been relatively slow and have met much resistance (Benson, 2013). Therefore, adopting cultural diversity and related diversity management policies and practices has not been easy with such strong resistance.

Some managers deny that diversity is an issue (e.g. C5, C6, C7 and C8). Employing non-Japanese people has become one of the few options available to cope with the labour shortage. However, some Japanese employers still prefer to employ Japanese nationals if they choose. This attitude has been confirmed by the comments made by C5's manager as "everyone should just follow the Japanese way since we are working in Japan, and this is the best way to organise work, and everyone can just follow such rules."

The situation is different in the case of foreign-owned businesses and larger Japanese organisations with international connections. Many of them have proactively adopted cultural diversity management policies and practices, but some have reacted to changes in the market situation to meet the different needs of foreign customers in recent years. For example, C1's manager claims:

"Employing culturally diverse people is important for us to meet the challenges of different needs of culturally diverse customer groups with cultural understanding and multi-language capabilities."

Others also indicate that, in the words of 'C3's manager, "the company will become wealthier by employing more international employees with different ideas and cross-cultural understanding and international experience."

By understanding the challenges as well as the benefits of employment diversity, some companies have adopted a more proactive approach towards cultural diversity management policy and implementation, such as regular cross-cultural training programs, new KPI for measuring performance in cultural diversity management, and reward for 'excellent 'performance' in this area (i.e. C1, C3, C9 and C10). The companies which have adopted a more reactive approach towards cultural diversity management tend to have simply accepted the cultural diversity of their workforce as having become a reality; they tend to see a more control-oriented policy initiative as an effective mechanism. The comments made by C2's manager re-enforce such an approach:

"Our business is to provide high-quality services, but employing culturally diverse people may influence the level of such high quality. Therefore, we need to control the process with relevant HR functions and practices to maintain quality."

From this comment, we can see that a certain level of ethnocentric attitude and mistrust towards non-Japanese employees in maintaining high-quality service is explicit among some business leaders.

6. Discussion

Considering the limited research on cultural diversity management in Japan, this article contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of employment diversity in Japan in general and cultural diversity management policies and practices at the firm level. Our findings suggest that companies in Japan can be divided into three groups: 1) proactive companies using workforce diversity and adopting cultural diversity management as an opportunity to improve their organisational culture and management policy and practices; 2) reactive companies employing non-Japanese staff as a strategy to cope with an acute labour shortage and adopting some aspects of cultural diversity management as a way of complying with such norms; and 3) denial companies denying that cultural diversity management is necessary for their businesses and maintaining that the Japanese way is the only way to follow.

One of the critical contributions of this research is to fill the gaps in the current diversity management studies by exploring the determinants rather than only the effects of adopting cultural diversity management (McCrea & Zhu, 2019). Our evidence shows that the determinants could have both positive and negative impacts on adopting and implementing cultural diversity management. The research findings demonstrate that the changing market situations are the essential environmental determinants influencing workforce diversity and related cultural diversity management. For example, a rapidly increasing number of foreign visitors requires companies to employ more non-Japanese employees to provide adequate cross-cultural services. On the other hand, the shortage of labour supply forces them to recruit more non-Japanese employees as an alternative hiring strategy.

However, external factors are not the only determinants in this regard in Japan; organisational determinants also influence Japanese companies to adopt cultural diversity management policies and practices. For example, foreign-owned and larger sized Japanese-owned companies with international business connections are more compliant with cultural diversity management's best 'practices' by establishing adequate policy and implementation procedures. These procedures are related to their organisational culture, outward-looking with international connections and engagement, and leadership quality and strategic thinking about the changing global business environments. In contrast, small Japanese-owned businesses do not see cultural diversity management as necessary and have a strong 'Japanisation' mentality; they still hold a specific ethnocentric view towards non-Japanese employees.

Another contribution of this article is articulating the benefits and challenges of workforce cultural diversity in Japan. Based on our findings, the overall benefits

include tangible ones such as improved business capabilities with enriched human capital for meeting the different needs of more diverse customers and intangible benefits such as various ideas and ways of delivering cross-cultural services. Overall, business image, reputation and brand can be improved through greater customer satisfaction. However, many challenges face the prevailing conventional Japanese culture and management systems. As the evidence shows, by understanding the challenges and benefits of workforce diversity and related cultural diversity management, companies can and should do better in their future development. However, the crucial issue is that senior managers need to be more open-minded and value the positive contribution of a diverse workforce through effective cultural diversity management policy and practices.

7. Implications for theory

So far, the literature has focused on the positive and negative effects of cultural diversity management on organisational outcomes (Martins & Milliken, 1996; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). However, less attention has been paid to organisational denial of cultural diversity management and the negative determining factors for such denial, as we have found in the examples studied in this research. One key element causing this might be the prevailing conventional organisational cultures deeply rooted in the Japanese employment and management practices based on seniority and long-term employment. Many senior managers in Japan are relatively old and conservative; many seem to be reluctant to change (Benson, 2013).

Therefore, even though the reality has changed with increasingly more non-Japanese being employed, the mentality of these managers does not allow them to recognise such a changing reality. This situation poses one of the key obstacles to advancing cultural diversity management policy and implementation among many Japanese-owned companies in Japan. This study goes beyond the environmental determinants of cultural diversity management (McCrea & Zhu, 2019) by linking both positive and negative environmental and organisational factors as the determinants within the unique Japanese economic, social and organisational contexts (Cooke, 2018), such as market changes, ageing population, shortage of labour, traditional and societal norms, and characteristics of organisation and business leadership, with different ways of managing workforce diversity.

In addition, our research confirms the literature regarding diversity management as a process rather than a matter of input (e.g. diversity interventions) and outcomes (e.g. better economic outcome) (Olsen & Martins, 2012). As Carstens and De Kock (2016) argue, a perspective of diversity management can focus on

creating and sustaining the conditions for effective diversity management and by emphasising 'good 'practices' directed at managing diversity in pursuit of optimal performance. Gilbert et al. (1999) claim that diversity management should be treated as a complete cultural change rather than an isolated component of policy design. Our evidence shows that proactive companies adopting cultural diversity management tend to follow this pattern by introducing cultural diversity management policies and practices, trying to change the organisational culture, and reforming the existing implementation procedures.

Furthermore, concerning the diversity management approach based on the concept of instrumental and terminal values (Olsen & Martins, 2012), our evidence shows that companies that are proactive in cultural diversity management tend to focus on leveraging cultural diversity to achieve business-related outcomes, namely effective cross-cultural service. For them, diversity management has an instrumental value. However, there are other companies that other companies view a culturally diverse workforce as an objective without explicitly considering it as a means of achieving better business outcomes; these companies appear to be attributing a terminal value to diversity management. However, many companies go so far as to deny cultural diversity management as necessary. Hence, to a greater extent, future research could focus on the cultural diversity management denial model.

In short, this study has adopted a holistic approach to investigate the above issues in a non-western context with a relatively unique business management and employment relations system, namely the so-called 'Japanisation' style and traditions (Cho et al., 2018). Based on the findings, it can be said that this research has added several complementary theoretical contributions that might be relevant to countries where the existing conditions are very different from their Western counterparts (e.g. Yap & Ineson, 2016; Antun et al., 2007).

8. Implications for policy and practice

The above discussion indicates several implications for policy and practice. First, address cultural diversity management an issue, senior management plays a critical role, and therefore, attitudes need to be changed to advance cultural diversity in business organisations. Considering that there are views based on a 'Japanisation' tradition and superiority attitudes towards non-Japanese employees among conventional Japanese-owned companies, it is to adopt and implement effective cultural diversity management in these companies. Therefore, it is crucial to educate senior management and increase their understanding that cultural diversity in the workforce can make businesses grow and that utilising cultural diversity can promote future business development.

Second, companies taking a reactive approach towards cultural diversity management need to realise that their senior management must understand the benefits of workforce cultural diversity. Knowing how to maximise the potential value of non-Japanese employees is a crucial element for future business growth. Therefore, these companies need to address the gap and inconsistency in the current policy initiatives and management systems and build a new organisational culture to realise the potential of a culturally diverse workforce fully.

Third, the Japanese government and businesses focusing on diversity management have concentrated on gender diversity and the ageing workforce, but less on cultural diversity. However, given the increasing number of non-Japanese employees working in Japan nowadays, they must develop and implement guidelines and policy initiatives in this regard. The joint deployment of a clear policy on diversity management regarding cultural diversity and workable enforcement mechanisms is crucial for advancing the national economy, business growth and society in harmony, given the increasing challenges associated with employing multi-cultural foreign workers in Japan.

9. Conclusion

This article aims to tackle the challenging issues related to managing a culturally diverse workforce with cultural diversity management in the hospitality industry in Japan. Influenced by market changes, non-Japanese employees have increasingly entered the traditionally Japanese-dominated workplace in this sector. However, the evidence shows that further improvement in managing multi-cultural workforces in Japan is required. Some Japanese business leaders are still denying such reality with a relatively conservative attitude towards adopting changes. In order to turn these challenges into business growth opportunities, this study recommends that the government and business leaders play a leadership role to establish explicit and systematic workable cultural diversity management policies and implementation mechanisms in Japanese organisations. Given the limitation of this study due to the limited sample size and one-time snapshot investigation, future research could benefit from larger sample size and longitudinal research over time, following companies to determine their progress, challenges and opportunities. In particular, future studies should include several companies with a denial attitude to assist them in finding solutions to change corporate culture and attitudes in the long term. We hope this preliminary study of the current state and prospects of cultural diversity management in the hospitality industry in Japan can generate further exciting debates.

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Japan-Bangladesh Relations: Celebrating the Fifty Years of their Ode to Joy

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Abstract– Remarkably, Japan and Bangladesh have always maintained excellent and productive relations during the past three decades despite changes in the regime in both countries. It reflects the two countries’ shared goals in the political, strategic and economic sectors. The birth of Bangladesh, and the subsequent strategic considerations, thus gave impetus to relations between Japan and Bangladesh. This context highlights the Official Development Assistance (ODA) that has strengthened Bangladesh’s economy by enhancing trade and investment. This research illustrates the bilateral, economic, cultural, political, and international relations of Japan and Bangladesh that have become coherently evident in almost every aspect of Bangladesh’s society. This research implements secondary data analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of Japanese aid and assistance in Bangladesh over the years. A large grant of about US\$ 200 million per annum has been used to develop critical sectors of the economy. Finally, the research has also discovered the significant barriers to the effective use of resources. It further proceeds to explain how such barriers have affected people’s attitudes about Japan’s prospects for aid and how economic, political, bilateral and other relations will be in the years to come.

Keywords Bangladesh-Japan Bilateral Relations · Economic Relations · Political Relations · International Relations · Investment · Japan · Official Development Assistance (ODA) · Trade ·

1. Introduction

Japan now has more than 50 years of ODA history that has progressively evolved in a highly comprehensive manner over a period marked by a mix of economic, political and humanitarian considerations. Starting with the war retaliation

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dependent on its alliance with the Colombo Plan in 1954, Japan eventually became its first ODA donor in 1989. Japan's ODA rate considerably increased in 1997 and has declined since 2000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs MOFA, 2005). Japan's ODA entered a new era with the proclamation of five consecutive mid-term programs covering the years 1977-1991. Under this program, Japan's ODA expanded, varied and diversified in many ways.

Other priorities of Japan's ODA at the time were the environmental focus and Basic Human Needs (BHN) as its Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) set its environmental guidelines in 1989 and increased the ODA for Basic Human Needs from 10% in 1977 to 23% in the year of 1978. Partnerships with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) also began in 1989 as Project Development Assistance (PDA) gained stimulus. Indeed, the movement towards developing the ODA essential eligibility criteria, rules and regulations began at that time.

The Government of Japan reviewed the ODA Charter in August 2003 to strengthen its efficiency and improve the ODA policies while promoting public participation to deepen the understanding of ODA strategies inside and outside Japan. The primary purpose of this new ODA policy, as stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), was to "contribute to the peace and development of the international community and thus help to ensure the security and prosperity of Japan" (MOFA, 2003). Because of such a motivation, Japanese-South Asian relations took on a new dimension and developed with new significance and meaning.

Japan's economic relationship with South Asia first became apparent in the 1990s (Vishwanathan, 2000). However, Japan's perceptions of Southeast Asian countries are poverty, high population growth, sharp rural and urban divisions, and poor infrastructure impedes economic growth. At the same time, Japan appreciates the efforts made by these countries to bring about democratic and economic reforms and measures that have contributed to their transformation into self-financed economies. Thus, the South Asian region occupied an important place in Japan's ODA during the 1990s.

The Grassroots Grant Assistance (GGA) in small-scale projects in the 1990s also reflected the growing number of NGOs, self-financed institutions, all-inclusive governments and hospitals throughout South Asia. New relations between Japan and South Asian countries have strengthened regional cooperation and economic ties within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations.

The ODA now plays a crucial role in Japan's representation in the SAARC region. Considering the ODA as a means of promoting Japan's multilateralism, from the outset, the Japanese ODA was used as the country's main entry point in the South

Asian region (Gamini, 2006). As a result, economic and social development, environmental issues and the fight against poverty were given greater attention by Japan (Gamini, 2006: 105).

However, the first phase of Japan's ODA in the 1970s can be identified as a time of reintegration, liberation, restoration and renewal. The most critical objective of Japan's ODA was the reconstruction of Bangladesh – a severely damaged country after its bitter and traumatic war of independence.

The second phase was in the 1980s when Bangladesh's trade and investments gained stimulus due to the increase in the funds offered by Japan's ODA. It was made possible only by integrating foreign, political, bilateral, international, cultural, and economic relations between the two countries.

Fundamental policy changes marked the third phase of Japan's ODA. These changes were implemented to prioritise democracy and development goals in Bangladesh. These new policies helped transform Bangladesh into a fast-growing open-market economy and contributed to securing the position of Bangladesh as a free and fast-growing economy among the newly developed South Asian nations.

The fourth phase was documented as the “New Era” of Japan's ODA in Bangladesh when these two countries were more closely aligned about economic and political objectives. At that point, Japan envisioned new ODA ideas for Bangladesh based on the national aid program.

Japan's ODA policies and priorities have recently become more intensive towards developing an all-inclusive environment for democracy. The newest ODA policies are centred around economic, democratic, cultural, and social development, despite the daunting challenges of working in critical sectors, including poverty reduction, decentralisation and political stability in Bangladesh.

2. Scopes and objectives of the research

This research comprehensively analyses Japan-Bangladesh bilateral, economic, political, cultural, and international relations. It offers a historical and comparative perspective, starting from establishing the Bangladesh-Japan bilateral relations on February 10, 1972, concluding their friendship status until this date. It deals with the policy-coordinating strategies of Japanese and Bangladeshi governments that are focused on economic, cultural, political, and social development. The analysis has been established according to the data and information received from national institutions and governing bodies. As often demonstrated in the context of neo-institutionalism and socio-economic scenarios, the strategies of any nation-state to develop bilateral, economic,

political, cultural, social, and international relations can be influenced by its governmental, societal and cultural institutions. It means that, in assisting countries that show different rates of governmental inclusiveness in their societies, it is necessary to examine the practical impact of foreign institutions in other countries to exchange philosophies and ideas that can enhance governmental inclusiveness for the well-being of the society.

This study's secondary objectives are as follows: (1) To identify the institutions and the administrative mechanisms that have improved Japan's foreign policy formulation and implementation capacity. The objectives of such institutions are thoroughly examined concerning their bilateral, trade and economic policies in the Newly Industrializing Economies (NIEs) such as Malaysia and the Philippines. (2) To analyse the methods and problems of policy coordination faced by the bureaucracy while implementing their administrative policies in Bangladesh's civil society; and (3) To make recommendations on the future Japanese aid to Bangladesh to improve both countries' administrative mechanisms and policy coordination.

This paper analyses the institutions and management of foreign policies in Japan and Bangladesh from a comparative historical perspective. It is achieved by a comprehensive analysis of cases in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan compared to the more significant case in Bangladesh. International advocates emphasise good governance by focusing on the rule of law, speculation, transparency and accountability. Recently, they also encouraged network-like collaboration with stakeholders. Establishing a network-like structure for strategic collaboration and trustworthy and reconciling relationships among network members will help impose checks and balances system on governmental transactions. However, the paper proposes a strategic governance model, defined as the governance of development policy networks that include the government and its key economic actors. This form of strategic governance also involves the consolidation of bilateral, economic, international, political, social, and cultural relations between the member countries, which, in this case, are Japan and Bangladesh.

The strategic governance model has been legalised in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Malaysia. These countries have used various institutions to coordinate policies, such as intermediate organisations to execute their foreign policies at the grassroots level, business organisations to increase the government's economic and financial capacity, and many governments and business forums, including administrative councils that have provided a stable path for joint policy integration.

The close relationship between government and business in these institutions is governed by the commitment of strong and visionary leadership and various

monitoring mechanisms that control the key members' performance. Although these have similar relationships, such as rent allocation, it is associated with monitoring and performance. Therefore, this combination of governmental, business and administrative methods has made their foreign policies in line with national economic development and international economic well-being. It should be borne in mind that the governance of these countries was not a participatory process but a very selective and elaborate societal process, and their relations with other governments and businesses were not discriminatory but an all-inclusive one.

Recently, Bangladesh also introduced ways to formulate, coordinate, integrate and execute such policies. However, the bureaucracy was strictly divided in various opinions concerning integrating policies with other governments in Asia. Moreover, random and political transfer of staff members had damaged individual and organisational expertise, and monitoring and disciplinary activities were falling short. In addition, the two main political parties were involved in the whole system of the nation's administrative machinery. Thus, despite the recent introduction of mechanisms for deliberately compiling policies, the bureaucracy was already facing problems related to their limited roles, unequal and questionable membership, and a lack of monitoring and evaluation activities.

The research also makes recommendations to improve policy coordination in Bangladesh and Japan. Firstly, a strategic governance model should be developed within their respective national governments with a greater focus on all-inclusiveness, dynamic scientific features, transfer of staff to relevant departments that require higher levels of expertise, administrative capacity and performance-related reforms, policy integration by central agencies, and systems that can timely ensure checks and balances.

However, in contrast to the mainstream media's system as portrayed, the research also addresses the political aspects of governance, such as national reconciliation to resolve socio-economic issues and the revival of political leadership. Second, recommendations are made regarding improving strategic relationships between Japan and Bangladesh. It is also advised to introduce a clearly defined set of guidelines to qualify for membership based on merit to jointly monitor bureaucracy, government's relations with other countries, and administrative policies. To make these recommendations, Japan should be aware of its comparative benefits that can be advantageous for the performance of Bangladesh's bureaucracy in foreign policy and international relations.

Therefore, this paper examines the institutions involved in formulating the policies for the governance of strategic relations and consolidating bilateral, cultural, and economic ties between governments and businesses. Unlike the traditional approach to foreign policy and participation in governance, this can be considered a higher

concept of governance. However, key technocrats and the business should have prominent roles and responsibilities. The case of Bangladesh shows just how much the country is affected by the inefficiency of these elites in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, in any analysis of the roles and responsibilities of these elites, the research argues that the society should not shy away from the not so popular political ideologies about power and monarchy. Such ideologies are also an integral part of governance in civil society.

3. Research problem

This research seeks to address and render feasible solutions to the following socio-economic, cultural, and political dilemmas that are faced by the Japanese and Bangladeshi bureaucracy while implementing their foreign policies at the grassroots level:

- i. Implementation of an all-inclusive strategic governance model in the foreign policies of Japan and Bangladesh: Some limitations

Thirty years ago, a survey was conducted on Japan's development assistance, and results were drafted according to respondents' views in both Bangladesh and Japan. Most respondents were delighted with the Japanese assistance, technical assistance and cultural cooperation. However, almost all people have shown that the Official Development Assistance (ODA) impact was less than fair. The reason was the weakness of the Bangladeshi governmental institutions that handled or operated the service. The administrative departments of the relevant ministries and the External Economic Relations Division suffered from difficulties and weaknesses in coordinating the Japanese assistance from its inception to its implementation. A weak organisational structure and a weak project implementation process for evaluating and monitoring many programs may often lead to adverse outcomes. While Japan's aid was at an all-time high, the ability to use aid needs to be significantly improved in the future. In this case, the "Medium-Term" project model and other such program development models should be expanded and implemented appropriately.

- ii. Limitations concerning bilateral trade and investments

There is no denying that Japan has moved away from its 'trade' interests to ODA's liberal policy, allowing trade and investment opportunities. In the case of Bangladesh, this is very clear, the quality of Japanese aid is high and kind, and Japan would also like to expand trade and investment relations with Bangladesh on beneficial terms. It is also reflected in Japan's recent move to shut down Bangladesh.

The ‘debt’ amounted to US\$ 1.46 billion to enable Bangladesh to reduce poverty and social development. While trade relations between Japan and Bangladesh have been strained since the early 1970s, there has been no significant improvement in volume and trade terms between the two countries over the past three decades. The total value of the trade reached US\$ 600 million. In other words, Bangladesh continued to have significant trade imbalances, imports making it more frequent than exports, and no significant increase in volume. Although most respondents emphasised the need for more significant trade relations, it was difficult for Bangladesh’s clothing, leather products and cold food to enter the Japanese market due to fierce competition from other countries, including China and Southeast Asia.

iii. Poor investment climate: A barrier to the all-weather friendship between Japan and Bangladesh

Bangladesh’s high priority to attract Japanese investment does not match the construction of integrated infrastructure and administrative and political conditions. Thus, apart from Japan’s massive investment power in Bangladesh as the economic base of the South Asian region, Bangladesh has so far been the best in recognising this South Asian economic base. Most of the people interviewed expressed frustration that Bangladesh had not defeated Japan in this critical relations area. As the BOI data shows, Japan is already very committed, but the actual investment will be primarily made. Thus, there is a severe gap in any real expectation of Japanese investment in Bangladesh unless there is a fundamental change in the country’s governance – good governance, anti-corruption, legal development and cooperation and public-private partnerships. Policy continuity and political stability are two critical factors in attracting Japanese investment. It is a transfer of successive governments, but in reality, the situation has not changed so far – which worries Japanese investors.

Therefore, Bangladesh’s “Look East Policy” should be made more meaningful to meet the conditions required – that is, to create a compelling and transparent governance framework in Bangladesh. In this context, Japan must provide the necessary support for developing administrative institutions and professional and administrative leadership capacity, although the work must be done primarily by local political forces and national commitments. After all, economic development and the implementation of foreign policy are highly dependent on the strength of national political change, unity of purpose and efficiency at different levels, and the accountability of state administrations.

4. Significance of the research and research gap

This research is vital in proposing ways to strengthen the policy-oriented coordination of developing countries, which currently limit government participation. This contribution also benefits donor countries: the ability to coordinate the policy of the host countries will ultimately affect the effectiveness and sustainability of development projects. In short, the ability to formulate policy is essential for the effective implementation of the policies of the host countries and development assistance projects.

However, access to human resources, humanitarian aid, economic resources, financial resources, and natural resources is limited in developing countries. In order to make the best use of these scarce resources, certain strategic conditions are needed, rather than standard instructions, to improve their policy-making capacity. It is, therefore, desirable to make recommendations based on the practical problems of Bangladesh's administration and its policy and practical lessons that can be drawn from adequate information in other countries.

5. Research methodology: Analytical framework and approach

The accompanying study uses a framework of neo-institutionalism. Neo-institutionalism understands that institutions determine human trafficking and information, which gives an idea of the relationship between institutional building and operation.

The paper focuses on (1) policy liaison institutions, (2) internal government management structures, and (3) a joint management framework between the government and the private sector – particularly the business sector. Firstly, policy liaison centres refer to the framework for integrating resources across the public and private sectors. This framework stabilises human communication and leads to the formation of specific patterns. This paper identifies intergovernmental agencies, business organisations and government and business forums, such as negotiating councils and describes their policy process. Second, as an internal administrative structure of state-owned enterprises, bureaucracy is analysed through human performance and information, motivational approaches, political environment and leadership. Thirdly, the corporate governance structure focuses on two forms of governance: networks and senior positions. Network type management is reflected in the policy community's trusting relationships and repetitive behaviour. Position management is particularly evident in the use of force. This paper examines how these two forms of governance are used to establish and effectively manage policy liaison institutions.

In addition to these disciplinary measures, the study also included a two-week field survey in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to gather detailed information on institutions

and their management framework for integrating economic policies. Twenty-five interviews were organised during the study, including brochures and annual reports from various organisations. The Head Office and the Bangladesh Office of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have made significant efforts to facilitate these negotiations. Respondents included government officials, business organisations, the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the most respected. Field research contributed to this study by providing further details for observational analysis.

6. Findings

6.1 Japan's ODA to Bangladesh: An effective model for strengthening economic partnerships and bilateral relations

Historically Japan and Bangladesh have enjoyed a close relationship of cultural, emotional and personal ties. After the Bangladeshi War of independence, Japan became interested in the country for political and humanitarian reasons. Shortly after Bangladesh gained independence, Japan released US\$ 3 million to meet various developmental needs. Since then, Japan has provided economic support to Bangladesh through ODA and eventually emerged as a significant contributor to ODA. On average, about US\$ 200 million has been received annually from ODA from Japan over the past two decades (1985-2005). The following factors are often the results of the expansion of the ODA of Japan to Bangladesh: (1) Both countries enjoy and maintain traditional cultural relations. Intergovernmental relations have continued in the economic and technological sectors despite the instability of many other sectors between the two countries. (2) Bangladesh's dire need for assistance in addressing the burden of the masses. Bangladesh has the largest population (approximately 150 million) among the developed countries (LDCs). (3) Bangladesh is more vulnerable to natural disasters, such as recurring floods, hurricanes, river erosion, and earthquakes. (4) Bangladesh began quickly and progressed "with structural reforms including democracy and freedom since 1991" and did well among South Asian countries (MOFA, 1999).

In addition, Bangladesh was also regarded as "an important player in the United Nations" and other international forums, "an equal Islamic country with a democratic government and a major contributor to UN peacekeeping" (Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh, 2004). Bangladesh was also seen as actively involved in SAARC and an active member of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Thus, Japan's relations with Bangladesh strengthened bilateral relations with other developing countries, contributing to the South Asian region's political stability.

6.2 Japan's ODA to Bangladesh: An analysis of the various categories

According to official terminology, the ODA of the two Japanese states in Bangladesh has three sectors: Grant Aid, Technical Cooperation, and Yen Credit.

Grant-in-Aid: Grant-in-aid is a crucial feature of Japan's ODA to Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the highest recipient of aid from Japan (Akira & Yasuaki, 1998: 166). As of July 2006, Bangladesh received 455.3 billion yen (E/N Note Exchange supported) (MOFA, 2006).

Yen Debt: The Yen debt is a direct loan from the Japanese government to Bangladesh, similar to other host countries. Bangladesh received 597.8 billion yen (E / N based) until July 2006 (MOFA, 2006).

Technology Partnership: As of July 2006, Bangladesh received 46.6 billion yen as technical support from Japan. The technical cooperation was made by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) following the policy developed by the MOFA of Japan.

Technical Cooperation: Technical cooperation in Japan is part of a two-state grant and consists of (1) training projects, (2) sending Japanese specialists, (3) sending Japan's Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), (4) building materials and machinery program, (5) development plan, and (6) potential learning projects, and other programs.

6.3 Grant aid for debt relief: A geopolitical tool to strengthen Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relations

In response to the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Japan had begun assisting with the amount reimbursed in terms of the ODA payment agreement reached between Japan and host countries before FY 1977 decided that new measures would apply. Japan's ODA extended during the decade after the 1987 financial year, and it was granted permission by the Japanese government. According to MOFA (2006), the total amount of Japanese aid to Bangladesh (since 2006) has reached 455,444 billion yen, of which 256,866 billion yen is provided in the form of debt relief assistance. Bangladesh is the largest country receiving Japanese aid in debt reduction (accounting for 55% of the total).

6.4 Cultural aid: Bangladesh-Japan cultural relations reaching new heights

Japanese cultural assistance in Bangladesh includes study programs and organisations; exchange visits for scholars, scientists, artists, politicians and Parliamentarians; Japanese language course; Youth Invitation Program; and providing books and textbooks. According to the Japanese Embassy in

Bangladesh, more than 400 Bangladeshis travel to Japan under various Japanese government programs and training programs every year, and this number is one of the highest among South Asian countries and the ninth-largest in the world (Embassy of Japan in Bulletin, 2018). So far, until 2018, 2000 Bangladesh students have travelled to Japan under scholarships. In addition, Japan has expanded its assistance in conserving Bangladesh's cultural heritage through the UNESCO / JAPAN trust.

Bangladeshi students have received various bursaries from the Japanese government to study in Japan, and the number is currently very high among South Asian countries (Japan Ambassador to Dhaka, News Bulletin 2018). Japan has also funded several development projects that have improved Bangladesh's infrastructure.

In terms of technical support, Japan has provided essential human resource development support in various fields, including reproductive health, poultry care, poultry management, rural cooperation development, arsenic reduction-volunteers and heads of state from both countries have given a new spirit and greatness in the relations of both countries.

6.5 Magnitude and extent of Japanese ODA to Bangladesh

Japan has been generous in providing relief aid to Bangladesh. In April 2003, Japan announced a decision to cancel the 158.09-billion-yen loan in Bangladesh up to FY 1987 (MOFA, 2006). Since establishing diplomatic relations in 1972, Japan has been assisting Bangladesh. In this sense, Bangladesh has experienced 40 years in the 58 years of Japan's ODA. Japanese aid, starting with a tiny amount of US\$ 15 million in 1972-73, increased to US\$ 356 million in 1994-95. ODA migrated from Japan to Bangladesh until 1995, but the amount of ODA annual revenue received by Bangladesh has dropped somewhat since then.

Also, Japan's complete assistance to Bangladesh showed a significant increase from a tiny 2.7 per cent in 1972 to 18.5 per cent in 1990 (Moni, 2006). Based on payments collected up to the 2000-2001 financial year, Bangladesh was ranked sixth among the world's top ten ODA from Japan (Japan Ambassador to Bangladesh, 2004). As of 2006, Bangladesh received a total of US\$ 6736,052 million aid from Japan, disbursed as shown in the following table:

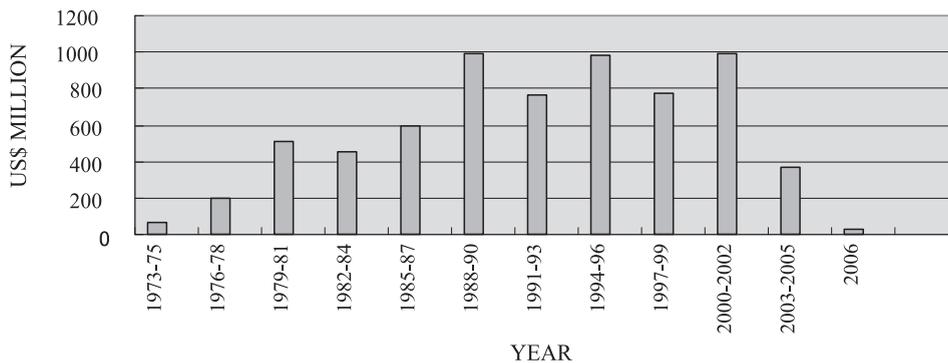
Table 1: Foreign Aid Disbursement by Japan to Bangladesh (1971/72-2019) US\$ Million

Type of Aid	Grant	Loan	Total	Share of each type in %
Food aid	245.265	163.210	408.475	6%
Project Aid	2268.220	1377.468	3645.688	40%
Commodity Aid	719.894	1961.995	2681.889	54%
Total	3233.379	3502.673	6736.052	100%

Source: ERD of Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh, 1971/72-2019

The following figure illustrates the trends of Japanese bilateral aid to Bangladesh in terms of food, educational projects, environmental projects, infrastructure development, and commodity aid.

Figure 1: Trends of Japan's ODA Disbursement, 1973-2006



Source: ERD of Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh, 1973-2006

Figure 1 illustrates the rise and fall of Japan's ODA to Bangladesh. It clearly shows continuity in the ODA amount from the late 1980s to 2002, but in the financial year 2005-2006, there was a substantial decline of Japan's ODA to Bangladesh due to a massive cut in Japan's national ODA budget.

6.6 Japan's important strategic position as a donor to Bangladesh

Japan was recognised as a significant donor to both countries in Bangladesh, and from 1972-2002 the total ODA of Japan was placed first among the DAC countries and other international organisations that assisted in Bangladesh. Table 2 shows Japan's position as a strategic partner of Bangladesh.

Table 2: Net Disbursements of ODA of DAC Countries/Multilateral Organisations to Bangladesh, 1972-2002

(Figures in US\$ Million)

DAC Countries/ Organizations	Multilateral	Position	Net ODA
Japan		1	6,049
ADB (Asian Development Bank)		2	4,665
USA		3	3,395
UN system (Inc. World Bank)		4	2,438
Canada		5	1,860
Germany		6	1,444
UK		7	1,274
EU		8	1,162
Netherlands		9	1,039
Saudi Arabia		10	888
Sweden		11	652
Denmark		12	586

Source: Weekly Market Review. No. 166 Dhaka: Assets and Investment Management Services of Bangladesh

Japan was accountable for 39.2 % of total bilateral aid to Bangladesh and approximately 18% of the total ODA distribution to Bangladesh from 1994 to 2005. The statistics are as follows:

Table 3: Japan's Share in Total ODA to Bangladesh (1994/95-2005) US\$ Million

Year	Disbursed bilateral aid from Japan (1)	Total Bilateral Aid Disbursed (2)	Total Aid Disbursed	(1) as a % of (2)	(1) as a % of (3)
1994-95	356.5	918.0	1739.1	38.8	20.5
1995-96	331.1	756.7	1443.8	43.8	22.9
1996-97	368.2	712.2	1481.2	51.7	24.9
1997-98	171.9	488.6	1251.4	35.2	13.7
1998-99	235.0	654.2	1536.1	35.9	15.3
1999-2000	390.7	795.2	1588.0	49.1	24.6
2000- 01	316.2	696.5	1368.8	45.4	23.1
2001- 02	287.4	708.7	1442.2	40.6	19.9
2002- 03	243.4	677.5	1585.0	35.9	15.4
2003- 04	79.4	506.1	1033.5	15.7	7.7
2004 - 05	45.0		1491.5		3.0

Source: Flow of External Resources to Bangladesh. Ministry of Finance

However, if we look at the composition of the Japanese aid received by Bangladesh up to 2001, 48% of the total aid assistance differs from the 52% loan component. Although the share of loans appears to be the highest in Japan, the debt owed to Japan prior to JFY1987 has been converted to Default Reduction Grants (DRG), making the loan more attractive in Bangladesh. In addition, Japan has been considering approval policy regarding interest rates and maturity of loans. Most importantly, “the interest rate on loans to Bangladesh is about one per cent over a ten-year repayment period” (Embassy of Japan, 2003).

6.7 Phases of Japan’s ODA to Bangladesh: An analysis of historical cum comparative perspectives

Indeed, Bangladesh is not in line with Japan’s ODA objectives, but Bangladesh gained attention by making efforts to develop trustworthy relations between the two countries and share in promoting peace and stability in South Asia and the international arena. Japan extended its hand to Bangladesh in 1972 with a US\$ 3 million grant, and within two decades, it became the sole ODI donor in Bangladesh. Assistance has continued with significant financial and policy changes. Japan’s ODA to Bangladesh has developed and varied over the years. Assistance can be divided into four categories:

6.7.1 First Phase (1972-1985): Relief, economic restoration, political stability, rehabilitation and self-sufficiency in food and nation-building

In the first phase of the Japanese ODA to Bangladesh during 1972-75- Japan’s ODA was based on aid and rehabilitation assistance, and after that, food aid and supplies were introduced to overcome food insecurity in a war-torn country. Independence in food and nation-building has always been a priority for this sector. From 1976, project assistance began until remittances in 1980 were set aside, and ODA established imported industries and focused on agricultural development to meet the severe food shortages. The net disbursement of Japan’s ODA in this phase was as shown in Table 4.

It can be seen in Table 4 that between 1972-1985, Bangladesh received US \$ 1361,902 million, of which food aid was US\$ 252.39 million (18.53%), logistical assistance was US\$ 769.003 million (56.46%), and project aid was US \$ 340.51 million (25.01%) against the US \$ 1680.302 million commitments. The rate of payment was 81.05%. Other notable features of Japan’s ODA in this phase (1972-1985) were the lack of project support before 1977 and the gap between food and goods assistance, which was \$ 40.724 million and US\$ 72.456 million, respectively (see table 4). One was for loans, amounting to US\$ 994,029 million and 73.98% of the total ODA, while grants amounted to US\$ 367.874 million out of 27.01% of ODA payments in Bangladesh. It can be seen in Table 4 that the

grants contained the highest position until the late 1970s, and the transformation took place after that, with loans coming forward until the mid-1980s except 1984-85. Project assistance started in 1976/77 and grew significantly due to the loan share (61.34%) compared to the grant share (38.3%). The grant-in-aid rate remains stable compared to the overall pay rate of 81.05% despite a significant increase in commitment, especially since the early 1980s.

In 1979/180, Bangladesh received \$ 229.61 million, 11 per cent of Japan's ODA loans and part of Japan's ODA in SAARC countries. However, in 1985 Bangladesh's ranking dropped to seventh place globally. Once again, in 1986, Bangladesh achieved ODA's highest priority in Japan (Bakht and Bhattacharya, 1992). There was no reason for such a trend, but especially since 1972-85, there was an increase in food aid that may have been due to unresolved social and political conditions in Bangladesh as the newly independent country at the time was facing severe food shortages, and many parts of the country were starving. As a result, food aid controlled the volume of aid from Japan (84% of food aid), with a 2% interest rate, 3% service charge, and a 20-year repayment period including a 10-year grace period (Bakht and Bhattacharya, 1992). Material assistance comprises 37.1% of the grant, a large proportion of the food assistance. However, in the early 1970s, the Japanese contribution was unlimited and only 3.6% of the total external flow to Bangladesh. The global situation for Japan's ODA was different at that time. After 1976, there was a significant increase in Japan's ODA in full and related names, and 1976 to 1985 was a time of consolidation of aid relations between the two countries.

Based on the data and analysis presented above, this potential evaluation can be done about the Japanese ODA in Bangladesh at this stage:

- i. There was no basic or prioritised policy other than future economic interests and resource considerations;
- ii. Until 1976 the ODA of Japan to Bangladesh was in charge of food aid and supplies; and
- iii. Until 1980, this volume was more significant than project support.

Economic interest is undeniable for Japan's ODA, and Bangladesh was no exception. Although the main objective of Japan's ODA to Bangladesh could be considered "liberation and renewal" (Bakht and Bhattacharya, 1992), there was also an economic interest. Especially after the 1973 oil crisis, we saw that Japan began looking for new energy sources. A powerful Japanese trading team met with representatives of the Bangladeshi government in January 1974 and sought to explore maritime oil and build two of the most critical bridges on the Juna and Buriganga rivers, and demanded full commercial rights to extract natural gas that

also generated a lot of income for Bangladesh (The Bangladesh Observer, January 25, 1976). Both countries failed to reach an agreement, as it was tough for Bangladesh to develop a viable solution because of various internal conditions. However, this led to the return of Japan's upcoming US\$ 533.3 million illegally proposed prior to the agreement mentioned above (Ibid).

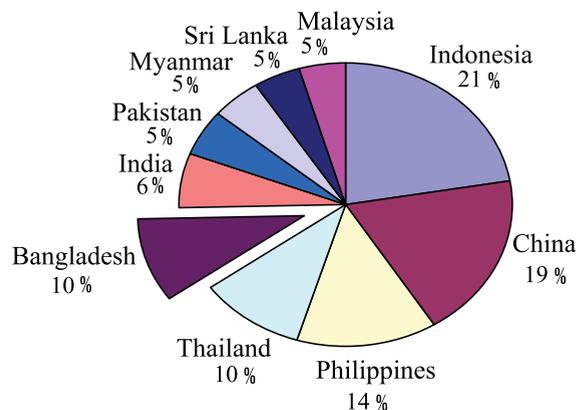
6.7.2 Second Phase (1986-1990): Elementary changes in ODA disbursement and special focus on infrastructure development by economic restoration

The second phase (1986-1990) was when Japan's ODA grew dramatically. It can be called one of the times of the Japanese ODA explosion in Bangladesh. Table 5 shows the steady increase of Japan's ODA to Bangladesh. During this time, Japan became a leading sponsor in Bangladesh and worldwide, and Bangladesh became the fifth largest country to host the ODA of two Japanese countries.

It can be seen in Figure 2 that at that time, Bangladesh received 10% of the total amount of money issued by the Japanese ODA in the world. It should be noted that during the years 1986-1990, Bangladesh became the first country to receive ODA among South Asian countries. In addition, Bangladesh has also left Myanmar and Malaysia in this regard. Table 5 shows the significant increase in the ODA volume of Japan to Bangladesh.

Table 5 shows that during this period (1986-1990), ODA's commitment to Japan in Bangladesh was US\$ 1418.328 million, with Bangladesh receiving a total of US\$ 1462,436 million, of which food aid was US\$ 70.962million (4.85 million). (%), material assistance was US\$ 710.007 million (48.55%), and project assistance was US\$ 681.477 million (46.6%). The rate of residual release at this stage was more than 100% commitment, which is very different from the first phase. Although there was no food aid loan, the second phase was also affected by the loans as in the first phase. The total loan amount was US\$ 1045.64 million, accounting for 71.5% of the total ODA, while grant assistance amounted to US\$ 416.806 million, accounting for 28.5%. ODA exceeded US\$ 300 million annually except for 1985/86. At the moment, the most notable feature of Japan's ODA aid to Bangladesh is that the loan was more than 70% of the total volume. The grant and technical cooperation percentage were low, with technical cooperation accounting for only 12.3% of total ODA in Bangladesh (Bakht & Bhattacharya, 1992).

Figure 2: Top Ten Recipients of Japan's ODA (1986-1990)



Source: Based on the data provided by Hossain, 1993

In terms of data and information, as in the first phase, there was no basic policy or specific policies of the ODA of Japan to Bangladesh during this phase, but the most critical thing in this phase was to promote complete development in the infrastructure and social sector; and particular emphasis was placed on the development of the country's infrastructure. It was the time when Japan emerged as the largest donor to Bangladesh, and total aid doubled from US\$ 139.55 million to US\$ 332.85 million in one year (1985 / 86-1986 / 87). During this time, Japan emerged as one of the largest donors by contributing to almost one-fifth of Bangladesh's total foreign aid (Bakht & Bhattacharya, 1992). The international community considered Bangladesh, the primary recipient of Japan's ODA (Kalam, 1996).

Many of the reasons applied to the significant increase in Japan's ODA during the 1980s. One of the significant events was the Plaza Accord in September 1985, which gave Japan a new desire to participate as a significant economic power and forced him to seek a new world role. Finally, Japan sets out a policy to expand ODA globally. After introducing the first Medium-Term Policy in 1978, Japan increased its aid approximately twice a year, forcing the country to acquire new areas of expanded ODA. Meanwhile, international politics influenced Japan to expand its horizons: especially "peer pressure" from the US (Katada, 2005), and part of Japan's aid was used to support American geo-strategy interests and ideologies (Orr, 1990).

US-Bangladesh relations were relatively good between South Asian countries (Kalam, 96), making Bangladesh more attractive to Japan's ODA. In addition, the country showed other favourable indicators, such that GDP was above 4% for the first time since independence (JICA Report 1990). Bangladesh also played a

Table 5: Commitment and Disbursement of Japan's Aid to Bangladesh (1985/86-1990) US\$ million

Year	Commitment						Disbursement						Disbursement Total		
	Food		Commodity		Project		Total		Food		Commodity			Project	
	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan		Grant	Loan
1985/86	16.064	42.220	-	-	4.588	-	62.872	6.288	16.822	59.459	22.869	34.119	139.547		
1986/87	12.408	30.476	105.601	84.119	100.930	333.534	18.359	39.396	143.885	22.475	108.739	332.854			
1987/88	17.015	37.690	107.739	27.168	55.605	245.217	25.676	30.415	135.922	54.607	67.975	314.595			
1988/89	14.993	48.669	163.405	25.281	210.793	463.141	12.578	40.978	136.701	6.998	142.888	340.143			
1989/90	9.138	65.983	60.480	48.251	129.352	313.564	8.061	20.114	86.315	91.170	129.637	335.297			
Total	69.618	225.038	437.225	189.407	496.68	1418.328	70.962	147.725	562.282	198.119	483.358	1462.436			

Source: Economic Relations Division (ERD), Bangladesh, 2005/06

leading role in establishing SAARC, giving new impetus to Bangladesh in the South Asian region and global politics. These points are considered appropriate in changing the amount of ODA Japan granted to Bangladesh.

6.7.3 Third Phase (1991-1997): Rudimentary changes in ODA policies and priorities, emphasis on basic human needs, rural development, gender and reproductive health

The third phase of Japan's ODA to Bangladesh had many policy changes in the 1990s and showed a significant increase in value. The end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union ushered in a new world in which many countries marked the rise to democracy and economic freedom (Kalam, 1996), which paved the way for Japan's multilateral economic relations, and encouraged Japan to play an active role in global politics. Since ODA was the only tool to represent Japan on the world stage, Japan felt the importance of ODA in the new world order. Japan began setting up the ODA philosophy for the first time, as reflected in the 1992 ODA Charter (Varma, 2000). Table 6 shows the net release of ODA Japan in Bangladesh.

It can be seen in Table 6 that during this period, Bangladesh received a total of US\$ 2111.672 million compared to US\$ 2443.868 million commitments. The revenue was generated by food aid of US\$ 70.595 billion (3.34%), grants of \$ 8.81 billion and project assistance of US\$ 799.116 (37.84%). Here we can see a lower trend in the release rate (86.48%) compared to the second phase. During this period, an essential feature of Japan's ODA was the significant increase in grant assistance. It was US\$1409.254 million (66.73%) compared to the total loan assistance of US\$ 702.368 million (33.26%). Loans dominated the previous sections. However, a significant increase in grant assistance has been marked as improving the quality of Japanese aid to Bangladesh. It is also evident (table 6) that the disbursement of food aid is almost always comparable to the second phase, and there was no food aid loan. This category was also governed by the material assistance accounting for 58.8% of the total ODA of Japan. It is also evident that the standard ODA payment methods remain unchanged and exceed the estimated US\$ 300 million in the second phase (see Tables 5 and 6).

However, since 1992 the ODA of Japan adopted a new status under the ODA Charter, which introduced the basic philosophy of the ODA of Japan, including conservation, interdependence recognition, human considerations and self-help efforts. As a result of the new policies, Japan saw Bangladesh's successful democratic transition in 1991. Bangladesh has also shown great strides in liberating its economy, including opening up telecommunications and power systems in the private sector. Eventually, a smooth link between Japan's ODA policies and Bangladesh priorities led to ODA's massive payments in Bangladesh.

During 1992-1997, Japan's total ODA to Bangladesh amounted to about US\$ 2 billion, and the total amount of ODA issuance up to 1997 was \$ 5.161 billion. In this regard, grants amounted to US\$ 2.2 billion and loans to US\$ 2.926 billion (MOFA). During this time, Japan turned its eyes to smaller economic goals and set new priorities in Bangladesh to address new global development approaches.

At this stage, Japan has set specific ODA policies and priorities in Bangladesh, namely: 1) agriculture and rural development and productivity improvement; 2) development of basic investment infrastructure and export promotion; 3) social sector improvement (human resource development, and the promotion of basic human needs (BHN); and 4) disaster risk management. At this stage, Japan has set specific ODA policies and priorities in Bangladesh, namely: 1) agriculture and rural development and productivity improvement; 2) development of basic investment infrastructure and export promotion; 3) social sector improvement (human resource development, and the promotion of basic human needs (BHN); and 4) disaster risk management and management (MOFA, ODA National Policy on Senior Recipients: 1999). According to the analysis, some of the tests that can be done with ODA Japan in this phase are: having a basic ODA policy for the first time in the history of ODA Japan; fundamental changes in policies and priorities; focusing on basic human needs and rural development; and various issues (gender, reproductive health). This period marked a significant change in Japan's ODA policy in Bangladesh.

JICA conducted the first national survey in 1990. The report looked at the following critical areas for Japanese assistance in developing Bangladesh: (1) Enhance the living environment and link Dhaka, Cumilla and Chittagong; (2) Expansion of jobs through integrated rural development; (3) Development of infrastructure to coordinate production based in the eastern and western regions; (4) Building and improving the foundation of investment promotion and export; and (5) Primary productivity and agricultural improvement.

Although those priority areas were carefully selected, they were the first recommendations from the JICA Country Study Group led by Toshio Watanabe. Later, MOFA set priorities for major ODA-affiliated countries and prioritised four areas: rural development, agriculture, infrastructure development and disaster risk management. Under four priorities, they have explored several new development goals, such as investing in improving local living standards by empowering women at a lower cost (Moni, 2006). During this time, Japan has shifted its importance from building infrastructure to public spaces, including basic human needs, health care, and social infrastructure development, such as minor irrigation schemes and agricultural roads (Ibid).

Table 6: Commitment and Disbursement Japan's Aid to Bangladesh
(1990/91 – 1996/97) US\$ million

Year	Commitment						Disbursement						Total Aid		
	Food		Commodity		Project		Total		Food		Commodity			Project	
	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan		Grant	Loan
1990/91	19,802	78,142	55,176	12,211	160,294	325,625	11,449	155,753	29,171	22,047	126,693	345,113			
1991/92	-	88,031	94,196	59,617	-	241,826	10,818	101,711	-	19,92	20,493	153,002			
1992/93	11,22	177,426	-	54,243	-	242,889	8,668	110,268	58,781	64,083	22,203	264,003			
1993/94	11,456	66,24	-	34,609	448,519	560,824	12,441	137,641	46,646	52,931	44,053	293,712			
1994/95	8,664	264,211	-	71,641	246,106	590,662	9,621	172,744	-	31,759	142,419	356,533			
1995/96	8,339	153,404	-	8,382	-	170,125	9,687	169,026	10,491	33,491	108,419	331,114			
1996/97	7,622	159,574	-	10,838	133,883	311,917	7,911	238,251	11,428	29,034	81,571	368,195			
Total	67,103	987,028	149,372	251,541	988,802	2443,868	70,595	1085,394	156,517	253,265	545,851	2111,672			

Source: Economic Relations Division (ERD), Bangladesh, 2005/06

From the data, it is clear that Japan has changed its policies and priorities during this period. The following events were due to the change of Japan's ODA in Bangladesh at this time: (1) A new political climate, especially after the end of the Cold War; (2) ODA Charter implementation; (3) The ODA of Japan was at its peak period; (4) A successful democratic transformation in Bangladesh after a long period of military rule; and (5) The fact that in 1990 Bangladesh became the fastest growing country in South and Southeast Asia (Japan's Ambassador to Bangladesh, 2004).

The end of the Cold War opened up new opportunities for development agencies to focus more on development than ever before, and aid became a means of political goals (Kevin Morrison, 2005). In line with this new trend, Japan changed its aid philosophy. Like other donors, Japan also assisted for non-developmental purposes. After the end of the Cold War, Japan saw the need to organise its large-scale relief aid and introduce its own ODA Charter 1992.

Subsequently, the Tokyo Conference on the DAC's new Strategy in June 1998, the Tokyo Conference on African Development in October 1998 and finally, the mid-term ODA policy in 1999 highlighted significant changes in Japan's ODA worldwide. As the primary recipient of Japan's ODA for several years, Bangladesh saw its aid policy from Japan change. Although Japan has repeatedly emphasised retaliatory and self-help efforts as a critical aid policy, Japan intensified its efforts for peace and stability in developing countries after the Cold War. At the same time, East Asia has always been a priority in Japan since its inception as an ODA donor. Since the 1980s, Japan has grown its interest in South Asia.

In addition, Japan increased its interest in South Asian countries, especially after the end of the Cold War, because many countries then began to move forward with democracy and economic freedom. In particular, Bangladesh played a crucial role in promoting peace and stability in South Asia against nuclear rivals: India and Pakistan. Another important reason for shifting the value of Japan's ODA to Bangladesh is the rapid growth of its ODA budget after 1989. The highest year for Japan's ODA was 1996-97, which led to many Japanese ODA releases in Bangladesh.

6.7.4 Fourth Phase (1998-2005): New and innovative ODA goals for Bangladesh to address poverty reduction

Phase 4 can be seen as a time to strengthen relationships between development agencies, partners and stakeholders, and it was also a time to introduce a development approach planned in line with Bangladesh's vision. Although both countries have maintained strong ties over the past few decades, and Bangladesh

has enjoyed significant Japanese support through ODA, this time, the flow of aid has shown a significant decline, especially after 2003. It can be seen in Table 7 that during this period, Bangladesh received US\$ 1800.042 million, in addition to US\$ 1763.402 million. Asset and project support is estimated at US\$ 924.753 million (51.37%) and US\$ 860.766 million (47.81%), respectively.

An increase in project assistance from 37.84% to 47.81% can be seen as a trend opposite to aid declining from 58.81% to 51.37% during this period (Table 6). As in the third phase, during this fourth period, the share of grant assistance was also high, accounting for US\$ 1050.982 million (58.38%) compared to the US\$ 733.537 million loans (40.75%). It can also be seen that the value of loans has decreased significantly while the value of grant assistance has increased significantly.

However, the decline in the loan status from the third category may be due to debt reduction measures. It should be noted that since 2003, Japan has not provided any amount of subsidy or food, making the sudden decline of ODA flow beginning in 2003 (Table 7). In interviews with JICA officials working in Bangladesh, they suggested that the reduction may be due to the exclusive monetary practices of Japan's national ODA. In addition, they added that details of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) did not include the debt relief grant offered to Bangladesh during this period.

However, Japan is gradually shifting its policies and priorities to meet the changing global needs reflected in the 2003 ODA constitution. Based on this document, Japan launched a new national aid program for Bangladesh in 2006. According to the national aid paper, the following areas have been considered new priorities for Japan's ODA to Bangladesh. By prioritising poverty reduction, the new federal assistance programme has set three priorities as follows: (1) Poverty reduction through economic growth; (2) Community development through public safety; and (3) Governance (main, sector and local level).

To meet these goals, National Assistance Program 2006 identified 12 priority areas, including private sector development; information and communication technology (ICT); tourism; transportation; power; agriculture and rural development; health; education; nature; disaster prevention and management, arsenic reduction and various aspects of governance. It also highlighted the importance of cooperation between donors in Bangladesh.

The following assessments can be performed in this section of Japan's ODA: significant changes in policies and priorities; changes in ODA release capacity; poverty reduction as a key to development; public safety; and cooperation between development stakeholders.

Table 7: Commitment and Disbursement Japan's Aid to Bangladesh
(1997/98-2005/06) US\$ million

Year	Commitment						Disbursement						Total		
	Food		Commodity		Project		Total		Food		Commodity			Project	
	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan		Grant	Loan
1997/98	6.601	140.430	-	-	57.290	-	204.321	-	-	73.187	3.247	11.512	83.964	171.910	
1998/99	-	152.736	-	-	2.925	-	155.661	6.601	6.601	116.029	2.775	37.759	71.869	235.033	
1999/00	7.927	174.273	-	-	17.203	136.303	335.443	-	-	278.586	3.016	24.997	84.088	390.687	
2000/01	-	184.369	-	-	8.002	147.444	339.815	7.927	7.927	144.522	-	10.247	153.415	316.151	
2001/02	-	143.660	-	-	8.072	-	151.732	-	-	142.030	-	16.758	128.646	287.434	
2002/03	-	123.291	-	-	7.379	76.876	207.546	-	-	161.361	-	15.640	66.406	243.362	
2003/04	-	-	-	-	12.565	-	12.565	-	-	-	-	6.444	72.937	79.381	
2004/05	-	-	-	-	7.986	103.140	111.126	-	-	-	-	5.357	39.682	45.039	
2005/06	-	-	-	-	24.105	221.088	245.193	-	-	-	-	7.553	23.492	31.045	
Total	14.528	918.759	-	-	145.527	684.851	1763.402	14.528	14.528	915.715	9.038	136.267	724.499	1800.042	

Source: Economic Relations Division (ERD), Bangladesh, 2005/06

In line with the national aid plan, Japan has changed ODA policy and priorities following the new ODA Convention for 2003. If we look at the second and third phases of the Japan ODA to Bangladesh (Tables 6 and 7), there are significant changes in priorities and assistance. Although after 2002, the decline in ODA prices in Japan may appear as a bad omen, Japan has been particularly concerned with improving the quality of Japan's ODA in Bangladesh (Japan's ambassador to Bangladesh, 2004).

In addition, every year, a significant cut in the ODA budget reflects the payment of the entire ODA in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Japan shifted ODA priorities from Japan's economic interests to Bangladesh's development, as Japan assumes responsibility for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries.

Since Japan considers human security a comprehensive ODA policy under the revised ODA Convention on Poverty, Japan's ODA priorities in Bangladesh are based on poverty reduction. In addition, in response to global developments, Japan took the initiative to promote cooperation and cooperation among development partners in Bangladesh (National Assistance Programme: May 2006). It is clear from the above details that there have been dramatic changes in the policy and priorities of the Japanese ODA to Bangladesh from phase three to phase four. The following reasons can be attributed to the changes: the new ODA document for 2003; the changing trend of Japan's ODA from economic interest to development perception; a change in the concept of development; and a Japanese initiative to link development partners fighting poverty.

It should be noted that although Japan used to set different policies and priorities for different recipients of the Japanese ODA, everything is reflected in the new ODA Charter. According to the new ODA agreement, Japan is focused on reducing poverty through economic growth in Bangladesh and other developing countries. Japanese ODA's Medium Term Policy also requires greater emphasis on poverty alleviation programs and various aspects of social development, human resource development, policy-related assistance and other forms of humanitarian assistance (MOFA, 1999). There was also a shift in the approach from Bangladesh towards development, which the Japanese government considered establishing a new ODA policy and priorities during that period (Horiguchi, 2004).

6.8 Overall impact of Japanese foreign policy in Bangladesh

6.8.1 Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relations: A special focus on political and diplomatic arenas

Over the past three decades, relations between Japan and Bangladesh have been formed through economic aid and trade. Although historically, political and strategic perspectives also played an essential role in laying the “solid foundation for lasting relationships” in 1973. Since then, exchanges of visits by heads of state, ministers, parliamentarians, political expatriates and foreign policy managers have contributed to the friendship and communication between the two countries. In this case, the contribution of Mr Takashi Hayakawa, the founding President of the Bangladesh-Japan Friendship Society and a special envoy for the Japanese government, was a remarkable one. He was an influential member of parliament who built “deep love and compassion” for the people of Bangladesh and appealed for the rest of his life to the cause of Bangladesh.

6.8.2 An assessment of the overall economic performance

As a country that has abandoned the goal of military size and nuclear power, Japan has been striving to create a desirable international community, primarily through economic cooperation and cultural ties. Japan’s ODA policy towards South Asian nations is based on a common perception of a region that focuses on high population, low literacy, poor infrastructure, income inequality, and mismanagement of countries. In this context and the promotion of the democracy of these countries in the 1990s, Japan began to set new priorities in Bangladesh. In fact, since 1992, Japan has become a significant supporter of Bangladesh and continues to maintain that position. The success of Japan’s relations with Bangladesh is exemplified by a series of major friendly bridges, including Jamuna, a great deal of power and telecommunications, and the establishment of fertiliser factories in addition to other contributions to social development.

6.8.3 Emphasis on infrastructure and new priorities: Key to the success of Japan’s relations with Bangladesh

Other concerns are that Japan’s assistance has become more focused on infrastructure, and the impact of such assistance has been positive, but not limited by the unequal emphasis on the sector. In the interview-based survey, many Japanese prioritised social sectors such as health, poverty reduction, the environment, disaster management, and education. They also prefer to provide more assistance to grassroots organisations (NGOs), research institutes, hospitals and local governments. Many respondents in Bangladesh also suggested that Japanese aid would significantly impact Bangladesh society if given its size if not

sent to critical social sectors and skills development centres weak governance institutions, including local standards, labour management, and poverty reduction.

6.8.4 Key developments in the social sector and technical cooperation in Japan-Bangladesh geopolitics: Role of JICA

JICA's role was re-evaluated in the context of receiving a 10 per cent ODA grant for technical cooperation. JICA executives emphasise institutional and cultural factors that prevent the full use of their partnerships. Lack of ownership of public institutions is a significant problem for Bangladesh officials who work and the people because they always have to face the consequences of discriminatory administrative policies and operate in a weak institutional framework. It dramatically reduces the achievement of national goals. The technical cooperation provided by Japan also has the problem of a lack of cooperation between the public and private sectors. The involvement of too many donors is also a complex aid effort to achieve the intended objectives. The future direction of JICA's efforts in critical social sectors should be in the middle of planning and implementation. The obligation of Bangladesh civil servants needs to be clearly defined and rehabilitated to develop their capacity and be used to achieve the ideas and objectives of the planning process. Culture – meaning the political culture of Bangladesh at all levels needs to be closely aligned with the power of development. Divisive cultures and personal interests should pave the way for social cohesion and national interests. Only then can the ownership of the assistance and its full potential be realised.

6.9 Future directions: Exploring the way forward

Undoubtedly, relations between Japan and Bangladesh have survived more than three decades through constructive engagement in many fields. The current global situation has brought new mandates to Japan and Bangladesh regarding responsibilities and challenges that must continue. The long-term economic downturn in Japan, ODA priorities, emphasis on existing organisations, especially on labour development, and the new global security environment and economic competition will significantly impact Japan's relations with South Asian countries, including Bangladesh. In this study, a strong view emerged that new structures of relations and a reorganisation of cooperation in these new structures are needed in this period of Japan-Bangladesh relations. Identifying significant global and regional planning changes needs to be done so that Japan-Bangladesh relations can be transformed in that context. In the 1990s, Japan responded to the demands of a new global system based on democracy and the sharing of responsibilities of developing countries and emerged as one of the most major world powers.

Today, Japan anticipates a wide range of interests that depend on the continuation of a host country policy and a dynamic change in the interests of both partners. In this context, to what extent can Bangladesh provide a stable platform or foundation to pursue those economic and security interests in Japan? Although it is difficult to answer a question, much depends on the positive response to the question. There is no doubt that trade, investment, culture, education and tourism will determine the future strength of Japan-Bangladesh relations. Of course, Japan will develop more humanitarian policy and 'self-help' solutions for Bangladesh to successfully implement its poverty reduction strategy successfully. Japan's deep commitment led to Bangladesh's long-term economic growth and stability.

Japan's vision of building a network of economic relations and development is based on a broader perspective on economic integration and spatial access to regional and inter-regional cooperation. In this context, Japan wants Bangladesh to be a prosperous society where the poor are not marginalised, and national commitment is growing to achieve economic development by building democratic institutions and eradicating maladministration. Our job in the future is to build a new generation of coaches and leaders in various fields who can understand Japan's unique role in benefiting Bangladesh and respond positively to its legitimate goals in economy, communications and security. At the time of the study, many people expressed their frustration that the Japanese impact did not coincide with his impact on Bangladesh over the past three decades, and Bangladesh has also not responded well enough to prioritise Japan.

The government of Bangladesh, especially the Department of Foreign Affairs, should extend more cooperation to good programs through think tanks (such as JSC, JUAAB) and other private organisations to promote Japanese studies, including language and human exchange, for better understanding. Information and understanding gaps need to be addressed at various levels of communication. In my encounter with many Japanese people of various occupations and ordinary citizens during the study, I was overwhelmed by the desires of many Japanese people to have more information about Bangladesh. They expressed their desire to come to Bangladesh as tourists and to know more about the country. In this context, it is expected that the government will appoint educators from Bangladesh in good universities in Japan to spread Bangladesh's message and better understand Bangladesh among the Japanese people.

We have many students in Japan, currently about 1000, the highest from South Asia. They can play a significant role in building a positive image and understanding of Bangladesh if provided and directed. Based on this research and the ten years of my involvement with Japan as a scholar, my view is that there is goodwill for Bangladesh among the people of Japan, and we need to touch on that goodwill to use it for our national interest.

There is no doubt that if we are to strengthen our foreign policy and communication, we must improve our image abroad. It applies to any foreign country, especially Bangladesh, in the context of the Japanese people historically 'special' in nature. We need to learn their thoughts. The people of Japan overthink Bangladesh as 'less secure', 'poorer', 'more difficult', 'more prone to disaster', more complex and unpredictable. It is encouraging to know that the number of people who think of Bangladesh as beautiful and prosperous is growing. At this critical juncture, I think we should not be complacent about Japan, and we should develop critical thinking as an effective strategy to achieve our goal of improving relations with Japan. I take this opportunity to urge the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs – a long time and devoted friend of Japan, to contribute to greater engagement and to a stronger relationship with Japan from where he is headed. He should emphasise the framework of his foreign policy on the merits of Bangladesh's national interests by exposing the culture, education, institutions of democracy and social stability, and religious tolerance to develop more robust and more friendly relations with Japan. At the same time, Japan needs a lot of recognition and appreciation for what it has done for Bangladesh over the past three decades.

Sadly, there is still a considerable gap in our understanding of Japan that needs to be closed. The government must encourage institutions and schools to understand the tremendous Japanese and Bangladeshi civilisation, their politics, culture, society, and economic prosperity. In conclusion, all-inclusive development plans must be prioritised for greater cooperation between Japan and Bangladesh which are the most democratic and orderly countries that contribute to a great extent in spreading harmony within Asia and in the world at large.

7. Conclusion and suggestions for further research

Japan reached its 50th anniversary of ODA history in 2005, and during those 50 years, Japan's ODA styles have undergone significant changes in line with world events. The first phase, especially 1954-1976, was known as the time of land construction. The Japanese ODA was wholly focused on Asia, especially South-East Asia. From the outset, Japan's ODA policy was based on its economic interests, as Japan's post-war reconstruction and economic development required logistics, markets and future investments. In this regard, it can be said that in the collection of resources, trade was inevitable, and in doing business, communication was necessary; as a result, the ODA of Japan has always focused on infrastructure development for developing countries.

We can find that from the 1950s to the 1990s, Japan's ODA styles evolved from a series of national and international events, such as oil shocks, Fukuda Doctrine, diplomacy (*omiagegaikô*), the concept of "complete security", the Cold War, and

Japan's own it is the state of the world through its economic power. After the 1990s, Japan's ODA policy was influenced by the interests of communities inside and outside Japan. In recent years, the ODA in Japan has been criticised for being too secretive and for violating basic human needs. It is clear from this analysis that Japan was eager to give ODA to Bangladesh. Japan was the largest donor to ODA in Bangladesh for a few decades. From 2005-to 2006, Bangladesh received US\$ 6736,052 million in foreign aid from Japan. In addition, much of this was spent on construction, agriculture, and much-needed energy production in Bangladesh.

The changing circumstances of the ODA in Japan were also in line with Bangladesh's developmental needs and political stability. The ODA of Japan to Bangladesh underwent a marked change over the years in terms of a combination of priorities. The beginning of the Japanese ODA to Bangladesh was marked as a time of liberation and renewal, as there were no actual intentions on the Japanese side other than to help a war-torn country. However, behind the scenes, it has been discovered that there are some interests. The first was the desire of Japan to spread its image as a country of human benefit. Second, Bangladesh's national interest was better off working with the South Asian region to fight the Indian-Pakistani conflict. Third, Japan was looking for energy sources, especially in the aftermath of the oil crisis, and had a plan to negotiate natural gas, which Bangladesh has a large amount of value (Khan, 1975). Eventually, Japan sought to establish a Soviet influence in the newly independent Bangladesh (Rahman, 2000).

Japan's political and strategic entry into South Asia was an essential part of Japan's post-1990 foreign policy reform. During this time, other events were also worthy of Japan's assistance in Bangladesh, such as Bangladesh's transition to a democratic government after a long martial law and an open market economy as a national policy.

Concerning poverty alleviation, the ODA of Japan in the future should focus more on the poor directly, especially landless farmers, widows and the disabled. They are always ignored; even micro-credit systems do not always integrate. Particular attention will be given to income-generating jobs by creating jobs in rural areas, home to 80 percent of the population of Bangladesh. In fact, in 1995, Japan directly supported the poor by lending 'poor housing' loans from Grameen Bank (a small finance and social development bank). However, there are challenges in addressing how Japan's new ODA focuses on poverty, and sustainable development will reach out to Bangladesh's poor and resolve their plight. It is encouraging to know that Japan embraced a peaceful democratic transformation in Bangladesh in late 2008 and reiterated its ODA policy vigorously to address poverty reduction and the promotion of business and a better investment. Bangladesh is also likely to benefit other donor and recipient countries.

8. Summary

This research illustrates the role of strategic governance in successfully augmenting Japan-Bangladesh bilateral, economic, political, cultural, and international relations. Strategic management of the bilateral relationship between Japan and Bangladesh has the following key features. First, government strategically selects and effectively utilises key business sectors as critical resources to coordinate and implement national economic development policies. Second, as a critical coordinator, the government is taking decisive action to lead the critical business sectors selected to contribute to the development of the national economy through strategic and geopolitical means. Third, political solid or organisational leadership is committed to the above functions.

This form of bilateralism is strategic, as it is a framework of governance that is described in an all-inclusive manner for national and international development. It, therefore, has a direct nature of directing, rather than being a standard one or focusing on excellence in participatory decision-making.

This hybrid model is governed by cooperation, trust and all-inclusive participation between members and the power exercised by a leading agent. In general, cooperation between government and business is also somehow managed by leading societal institutions. Specifically, in this research about strategic governance in Japan and Bangladesh, a type of transaction network has been suggested by analysing the reciprocal politico-economic behaviour, such as resource exchange and collective commitment to the policy-making processes. This mutual trust occurs more frequently between network members, often used unilaterally by leading agents in networks. This research has discovered that in strategic management of the bilateral relationship between Japan and Bangladesh, both equitable reliance and cooperation between these two nations can help solve complex relationships and build strengthened partnerships for the future. It is the unique contribution that this research has made in foreign policy about Japan-Bangladesh bilateral, economic, political, cultural, and international relations.

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Bangladesh's Learning from Corporate Governance in Japan

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Abstract– This paper attempts to investigate the practice of corporate governance in Japan since it has largely contributed to the country's financial management. That, in turn, led to the unprecedented economic boom of Japan. The practice and objective of corporate governance have got a different momentum in Japan despite its origin from the firm's Anglo-American theories, particularly 'Agency theory.' The convergence and divergence in corporate governance due to innovation and customisation of practices fitting in with the national culture have made Japan's practice different. The model Japan has evolved is now being attempted to be replicated by many developed economies. Issues like a stock-exchange scam, business organisations functioning as pressure groups, and electronic robbery in the Central Bank of Bangladesh have shown us that as a growing economy in South Asia, Bangladesh requires a model to adapt and learn from the existing practices of corporate governance to ensure the acceleration of economic development. This paper is a qualitative review study based on the existing literature—journal articles, book chapters, newspaper articles, interviews of experts, and periodicals. The paper attempts to identify the practice of corporate governance in Japan and prescribe a possible model for Bangladesh to contribute to the economic growth of this developing economy.

Keywords Corporate Governance · Japan · Bangladesh · Learning · Economic Growth ·

1. Introduction

Corporate governance has been one of the critical factors contributing immensely to the post-war Japanese economy. The unique practice due to the amalgamation

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of the national culture in the capitalistic financial control model has contributed to fit in the society, making economic growth unprecedentedly possible. Thus, to an extent, corporate governance diverged from and converged with the Western model in Japan has become a popular and effective model for the developing countries to follow. Since developing economies have been suffering categorically in the area of governance, especially corporate governance, because of an underdeveloped structure of politico-economic crafting, the texture of control and deregulation mechanisms do not correctly function to make it conducive to the expected growth of the economy. Moreover, because of the globalisation of capital, labour, and markets, control over the corporations is crucial for the economy's sustainable growth. Corporate governance, hence, is the determining factor of sustainable growth for any developing or transitory economy. Acknowledging the shareholders' value, healthy ratio of individual and institutional investors, the composition of the board of directors from both in and to a minimal extent outside the institution, the well-defined role of central and commercial banks and their relations with the companies, companies' employee-centric attitude and stability of shareholdings are some salient features of Japanese corporate governance making it uniquely unique and effective. So, the Japanese corporate governance model has inspired the present researchers to study and recommend a model for corporate governance in Bangladesh. Being a promising economy, it has been facing challenges in this area of governance. The loopholes are so pervasive at the corporate governance due to lack of institutionalisation at any level that there occurred massive incidents like electronic robbery at the central bank, stock exchange scam, abrupt regulation and deregulation, political partisanship in framing board of directors for banks, and other regulatory institutions, and so forth. Thus, the customisation of corporate governance in Japan shows a possible solution for Bangladesh to develop a model based on 'Anglo-American' one with necessary synchronisation of aspects in correspondence with the existing social practices for facing the said issues so as not to happen further. The rest of the paper has been divided into five broad sections. The first section covers the literature review on corporate governance, comparative corporate governance, and practice in Bangladesh and Japan. The second part of the paper entails the research methodology, whereas the third part of the paper deals with the discussion and findings of the research. Here, the best practices of Japanese corporate governance and the impediments of establishing effective corporate governance in Bangladesh are detailed. The fourth section of the paper prescribes a possible corporate governance model for Bangladesh. The last part draws a conclusion that leaves the future scope of research in this area.

2. Literature review

2.1 Corporate governance

Shleifer and Vishny (1997) state that corporate governance is the framework that directs and controls companies; and is a prominent subject for research and discourse. Vives (2000) further opines that the recent extension of “shareholder value” notions and institutional investment, the formation of best-practice guidelines for boards of directors, and the debate over whether market-oriented or bank-relations-oriented systems are better for economic performance are all excellent examples for the ongoing discussions. The debate’s result is crucial for developed countries, developing countries, and countries with economies in transition. National regulations, capital market needs, and individual corporate actions influence corporate governance systems. There are significant variances in foreign corporate governance systems due to historical factors. However, as product, labour, and capital markets have become more globalised, international governance systems have become more competitive. In the long run, this struggle will result in the convergence of all systems, the continuation of many systems, or the supremacy of a single corporate governance system. Globally, corporate governance systems are comprehensive (Schmidt & Spindler, 2002; Witt, 2004). Claessens (2006) and Levine (2005) have expressed that firms, markets, and governments benefit from good corporate governance. It has been linked to cheaper capital costs, more robust returns on equity, more efficiency, and better treatment of all stakeholders. Businesses and governments should proactively reform given the benefits of effective corporate governance.

Similarly, valuation, operating performance, and stock returns are used to assess the connection between corporate governance and performance. The majority of evidence points to a beneficial relationship between corporate governance and numerous performance indicators (Black, 2001; Black et al., 2006; Black & Khanna, 2007; Love, 2011). Hopt (2010) explains that in every country focusing on modern industrialisation, corporate governance, or the framework by which corporations are managed and governed, has become an essential topic in legislation, practice, and academics.

Accounting and financial scandals of immense proportions have recently erupted worldwide. Both Detomasi (2006) and Woolcock et al. (2001) state that much of the blame for these scandals has been placed on the offending corporations’ inadequate corporate governance practices, demonstrating how corporate governance impacts economic development. The question of whether national corporate governance systems are likely to converge, what form such convergence would take, and what hurdles now prevent convergence has gotten much attention. In addition to that, the methods of regime theory have shown

much promise for structuring empirical research into the process of corporate governance convergence. It uses the recent Western corporate governance experience to show how a consensus on corporate governance norms, values, and principles is forming. Furthermore, the development of a corporate governance framework for emerging market economies and the topic of global governance, in general, may have positive consequences.

2.2 Comparative corporate governance

In recent years, Comparative Corporate Governance (CCG) has become a more mainstream method in corporate governance research. It is partly due to a growing international orientation among legal experts and an increasing empirical trend in corporate law studies. Different practices in different jurisdictions provide for natural experiments to establish causal connections between specific characteristics of a corporate governance framework and real-world outcomes. As the world approaches the second decade of the twenty-first century, this comparison body has become increasingly significant. Many established methods of thinking about corporate governance and the connection between businesses and the government have been brought into question (Clarke, 2011; Hopt, 2010; O'sullivan, 2000). As a result, governments and academics ask themselves if other countries can do better.

2.3 Corporate governance in Bangladesh

Corporate governance has become a critical concern in Bangladesh and a heavily debated topic. Corporate governance has a considerable influence on companies. The corporate governance system in Bangladesh assigns the proper distribution of corporate responsibilities to principles that govern management characteristics and actions. In Bangladesh, where corporate governance plays a minor role, agency problems (internal conflicts of interest) emerge between shareholders and the managerial bodies. Corporate governance practices are more extensive in some sectors than in others. Local ownership, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) notification, and firm size are all found to have a substantial impact on corporate governance practices. Membership at a financial or non-financial institution, age, being a global corporation, and the size of the board of directors are all proven to have no meaningful impact on corporate governance practices. It results in a precarious legal and regulatory framework, as well as inconsistencies in accounting, auditing standards, and bad management practices (Bhuiyan & Biswas, 2017; Haque et al., 2011; Rahman & Khatun, 2017; M. N. Uddin et al., 2019). Several studies have found that the Bangladesh Bank (BB) is subject to various regulatory and strategic constraints.

Furthermore, BB lacks openness in reporting, as seen by the absence of worldwide reporting and external verification. Moreover, it has been proven that BB's regulation is under threat of credibility due to political, business, and societal responsibilities. These are due to a lack of or otherwise ineffective corporate governance. The country already paid the penalty through stock-exchange scams, business organisations acting as pressure groups, and electronic robbery at the BB (Masud et al., 2018; Masud & Hossain, 2017). As a result, Bangladesh needs to adopt corporate governance, which will play a critical role in providing the essential checks and balances between shareholders and management to limit agency difficulties in these circumstances.

2.4 Corporate governance in Japan

Japan's corporate governance is neither wholly convergent nor utterly divergent from the Anglo-American model, particularly the 'Agency theory.' Instead, Sony, the forerunner in corporate governance changes in Japan, and its followers selectively absorbed characteristics from this model, dissociated them from the original context and adapted them to match their very own national culture and philosophies, which ultimately has developed governance innovation (Ahmadjian, 2000; Mallin, 2006; Yoshikawa et al., 2007; Yoshikawa & McGuire, 2008). Banks are influential and crucial in corporate governance in Japan, and while there is evidence that their authority is waning now, they continue to play a substantial role. Taking these assertions correctly while addressing corporate governance, it is essential to distinguish between two concepts: influencing the company and monitoring its management. Banks are powerful influencers in Japan, yet it is not easy to demonstrate that they effectively monitor Japanese corporate governance. Second, employees are highly valued in Japan. Even though the Japanese company law assumes that shareholders are the business's owners, Japanese companies are widely assumed to be owned by their employees and governed in their best interests. Kanda (2015) suggests that, as a result, Japan's creation of corporate ownership for its employees, along with strong corporate governance, has resulted in maximum value generation and unprecedented economic growth. Japanese Chief Executive Officer(s) (CEO) are paid far less than their Western counterparts is a distinctive aspect of the Japanese corporate governance paradigm. The culture of intolerance explains this paradigm for excessive executive compensation in Japan, which is well accepted by the CEOs and backed by their long-term-oriented institutional investors, such as banks, to ensure workers' well-being. Furthermore, a lower CEO salary does not harm business performance, according to a study of Japanese example, and is a vital factor in developing stakeholder-friendly corporations (Abe et al., 2005; Gilson & Milhaupt, 2005; Jackson & Milhaupt, 2014; Salazar & Raggiunti, 2016). Furthermore, according to empirical evidence offered in numerous reports

done by Witt (2004), it is widely acclaimed that the Japanese corporate governance model will persist as a distinct but equally (or in some cases more) efficient system, in the long run, hence making the best model for adoption for many countries around the world.

The literature review effectively highlights the importance of corporate governance, the financial and transparency-related consequences, and corporate governance in Bangladesh and Japan. It describes Bangladesh's lack of or inadequate corporate governance and how Japan's corporate governance has played and continues to play an essential role in its economic development. In addition to that, many emerging economies, similar to Bangladesh, may embrace the Japanese corporate governance model. The purpose of this article is to present an overview of Japanese corporate governance norms, helping build a model for Bangladesh that would contribute to the country's economic progress.

3. Methodology

The reductive technique and document analysis strategy are used in this qualitative approach. Data are analysed using the Thomas & Harden (2008) content analysis methods for thematic analysis of qualitative research. QDA Miner qualitative data analysis software is utilised to code data for creating themes. This study is based on recently published secondary sources and online secondary sources. Apart from that, a few interviews of the experts have been conducted to keep the research on track. Data was gathered to investigate the research topics from academic and journal articles, book chapters, newspaper articles, periodicals, research reports, and various websites. A variety of sources were used to organise several tables and figures. Many authentic domains' data have been used. The researchers made great efforts in data gathering to obtain relatively latest information that has not previously been evaluated in any academic study of this sort. However, because most of the secondary sources for this study were gathered through web-surfing, research ethics were given due consideration. The data's sources have been checked for authenticity and veracity.

4. Discussion and findings

The findings of this study provide an overview of both Japanese and Bangladeshi corporate governance norms. The findings are divided into two categories: unique characteristics of Japanese corporate governance and impediments preventing effective corporate governance in Bangladesh. These two aspects effectively demonstrate the significant dissimilarities and gaps in corporate governance norms between the two countries. In conclusion, this article summarises the key findings and provides additional perspectives by prescribing a possible model for Bangladesh to contribute to the country's economic growth.

4.1 Unique characteristics of Japanese corporate governance

Although it stems from the firm's Anglo-American doctrines, particularly 'Agency theory,' The practice in Japan is distinctive due to the convergence and divergence in corporate governance as a result of innovation and modification of methods to accommodate the national culture. This unique type of corporate governance has played a significant role in the country's financial management. As a result, Japan experienced an extraordinary economic boom. These unique characteristics of Japanese corporate governance are characterised by the unique features related to how their shareholders, employees, board of directors, and the banks in Japan interact with and within the Japanese corporations.

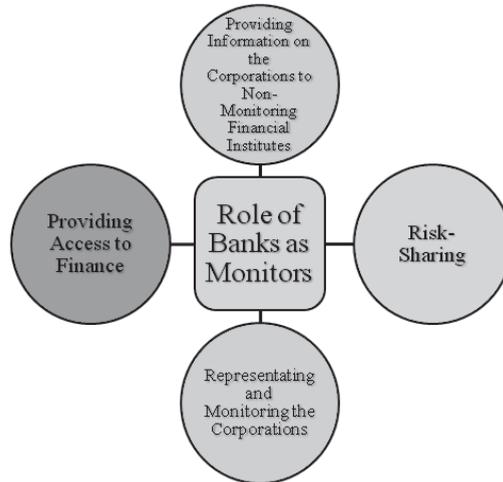
4.1.1 Stable shareholding and cross-shareholding

Japanese shareholders are often believed to have been excluded from participating actively in the governance of their companies (Ide, 1998; Kester, 1993). The majority of shareholders are thought to have agreed to forgo control rights, not sell to third parties, and consult with the firm whose shares are held if they are disposed of, which is commonly viewed as an essential characteristic of Japanese corporate governance (Sheard, 1986). Together with low share turnover rates, these ownership patterns lend credence to the notion that Japanese shareholding is primarily defined by substantial, stable, reciprocal transfers between business partners and a tiny fraction of actively traded shares. As a result, firms are widely considered immune to the 'discipline of the market,' which could be exercised by independent shareholders actively trading underperforming equities (Monks & Minow, 1995). However, as some enterprises began to expand nationwide rather than locally or regionally, they realised the importance of establishing economies of scale and scope. Rather than building vertically or horizontally integrated organisations, *keiretsu* (networks of closely or loosely related companies) were developed. Shares were frequently sold to allied corporations and institutions rather than the open market, partly to raise funds and build business relationships. A risk-sharing hypothesis, first presented by Nakatani (1984), is the fundamental theoretical perspective economists have established to explain the continued robustness of stable shareholding. As a result, it is stated that cross-shareholding acts as an implicit mutual insurance scheme, in which member firms are simultaneously insurers and insured. Japanese firms are additionally protected from hostile takeovers by this stable shareholding and cross-shareholding practice. Although this system may not improve firm-level profitability, it is not inherently inefficient because increased macroeconomic stability may benefit. Furthermore, Japanese corporate governance is concerned with ensuring that firms are run in such a way that society's resources are used efficiently, taking into account social costs and a wide range of stakeholders in addition to shareholders, such as employees, suppliers, and customers (Allen & Zhao, 2007).

4.1.2 Banks as monitors

The role of the banking system is commonly regarded as an essential component of Japanese corporate governance systems. The banking system plays a crucial role in monitoring company executives in the absence of shareholders (Monks & Minow, 1995; Watanabe & Yamamoto, 1993). The involvement of commercial banks in the management of financially distressed clients, such as Sumitomo Bank's well-known restructuring of Mazda, is likely the most widely cited 'proof' of significant banks' potential influence being realised (Pascale & Rohlen, 1983). Several empirical investigations also demonstrate that significant banks play an active role in assisting clients in financial difficulties. These banks are risk-sharing organisations that receive significant premiums in good times and guarantee consumers in bad times (Nakatani, 1984). Another possible explanation for the bank puzzle is that it serves as a delegated monitor for all banks' lending to a corporation (Sheard, 1986, 1994). Other banks, in turn, serve as delegated monitors for other corporations, resulting in less duplication of effort. As a result, the commercial bank does not immediately gain because it manages costs. However, the system is more efficient: For the non-monitoring banks, the monitoring of commercial banks produces a favourable externality. It is willing to do so because it enjoys favourable externalities from the same institutions when it lends as a non-monitoring bank (Sheard, 1986). The Japanese commercial system is so distinct because of the leading bank system. The primary function of these monitoring commercials is to create and integrate costly information on borrowers that is not available on the capital markets (Horiuchi et al., 1988). These banks may substitute screening and monitoring organisations such as bond and credit-rating agencies. In this context—banks have a thorough knowledge of corporations; thus, their lending behaviour reflects the company's strength to the market (Sheard 1994). The structure of long-term transaction relationships in Japan improves the quality of this information, resulting in the bank—company relationship, which allows banks to give firms loans while simultaneously signalling specific companies' soundness to other banks and companies. It can be seen that bank-oriented finance is an excellent way to allocate capital in Japan (Hoshi et al., 1990, 1991). Businesses with well-defined bank relationships have better access to finance, which attribute to the high quality of information. As a result, Japanese corporations can take on a more significant amount of debt financing with lower levels of risk.

Figure 1: Role of Bank as a Monitor



Note: Developed by authors based on document analysis

4.1.3 Employee centric corporate system

It can be seen in Table 7 that during this period, Bangladesh received US\$ 1800.042 million, in addition to US\$ 1763.402 million. Asset and project support is estimated at US\$ 924.753 million (51.37%) and US\$ 860.766 million (47.81%), respectively.

An increase in project assistance from 37.84% to 47.81% can be seen as a trend opposite to aid declining from 58.81% to 51.37% during this period (Table 6). As in the third phase, during this fourth period, the share of grant assistance was also high, accounting for US\$ 1050.982 million (58.38%) compared to the US\$ 733.537 million loans (40.75%). It can also be seen that the value of loans has decreased significantly while the value of grant assistance has increased significantly.

Figure 2: Importance of Each Stakeholder by Japan's Corporate Governance Practice



Importance of Each Stakeholder by Bangladesh's Corporate Governance Practice (Highest to Lowest)

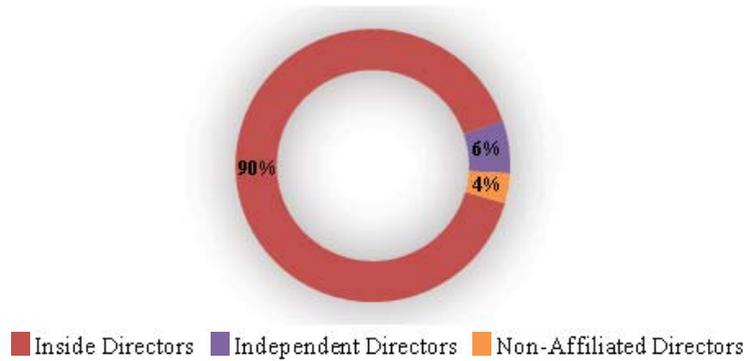
Note: Developed by authors based on document analysis.

Japanese employees and employment practices have long been seen as a critical component of Japanese firms' competitive edge in achieving rapid economic growth. In many circumstances, it is said that Japanese companies and corporate governance are more employee-centric than those in other countries; Figure 2 illustrates this notion. There has been some discussion about the sound effects of employment policies on corporate governance, particularly regarding the robust engagement in firm decision-making that they foster. The relationship between a company and its employees has been extensively mentioned as a vital component of Japan's national competitive edge throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when Japan's economic success became a focus of attention worldwide. 'Enterprise welfarism' and 'welfare corporatism' were two terms coined to describe the system adopted by many Japanese businesses; vital elements of these systems included lifetime employment guarantees, seniority wages and promotions, the development of firm-specific skills, enterprise unions, labour-management consultation, and the provision of company housing, medical, recreational, and dining facilities (Johnson et al., 1993). Other researchers have linked certain aspects of Japanese employment practices to cultural characteristics, emphasising the importance of Confucianism and Buddhism in shaping Japanese values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour, such as interdependence, respect for elders, a shared sense of security, a lack of personal ego, and group identity (Nakane, 1972). Many commonly recognised elements of Japanese business are said to be congruent with Japanese employees' strong affinity with their company. Japanese companies, for example, have been able to provide more chances for employees by focusing on gaining market share rather than improving profitability. Employees and capital providers are willing to pursue productivity improvement simultaneously since they know they will receive a significant portion of any profit made. High levels of investment in training and research and development have also been made with due care since companies recognise the long-term benefits. These high levels of employee participation in Japanese companies, such as group decision-making, joint employee-management consultation teams, and the practice of consensus building, are linked to this unique employee-centred corporate system (Learmount, 2002).

4.1.4 Insider board

Since it is uniquely positioned as the internal corporate vehicle for holding management accountable to shareholders, the board of directors is at the heart of corporate governance systems (Learmount, 2002). Because the majority of these external directors come from linked enterprises and friendly banks, it is considered that they are unable to make independent decisions or represent the interests of shareholders (Monks & Minow, 1995). The composition of the board of directors in Japan is depicted in figure 3.

Figure 3: Simplified Chart representing Composition of Board of Directors in Japan



Note: Developed by authors based on Aman & Nguyen, 2012.

Although senior executive job turnover and compensation in Japan are not directly tied to stock performance, they are more sensitive to poor results in Japan than in the United States, according to Japanese ‘insider’ boards. It is used to show that Japanese executives are no more entrenched than their counterparts in the United States (Kaplan, 1994).

4.2 Impediments of establishing effective corporate governance in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's GDP has grown 271 times because of macroeconomic stability over the last 50 years. The country that Henry Kissinger previously called a “bottomless basket” has now projected itself as a future “Asian tiger” (Sharma, 2021). In 2006, Bangladesh's securities authority established the Corporate Governance Guidelines (CGG) for the country's local corporate governance. Table 1 shows an overview of Bangladesh's corporate governance characteristics for voluntary compliance by listed firms to aid the country's progress even further. In 2012 and 2018, the CGG was amended and changed for obligatory compliance. Although CGG has been around for a long time, and several changes have been made, most of its flaws have yet to be addressed (Bala, 2018).

Table 1: Overview of the characteristics of Bangladesh's Corporate Governance

Aspects of Corporate Governance	Practices in Bangladesh
Structures of Ownership	Banks, financial institutions, other corporations, or dominant shareholders possess most stock.
Control-Oriented Finance's Share	A small number of shareholders wield a large amount of control. The majority of these come from either family investors or financial institutions.
Markets for Financial Services	Small and not particularly liquid.
Financial Institutions Monitoring	It is supposed to be extensive, but it is not.
Individual Stockholders Monitoring	Yes, provided it is a member of a family or a financial institution with the authority and knowledge to do so. No, because smaller investors are not well-educated in this area. There is no systematic policing of structures – rules.
Stocks of All companies Listed on Stock Exchanges	Small for large corporations— there are still a lot of state-owned businesses that are not included, and only 20 were privatised through share sales in 2005.
Debt and Equity Ownership	Concentrated.
Orientation of Investors	Family-owned, not portfolio-owned.
Rights of Shareholders	Weak – a lack of understanding of their rights.
The conflict between Dominant Agencies	Minority Shareholders vs Controlling Shareholders
Rights of Creditors	Banks have a strong position, while commercials have a weak position.
The Board of Directors' Role	Limited.
Insolvency and Bankruptcy's Role	Limited as involvement in debt finance is high.
Power Over Management / Board's Independence	There is no managerial responsibility structure for the board of directors. The board's chairman or the majority share owner holds the most power over the management and the board.
Corporate Control Market	Takeovers are rare since family ownership is heavily concentrated, there are no takeover restrictions and inefficient market.

Note: Developed by authors based on A. Rashid et al., 2007.

4.2.1 Company decisions dominated by sponsor ownership

Public and private limited firms, among others, account for the majority of the companies that contribute the most to Bangladesh's growing economy. These

businesses are run by majority shareowners who have great power and influence over company decisions and frequently come from the same family. It alone has a tremendous impact on managing its internal and external accountability. The majority shareholders elect themselves or their representatives to key management positions. These owner-managers then use the internal and external accounting systems to maximise their interests and limit responsibility and transparency to internal and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, these majority shareholders or family owners use executive power to serve their interests rather than the interests of other shareholders. The formal rationale of corporate governance was impeded by the substantive rationality coming from Bangladesh's conventional institutional characteristics (A Sobhan & Bose, 2019; M. N. Uddin et al., 2019; S. Uddin, 2009; S. Uddin & Hopper, 2001, 2003). Because the board of directors is always elected by the majority shareowners or the family owning the majority of the stock, it creates an environment in which the sponsor families, with their traditional attitudes, craft ceremonial boards of directors, grant limited authority to non-family affiliated managers, stage-managed Annual General Meetings (AGM), and dominate external auditors who lack independence. As a result, corporate governance in Bangladesh does not converge due to the ineffectiveness of ancillary institutional characteristics, which in the truest sense of the term is lack of institutionalisation. Ownership is divided into three categories: managerial, board, and sponsor. Again, these ownership indicators represent the same ownership structure, as the board of directors and management in many Bangladeshi companies are nothing more than expansions of the sponsors.

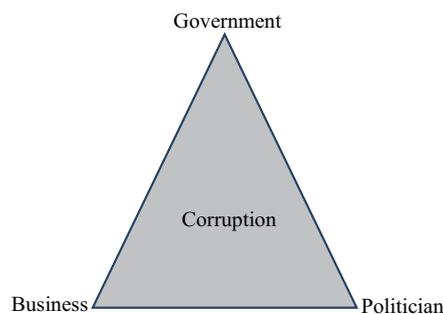
Furthermore, independent and non-sponsor-related executive directors are limited on the board of directors. They have little or no ownership interest in the companies, as their opinions are rarely heard due to sponsored directors' domination (Al Farooque et al., 2007, 2010; Mollah et al., 2012; Rahim & Alam, 2013; Sobhan, 2016). As a result, the companies fail to comply with Bangladesh's CGG 2018. Their national and international growth ambitions have been considerably restrained, and the highest form of value creation has not been achieved. They focus more on serving the interests of the sponsor owners.

4.2.2 Political influence, corruption, and weak institutional enforcements

Although it is weak in some areas, Bangladesh has a basic well-defined administrative infrastructure (Stiftung, 2018). It has long been suggested that there is a significant link between governance, in this case, corporate governance, ethics, and integrity, all of which are the result of a complex interaction of political, economic, social, and even psychological variables and pressures (Westra, 2000). When it comes to Bangladesh, there is a relationship between

integrity governance and corruption in the country, which is due to the existence of a government-politician-business corruption nexus, which is illustrated in figure 4, as a result of which corruption has infiltrated all government departments (Rashid et al., 2018). The country's close relationships and networks between politics and business are the main drivers of this behaviour. Indeed, in Bangladesh, developing effective corporate governance has been hampered by a lack of political resolve to combat corruption (Rahman, 2019). As a result of this overall situation, several institutions such as the Bangladeshi capital market and its auditing standard have seen their expansion and scope of operation limited (Hossain & Islam, 2012).

Figure 4: Government-Politician-Business Corruption Nexus



Note: Developed by authors based on document analysis.

The banking sector represents a country's whole economy. The Bangladesh Bank (BB), the country's central bank, issues guidelines for the banking sector, which all commercial banks must follow to do business in Bangladesh. If the financial sector fails, the entire economy will fail as well. The Hallmark Group perpetrated a swindle of over BDT 4000 crore. The Bismillah Group's BDT 200 crore loan fraud involving six commercial banks. Basic Bank's loan approval of BDT 4,500 crore without sufficient documents and examination has resurrected the problem. The infamous electronic robbery in BB was the final nail in the coffin. Such deceptions point to a lack of corporate governance practices in the banking industry. In the banking sector, senior management influence, as well as political pressure, impact lending choices. Several scams have been linked to corrupt bankers and dishonest Bangladesh Bank executives. Although proper documentation is required, banks occasionally demonstrate leniency in this area and provide additional benefits to their customers. Banks suffer significant losses due to poor borrower selection, unhealthy rivalry among banks, capital diversion, inadequate audits, and insufficient collateral. Banks do not always follow Bangladesh Bank's rules and standards, which are meant to safeguard them and help them run their businesses successfully. Due to a lack of enforcement powers,

institutions entitled to enforcing corporate governance laws and regulations frequently fail to do so (Mahmood & Islam, 2015; Reaz & Arun, 2006).

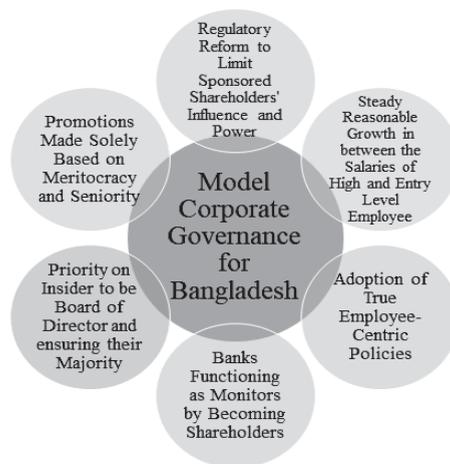
5. Possible model for Bangladesh

Bangladesh has been facing several challenges in establishing a viable corporate governance structure and guidelines. In this part of the paper, the challenges are attempted to address and develop a possible solution. In the first place, unlike Japan, companies, in this country incorporate much-sponsored ownership. It creates a disturbance in the governance of the companies since their prevalence and, in some cases, a united effort to divert any decision in the companies towards a direction that is not favourable for the company because of their getting into the driving seats. At the same time, decision-making, the appointment of the board of directors, and higher officials, hardly pay attention to the interest of the more prominent shareholders. The latter might not be even seen in the scenario for being either dispersed or side-lined. Japanese corporate governance does not allow such sponsored shareholdings. It keeps the small shareholders away from decision-making and distributes the profit accordingly, keeping all the aspects transparent. Bangladesh, in this connection, may make regulatory reform to disable companies' sponsored shareholders to participate in the executive body. Secondly, disparities in the salary structure for the employees and the CEOs have been exceedingly high in Bangladesh. Sometimes, it is so high that the entry-level employee is paid one-twentieth or one-thirtieth of the CEO's salary. The Japanese practice, in this connection, seems healthier with a much lower gap, instead of with good steady growth in between the salaries of the said posts. Thirdly, it is seldom found in Bangladeshi companies that the employees are considered stakeholders.

In contrast, Japanese companies are indeed employee-centric, which ultimately boosts the belongingness of the employees resulting in the highest productivity of the companies possible. Fourthly, Bangladesh can let the banks function as monitors of the companies. Like Japan, banks might become shareholders and function as monitors instead of giving loans to the companies. Fifthly, partisanship is pervasive in the companies in Bangladesh, which results in low productivity because of placing less efficient employees in vital positions. Japanese companies, in this connection, show a great example of meritocracy and seniority, and they never supersede seniors in a promotion. No connection with the higher authority is a more viable relation than that through the performance of the employees. Sixthly, In Bangladesh, political partisanship while recruiting outsiders in the Board of Directors, even in the public limited banks, is so in practice that the insiders being promoted in the higher positions gets low. As a result, employees' motivation and dedication towards companies go down.

On the other hand, Japanese practice is quite the opposite. Very few companies bring outsider managers in positions, not even banks. Employees are kept in such a position with the facilities, like lifetime employment and other fringe benefits, that they consider themselves the owners, ultimately bringing the best from them, maximising the companies' profit. Figure 5 is the possible model of corporate governance for Bangladesh inspired by the Japanese practice.

Figure 5: Possible Model of Corporate Governance for Bangladesh inspired by the Japanese Practice



6. Conclusion

Corporate governance in Bangladesh has to be substantially accommodative to get the best possible practice for contributing to the country's economic growth. 'Anglo-American theory' of corporate governance has primarily been modified to fit it in the society of Japan following their social norms and values. Thus, it has got a different momentum that has primarily been instrumental in its financial management. As a result, rapid economic growth has been possible and sustainable for some time. Bangladesh, as a promising economy, has been showing tremendous growth. However, some mishaps have occurred due to a few malpractices at corporate governance and inefficient enforcement of the guidelines. The electronic robbery of the central bank of Bangladesh, stock exchange scams, misleading loans from the public limited banks, sponsored ownership and the crises of management in the large companies, dynasty or hereditary leadership of the private companies, partisanship, and nepotism in the appointment of the board of directors have drawn the attention of the academics and practitioners to find a way to ensure the sustainable economic growth of the country. Japanese corporate governance through its unique characteristics of employee-centric corporation system, meritocracy and seniority policy, lifetime

employment policy of Japanese companies, strong networks among corporations, banks' functioning as monitors of loanee companies, deregulation to a limited scale, stable exchange commission, and insiders' holding of the higher position through regular promotion have made the Japanese version an exemplary one. It would provide Bangladesh with the opportunity to replicate a similar success story. The gaps between the practices of Bangladesh and Japan can be curtailed by bringing the best practices of Japan in Bangladesh suitable to the country's social norms. The paper leaves scope to conduct quantitative research and the mixture of the current method for identifying the exact or close to that amount of contribution a specific corporate governance structure can make to economic growth and social well-being.

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Sakit at Pasakit: The Epidemics amid the Japanese Occupation in the Philippines, 1942 – 1945

Roman R. Sarmiento Jr II*

Abstract– Amidst the Japanese Occupation in the Philippines, where human atrocities took place, the Filipinos were not spared from epidemics and this condition added to the hardships and sufferings of the Filipinos. The Japanese period is always stereotyped in the Philippine history as the most violent colonisers, the risk and danger always come with the human factor, but we must also consider that risk and danger are not isolated on human action; natural factors can also bring these. This study will focus on the narratives and historical accounts were the natural calamities during that time 1942-1945 and the colonisers' corresponding action in managing these calamities, especially in propagating their political and cultural propaganda.

Keywords Natural calamities · Biological calamities · Epidemics · Propaganda · Japanese colonisation · The Philippines · Sakit (sickness) · Pasakit (Atrocities) ·

1. Introduction

“We are, on the contrary, urged to share the blessings of prosperity with our fellow Orientals. We can be truly free as a nation only if we are also economically and culturally independent of the West”.

Jorge Vargas, Chairman of the Philippine Executive Commission, stated this phrase during the occupation period. This statement showed and justified the intentions and reasons of the Japanese in their colonisation in the Philippines. It is apparent in the various propaganda that the Japanese often presented in radio programmes and newspapers. Often also this propaganda aims and contains statements showing and promoting their personal goals but stated in artistic and deceiving announcements. The statements on the radio, newspapers and even

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brochures contain the intention to show that the Japanese are allies and not enemies, urging members Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon HUKBALAHAP (People's Army Against the Japanese) to surrender to the Japanese, encourage politicians to collaborate with the Japanese and invites Filipino to renounce the western culture and re-embrace the pro-Asian culture.

They used every opportunity in pushing their advocacy, whether in the period of convenience and especially in times of difficulty such as calamities. This research explains how epidemics become a calamity and how it affects the Filipinos amid Japanese colonisation. This will also explain how the Japanese colonisers demonstrate and take advantage of epidemics to promote their personal, political, and cultural ideals.

2. The biological calamities

There are three kinds of natural calamities, namely: the geo-physical is connected with the movement of the earth such as earthquakes that hit various parts of our country; the climatic represent the deluge, strong winds and rain, storm and flooding; and the biological that focuses on the spread of epidemics. The three most common epidemics during the Japanese occupation are leprosy, malaria, and tuberculosis. These diseases were widespread at that time and became a significant threat to the lives of the Filipinos and the Japanese.

2.1 Malaria

With the advent of the Japanese delayed many medical services for reasons of war, and among the more severely affected are those experiencing malaria. According to the report of the U.S. Military in December 1941:

The events of the Second World War have aggravated the burden of malaria in the conflict by the military. The number of malaria victims is almost the same as the number of war deaths in battle. After the attack on Pearl Harbour, in just a few weeks, they are encamped in hot, humid forests full of mosquitoes; 200 to 700 people recounted suffering fever and delirium, resulting in nearly 24,000 deaths.

In November 1942, in the past six months, the Bureau of Health had 25 763 cases of malaria in the provinces of Central Luzon. The casualty number is 2.27%, or 576 people. The 42.68% is conditional worst called benign tertian malaria, 29.82% are malignant tertian malaria, 20.46% are mixed malaria infection, and 0.04% is conditional quartan malaria or the worst type of malaria.

From 1943 to 1945, the recorded number of people tested positive for malaria has reached 572 000. They continued to live despite the sickness and the violence

brought by the Japanese. Even the struggling guerrillas struggle with this disease, so to remedy it, they used the cinchona tree as a cure that was once found in Bukidnon province.

The government issued a decree to cure diseases caused by mosquitoes such as dengue and malaria. The Bureau of Health has warned the public to follow specific guidelines to eliminate *Culex* and *Aedes* mosquito species that carry malaria. In addition, they have set up groups in each district that serve as exterminators of mosquitoes. They often use gasoline and kerosene as sprayers on canals and damp areas to eradicate mosquitoes, but in the absence of these, they are better at mechanical suppression such as cleaning and drying in the downed areas, clearing canals and covering estuaries. Instead of kerosene and gasoline, they used bayate (a vine whose fruit is as big as a grain of coffee) as an effective sprayer and killer of mosquitoes. Accordingly, vaccination against people living with high levels of malaria such as Bataan, Pampanga, Quezon, Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna was also promoted to target people with the disease that mosquitoes can cause malaria. As a result of these measures, report of the Bureau of Commissioner of Education, Health and Public Welfare, after nearly a year's outbreak of malaria epidemics in the provinces of Bataan, Batangas, Bulacan, Isabela, Laguna, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Rizal, Tayabas and Zambales was controlled by the Bureau of Health. In their submitted records from November 23, 1942, to March 31, 1943, there were 38,951 malaria cases in 11 malaria hospitals and 15 malaria wards in various provinces and Manila. Of these 38,951 cases, only 1.33% died and all recovered.

2.2 Tuberculosis

This disease was one of the leading causes of death in the American occupation in the Philippines. In 1936, it was estimated that 32,235 people died from tuberculosis, which is almost equal to the five leading causes of death in that year, such as malaria, influenza, dysentery and typhoid. The leading cause of the spread of this epidemic is lack of proper education, lack of sanitation, poverty and malnutrition. The situation worsened with the arrival of the Japanese in the Philippines; many hospitals, dispensaries and wards were damaged by the war, and some became Japanese military camps.

The Tribune, on August 12, 1943, reported that approximately 80,000 people were diagnosed and treated in the establishment of the Tuberculosis Division for six months. From January to June, 27,512 persons were given dispensary treatment, home treatment is 493, 418 have been entered into the tuberculosis institute, and 51,319 were examined. In contrast, the Bureau of Health and the Philippine Tuberculosis Society released a report on the number of tuberculosis patients before and during the Japanese occupation, found in the table below.

Before the Japanese Occupation		
Year	Number of Patient Tested	Number of Positive Cases
1939	262,804	16,652
1940	261,143	15,294
1941	175,701	10,804
Total	699,648	42,804
During the Japanese Occupation		
1942	27,312	4,418
1943	45,113	7,419
1944	29,581	5,948
Total	102,006	17,785

Source: M. Quisumbing, *the Eradication of Tuberculosis: The Greatest Health Problem in the Philippines*

It can be seen that the number of positive cases declined because they only tested a smaller number of patients, so it is unclear whether the number of victims of this epidemic at that time decreased.

2.3 Leprosy

Aside from tuberculosis and malaria, the Filipinos also faced the struggle of leprosy even before the Japanese in the Philippines. From Manila in April 1942, in conjunction with the Death March, was leprosy (a disease caused by bacterial infection that affects the skin, peripheral nerves in the hands and feet, mucus in the nose and eyes). They built a military base, the Japanese arrived in Coron, not far from Culion (Leper Colony). They visited Culion, and unfortunately, they attacked the storage of food and confiscated all rice and other supplies they found there, which led to a lack of basic needs of the residents and gave way for some to flee in their fear of the Japanese. Just like the 45 people evacuated aboard a small boat, the Japanese soldiers killed them when they approached Panay. The continued existence of the epidemic in the middle of infliction of the Japanese in this area is estimated nearly 2,000 was left from nearly 5,000. Among these 2000 lepers, almost 700 immediately died in the first year of the war for malnutrition, lack of enough medicine and medical attention, and fear and hunger.

To alleviate poverty and hunger, the hospital staff took some steps under the leadership of Dr Jose Velasco (chief pathologist), and one of them is exchanging products on another island where they exchange their clothing for food. Although the situation was poor, they also used their illness to survive the Japanese exploitation somehow, because when they claimed that foods such as chicken and other food came from Culion, they were not taken by the Japanese in fear that they

would be infected with leprosy. The lives of those who lived there continued, and some described their lives as follows:

Simeon (Dumang-og, Cebu) - We were looking for something to eat. We exchange our shirts for rice in Kabulihan town. We are often afraid of the Japanese, so at night we go out to find something to eat, and we are always near the mangroves so we can hide by the time we hear the Japanese boats coming.

Dolores (17 years old of the outbreak of war) - At the outbreak of the war, everyone was filled with anxiety that the Japanese might migrate to Culion. The nuns were concerned that no Japanese or even guerrillas could take no wives and families - as happened in Manchuria. One nun suggested finding a leper's wife to watch over us. So I decided to marry Juanito Lausan. There was no order in Culion. Many were hungry and had nothing to eat. Others died from eating poorly prepared "crabs".

Hipolito (10-year-old boy scout during the war) - I was in first grade when war broke out. Since I was a young scout, I responded to Dr Nolasco to help those in need. Me and my friends Pastor Sabar, Juan Patubo, Simeon dela Cruz formed the group to look for something to eat. I was ten years old and the youngest in the group, but I was their runner. One day in 1942, news spread that the Japanese would burn Culion. I realised it was worth reporting ... so I sought after the guerrilla leader in Paragua. On my way home, I moved to Paragua without informing my parents. I travelled alone for almost a week, eating only cassava and bananas. It was a tough challenge to find Amores (guerrilla leader), when I told the news, he immediately sent me back. I saw only the ocean next to Culion burning on my way home. I missed the air and ocean battle, but I saw only corpses floating in the sea and smelled for almost a week.

3. Biological calamities and Japanese propaganda

Inferred from these accounts, the epidemics contributed to the misery, and these changed the lifestyle of Filipinos and the management of Japan to respond to the needs and demands of that time.

The Japanese advance their propaganda even in the time of an epidemic. Through this, they are addressing the concern of the Filipino people while progressing their personal goals and presenting themselves as allies and not opponents. Most of this propaganda is presented through images, posters, news articles and projects through different Japanese institutions.

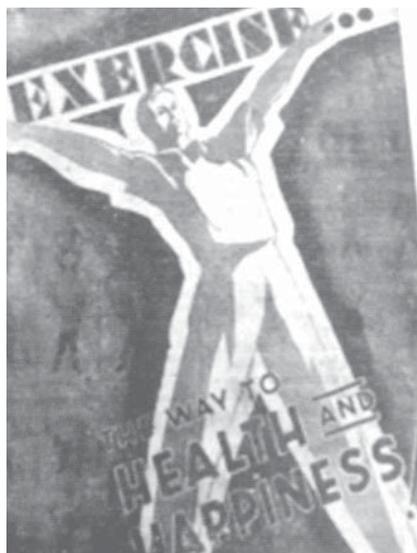
IMAGE NO. 1

A poster in the contest organised by the Department of Health and Welfare
(The Tribune, November 22, 1942)



IMAGE NO. 2

Winner of the poster making contest hosted by the Department of Health and
Welfare (The Tribune, November 22, 1942)



Meanwhile, the 1st and 2nd pictures are the winning posters in the contest conducted by the Bureau of Health and Welfare, aiming to promote citizens' awareness in solidarity to combat the epidemic. The fifth picture shows a grown man or woman with the caption, "Stop, Look. Health is Wealth: The New Philippines depend on Strong and Healthy Citizens" this was used as propaganda by the Japanese in their establishment of the Kapisanan ng Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas KALIBAPI (Association of Serving New Philippines) launched on December 30, 1942. In the statement of Commander in Chief Masaharu Homma:

... The new organisation will represent the total population of the Philippines ... the Executive has been developed to stimulate the consciousness of Filipinos about loving and serving the people and unite the Japanese Military Administration ...

The Japanese used the KALIBAPI as supporters of the Japanese Military Administration to easily promote their policies like the complete expulsion of Western thought in the consciousness of Filipinos and accomplish the plans of the Japanese contained in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Most of the members of this are used in the propaganda as spokesmen under the Bureau of Publicity in spreading the goals and activities of the Japanese through the press, radio, cinema, theatre, posters, meetings, rallies and other activities with direct coordination with the Japanese military. So this poster by the Japanese conditioned the consciousness of Filipinos to unite and join the upcoming establishment of the KALIBAPI and used the biological calamity to encourage Filipino to nurse their public health to prepare for the establishment of the new and innovative Philippines supervised by the Japanese.

The 2nd picture gains 1st place in the contest mentioned above of posters and entitled "Exercise ... The Way to Health and Happiness." Maybe a simple note, but it also contains propaganda oriented in cultural aspects. One is constantly reminded of the Japanese culture to exercise or Radio Taiso. It is strictly enforced during 7:00 am to all officers and employees, students and even ordinary citizens, by following the steps with music played by the radio station (managed by the Japanese), it has shown the simple act of showing Japanese superiority through obedience of the Filipinos in their command. According to Ricardo and Lydia Jose, the Japanese preferred to instil in our consciousness the discipline by Radio Taiso, where the invisible authorities command the Filipinos through radio. So when the Filipinos followed the reminder, we 'avoided the sickness and shaped our discipline by following the Japanese.

To meet the needs of malaria, they also showed their gentleness through the free distribution of medicines in places where there is widespread epidemics such as

Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Manila. General Hideki Premier Tozjo sent the 4,500 drug tablets of quinine. They are immediately distributed to various hospitals, clinics, dispensaries, and some public offices in the management of the Health Bureau, saying that the outcome of these drugs is the gradual reduction of cases of the said epidemic.

Associated with the inhibition of epidemic malaria and distributing essential quinine medicines to the sick, “prevention is better than cure” the Japanese launched a project through the Philippine Malaria Relief Association to distribute mosquito nets to serve as a barrier from the mosquitoes that carry the disease malaria. Almost 2,000 mosquito nets were sent to different provinces of the Philippines such as Bataan (Balanga, Abucay, Pilar, Orion, and Orion Bagak), Tayabas (Quezon), Batangas, Pampanga, Manila and Laguna. The mosquito nets are made of abaca by selected Filipinos, usually orphaned children and widowed by the war. The distribution of mosquito nets was estimated and managed by the Bureau of Public Welfare to ensure that the needy or poor people who cannot afford them will only receive the mosquito nets. According to the executive secretary of the Malaria Relief Association, Dr Manuel Olympia, the first priority are the people in the province of Bataan who were affected by the epidemic and victims of war.

The mosquito nets were provided to safeguard the Filipinos from the mosquitoes to prevent malaria; it is also used to show the good side of the Japanese, especially to the victims and survivors of the war. By distributing mosquito nets with quinine and other basic needs, they want to erase the harmful effects and violence brought about by the war in the eyes and minds of the Filipinos. However, ultimately, mosquito nets and medicine are not enough to relieve the pain of abuse and violence they also caused.

The released newspaper article tells the rules, response, and strategy to express their political and cultural propaganda. The article is the means to tell and explain that they have come to help and will only succeed if the Filipinos will properly collaborate with their policies.

4. Conclusion

During these epidemics, the Japanese had shown their kindness by helping and responding to the victims, but it failed to change the perspective of Filipinos at that time. They probably experienced more severe difficulties than the epidemics they experienced in the Japanese hands. These epidemics have contributed to the suffering of the Filipinos while also in the hands of Japanese atrocities.

As a whole, this research narrated the condition of the Filipinos as we are subjected to the Japanese s emphasising the role of environmental factors (natural

calamities) and how they used this to advance their personal goals and show their propaganda in expressing their vision for the Philippines, to the latter, the benefit is not for the Philippines but in the hands of the Japanese. Filipino or Japanese need to respond and cope with the motion of nature brought by the biological calamities based on the demands of the situation and opportunities. Filipinos' vulnerability and resiliency for every epidemic contribute to a lack of basic needs (food and medicine). The Japanese are changing and advancing their strategies to use the epidemics as propaganda for their interests and political and economic purposes.

In the end, displaying pictures and the narratives from news articles was not enough to completely overcome the Japanese to promote their propaganda. Yes, it was successful but only through paper, but it is not translated into reality, consciousness and mentality of the Filipino people.

Acknowledgements- I would also like to show my gratitude for the help and moral support of my colleagues in the Far Eastern University, Institute of Arts and Sciences (IAS), Department of Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS); the IAS Dean, Dr Rowena Capulong-Reyes, Associate Dean Mark Ysla, former IDS Chair Juanito Anot, and the IDS Faculty family. With their guidance and assistance, I produced and finished this research. I am indebted to Dr Karl Cheng Chua, whose articles guided and source in finishing this research. It is also through his Facebook post that I was able to see the call for papers of this JJSEM. I would also like to thank my parents, whose love and guidance are with me in whatever I pursue. They are the ultimate role models and inspirations. Nobody has been more important to me in the pursuit of this research than my family members.

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The Philippine Tribune (Manila). 1942-1945.

A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Study of 'Japonisme' in South Asia in the Late Nineteenth Century: New Aspects of Thought on the Relations between Japan and South Asia

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Abstract– *Japonisme*, which is defined as a unique cultural phenomenon and fashion from the 1860s to the 1910s, is the technical term for “having a liking for many Japanese items, patterns and paintings”. This French word and concept have been studied for several years only in Western collections and in cities like Paris, London and Vienna, which had direct relationships with each international exhibition in the late 19th century. After Japan’s period of isolation from the 17th century to the late 19th century, many such international exhibitions in Western countries started introducing Japanese arts and crafts to the Western world for the very first time. That was the standard explanation concerning *Japonisme* at that time. However, before then, only a little Japanese art had been reported on or studied by researchers in South Asian museums during the 19th century. Although, under the current understanding of Japanese history, the term *Japonisme*, which was used by Western nations, may not be appropriate or reasonable now. Therefore, at the moment, if one starts to investigate Japanese art in the 19th century in South Asia with comprehensive analysis, it may result in something new and of value. This paper describes the possible presence of studying *Japonisme* by researchers of Japan in South Asia.

Keywords *Japonisme*. *Japanesque* items, patterns, paintings. Japanese swords. Japanese arts and crafts in Western world. Japanese art in South Asian Museums. Japan’s National Isolation Policy. Anglo-Indian Banking System in Japan. Colonial finance and intra-Asian trade. Japanese yen before First Sino-Japanese War. Multidisciplinary approach to *Japonisme*.

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1. What has become of *Japonisme* since the 1860s?

Even a person who is not interested in Japan certainly has some experience of that country, such as seeing a Japanese sword, ukiyo-e (wood print), kimonos in films, television programs, and the like. Using these Japanese classical items in Western lifestyles, such a taste is called *Japonisme* in French. More specifically, this term is well known in art history as a particular style for the arts and crafts of Japan in the West, particularly in Europe and America, in whose cities the World Expositions were held from the 1860s to the 1910s¹.

The word *Japonisme* is French because it was first formulated at the 1867 World Exposition in Paris and was defined by the French critic Philippe Burty (1830-1890)².

It was in vogue in the latter half of the 19th century, when natural history and Oriental studies flourished. However, when it was no longer fashionable, there were many *Japonisme* collections, including old miscellaneous Japanese items in these cities.

It is common knowledge among Japanese art researchers that there are significant collections of *Japonisme* in the West like Britain, France, Germany, America, and so on³.

¹ Jarves, J. J. (2012). *A glimpse at the art of Japan*. Place of publication not identified: General Books. A reprinted edition was published in 1999 from Ganesha Publishing at Bristol, United Kingdom. Inside the new introduction of its reprinted edition, Akiko Mabuchi explains *Japonisme* with defining its period was from 1860 to 1910 as follows; “*Japonisme* has traditionally been considered to be primarily a visual arts movement, and even when it was interpreted to include music and other arts, the pictorial arts have always been thought to be the heart of the movement. The interpretation that the pictorial arts were at the centre of *Japonisme* is not grounded in fact but results from the exclusive focus of nineteenth-century art historical research on the study of pictorial arts. *Japonisme* has attracted attention because of its link with Impressionism, and the simplistic scheme showing the influence of *ukiyo-e* upon the great Impressionists holds sway even today, with most people being satisfied that all they need to know about the subject is the relationship between *ukiyo-e* and the *Japonisme* of Manet, Monet, Degas, Pissarro, Whistler and Van Gogh.” (v.) .

² Teramoto, N. (2017). *Pari Bankoku Hakurankai to japonisumu no tōnjō: Les expositions universelles de Paris et la naissance du japonisme*. 4p. However, more early world exposition at London in 1862 also showed huge amount of Japanese art crafts and they have great power of influence too.

³ Minami, A. (2015). *Kokkyō o koeta Nihon bijutsushi: Japonisumu kara Japonoroji e no kōryūshi 1880-1920*. Tōkyō : Fujiwara Shoten.

For instance, from 2010 to 2012, several principal researchers from the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo conducted collaborative investigations of overseas Japanese craft collections of the Meiji period(1868-1912) overseas⁴

In their research plan, their destinations were as follows: The British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Guimet Museum and the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, the Kunsthalle in Hamburg, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, and Seattle Asian Art Museum. The museums mentioned above are located in cities where several World Expositions were held during the late nineteenth century. As before, these museums are still the most critical places for understanding the concept of *Japonisme* in today's academic world.

2. A suggestion from a researcher of Japanese art history

As mentioned above, a fashion takes off after an influential exhibition in a particular well-known country, as with the popular theory concerning Japonisme. Although, only recently, a significant change of thinking about *Japonisme* has appeared.

Katsumi Miyazaki (宮崎克己), who published a book entitled *Japonisme*⁵ in 2018, mentioned many significant revaluations of the term *Japonisme*.

He points out that in 2015, the European Library comprising of 18 countries in Europe, launched a new service, which enables users to search a vast number of newspapers from pre-modern to modern times. Utilizing this full-text cross-searchable database, he came up with a unique hypothesis on the beginnings of and reason for this term and the curiosity for all things Japanese.

Miyazaki discovered that people living in Western societies suddenly turned their attention to Japanese culture in Far East Asia in the 19th century due to the Opium Wars in China from 1840 to 1842 (pp. 33-37). Between the late 1830s and 1850s, they often read articles about this area in newspapers due to these wars and hence, they could have possibly learnt the difference between China and Japan for the first time.

As explained above, Miyazaki obtained his tentative opinion in his research about the sudden interest of Western societies in East Asian culture by using this massive cross-country search of newspaper articles in Europe from the 1830s to

⁴ Project Number: 22401021, Research Category: Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research(B), Project Period: 2010-2012, Principal Investigator: MOROYAMA Masanori.

⁵ Miyazaki, K. (2018). *Japonisumu: Ryûkô toshitenonihon/ジャポニスム流行としての「日本」* (講談社現代新書).

the 1900s. “Curiosity about Japan” means having an interest in new Japanese items found in newspapers in those days.

Also, he pointed out that the industrial capitalistic interest in Japanese art (*Japonisme*) preceded the appearance of artistic inquisitiveness about Japan by Western artists (pp.98-103).

According to him, we may have a good chance of thinking about *Japonisme* without considering the nineteenth-century World Expositions in Western countries as the first adopter of Japanese culture.

2.1 Shimla in India: An example well demonstrating the effects of Miyazaki’s explanation concerning *Japonisme*

The first such exhibition, held in India, was in 1911 in Allahabad, and no researcher had expected to study *Japonisme* in India by 2016.

In that year, a Japanese researcher of South Asia, Ui Teramoto (寺本羽衣), published a paper, explaining that historically, Japanese crafts, souvenirs and commodities were popular in India at the end of the 19th century⁶. She discusses how such items were accepted in that country in the context of not merely the interpretation of exchanges between Japan and India but multilateral trade and global history. She concludes that its crafts prevailed in India from 1859 to 1899, and the vogue with these various items was usually regarded as not *Japonisme* but “Japanese curios”. Her paper on the prevalence of Japanese crafts in India has many points, which differ from the accepted notion and theory of the history of Japanese art.

However, from the study of Japanese art history and British history in the last 20 years, her ideas concerning the great interest in Japanese curios in India are a reasonable conclusion.

Among many Japanese art researchers, only Katsumi Miyazaki’s research complement Teramoto’s new views in his latest book published in 2018.

In her paper, Indian cities like Shimla, Hyderabad and Mumbai are places where “Japanese curios/curious” were imported and popularised. Shimla is the first city to start teaching the Japanese language in India. Hence, we need to consider future

⁶ Teramoto, U. (January 01, 2016). Trade and Commercial Networks of British Indian Trading Houses during the Treaty Port Trade in Yokohama (1858-1899)/英系インド商会の貿易と商業ネットワーク: 横浜の居留地貿易の事例から. *Journal of South Asian Studies/南アジア研究* / the Japanese Association of South Asian Studies/日本南アジア学会編, 28, pp34-65. https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/jjasas/2016/28/2016_34/_pdf/-char/ja

possibilities of investigating that city as an essential point of departure for Japanese studies.

2.2 Hyderabad in India: A new history of the Princely State of Hyderabad with a Japanese arts and crafts collection in the Salar Jung Museum

The Salar Jung Museum of Hyderabad has the third largest collection in India; gathering the crafts is somewhat puzzling. According to the theory mentioned at the beginning of this article, a particular style like *Japonisme* usually takes off after an influential exhibition in a particular well-known country. The first such exhibition, held in India, was in 1911 in Allahabad. In that respect, how is it possible that the Nizam of Hyderabad had already been interested in East Asian crafts at around the same time as Western art enthusiasts were, *even* before the 1911 exhibition?

We know that each princely state in India accumulated a unique collection of 19th century Japanese artefacts, as we can see at present in these museums in several of these Indian cities. The Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad has one of the most famous *Japonisme* collections. Although it is reasonable for South Asian researchers to have knowledge of the history of these Indian states, Japanese art researchers have rarely visited these virtual museums, which is a great pity. Throughout India, there are collections of Japanese crafts, about which such people, whose primary subject area is Asian studies, could write some interesting articles.

On a preliminary survey in that museum, my Indian co-researchers and I discovered that there were around 6000 items, presumably thought to be from Japan or other East Asian countries.

2.3 Mumbai in India: A collection of Japanese swords

It is said that there is a collection of old Japanese swords in a museum in Mumbai. About 30 years ago, a research project was carried out to make a systematic annotated catalogue (*catalogue raisonné*), funded by Japan, though unfortunately, the details are unspecified.

It is expected that a more extensive study of this collection in the future will be undertaken. Therefore, if anybody wants to draw up a research plan to investigate this and catalogue the results, they cannot do any better than going to the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Library⁷ in Japan before visiting Mumbai. Kensaku

⁷ <http://www.tufs.ac.jp/library/index-e.html>

Mamiya (萬宮健策) of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, as a discussant of the panel presentation “Thoughts on the Formative Process of *Japonisme* in the Princely State of Hyderabad in the Late Nineteenth Century” at AAS-in-Asia2020 on the 2nd September 2020, considered the library to be of great value.

At that presentation, the panellists, discussants and questioners discussed that several Indian cities, apart from Shimla, Hyderabad and Mumbai, had collections of Japanese artefacts imported from East Asian countries in the 19th century.

2.4 The current trend of study of Japan’s national isolation policy called *Sakoku* (鎖国) or “closed country policy” from 1639 to 1854

As Miyazaki and Teramoto have already remarked, many Japanese classical crafts and light industrial products were exported to South Asia rather than Western nations before 1868. It is consistent with theoretical explanations and physical evidence that we regard the 19th century *Japonisme* fashion to have begun suddenly not so much from England, America or other European countries but from the British Raj, which started to govern India in 1858.

However, until 1868, Japan had upheld its isolation policy, and many *Japanesque* goods called *Japonisme* were supposedly under the control of the government.

If the British Raj imported such crafts and the like from Japan before 1868, which became popular in Hindustan, how should we interpret and understand Japan’s isolation policy?

Considering this question with the following three points in mind would be wise.

Firstly, the concept of its isolation policy “seclusion (鎖国)” has continued to change only gradually over the past 60 years and is still a little outdated even now.

In February 2017, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Agency (MEXT, 文部科学省) announced that in the next draft of the Government Courses Guidance (学習指導要領), the term “seclusion (鎖国)”, referring to the foreign policy of the Edo period, especially from 1639 to 1854, would be omitted from elementary and junior high school textbooks⁸. Because of the results of historical research, this term is no longer an accurate description of the situation at that time.

Even though it is now 2021, “seclusion” is still used in Japanese textbooks. However, it is undeniable that this concept has become outdated in our understanding of Japanese history over the past 60 years.

⁸ <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20170215/k00/00m/040/042000c>

Credited to the progress and the results of contemporary Japanese historical studies concerning foreign relations in the Edo period (1603-1867), the term “the opening up of the country (開国)” as well as that of “seclusion” have been re-evaluated. In this area and the study of Japanese political history, it has become necessary to be careful when using the latter term⁹.

3. The Anglo-Indian banking system in Japan in the late 19th century

The second point concerns the Japanese banking system in the late 19th century. There were no modern Japanese banks at that time, which were capable of transferring money overseas, nor any adequate banking system in place to make this possible. Moreover, the Anglo-Indian Bank was the only foreign bank having a branch in Japan immediately after the Meiji Restoration (1868). To begin with, until the establishment of a modern central bank system in Japan in 1882, this bank effectively played that role.

In this section, we need to think not about the nineteenth-century merchants who specialized in international trade but about the banks that quartered in London and had branches in the British colonies.

After the British East India Company had been dissolved in 1858, this bank took over its role of international remittance, bill issuing and an international trading company in Britain's Asian colonies. It had a more modernized international banking system, using a telegraph as the latest technology at the time than its predecessor.

In 1992, Kazuo Tatewaki (立脇和夫) in his book entitled “The Meiji Government and the *Oriental Bank Corporation* (明治政府と英国東洋銀行)”, described how this bank played a pioneering role from 1870 to 1880 as essentially the Japanese central bank and served as a launching platform for the Japanese modern banking system. However, he did not explain why it was not a British bank but rather an Anglo-Indian one. For a long time, therefore, many Japanese had not been aware of the Japanese banking system at the end of the 19th century until they realized they had to consider Britain and India.

In the 1860s, Hakodate (函館), Nagasaki (長崎) and Yokohama (横浜) began operating as trading ports in 1859 under the Ansei Five-Power Treaties (安

⁹ On this point, see below; Matsukata, F. (2010). Oranda fūsetsugaki: “sakoku” Nihon ni katarareta “sekai” (松方冬子『オランダ風説書 「鎖国」日本に語られた「世界」』(中公新書、2010)) . Arano, Y., Ishii, M., & Murai, S. (2012). Nihon no taigai kankei: 7. Yoshikawakobunkan (荒野泰典, 石井正敏, 村井章介編『日本の対外関係 7 近代化する日本』(吉川弘文館、2012)) .

政五カ国条約) to allow foreign merchants to buy goods in Japan, pay for them and ship them elsewhere. Then, in 1868, Osaka (大阪) and Kobe (神戸) also started their history as modern trading ports. Yokohama and Kobe became particularly well known as export ports for Japanese goods of all these cities.

There were no British banks that had any relationship with the Indian banking system in either of these two cities during the Meiji period, according to the Tatewaki. However, some Anglo-Indian banks, such as the Bank of Hindustan in Japan, were earlier than other nations' banks. While, at that time, French and German banks were in the minority there and not beneficial for their home countries. However, Tatewaki never explains or refers to the importance of the Indian bank's role in Meiji-era Japan due mainly to the intra-Asian trade studies by researchers of South Asia, Britain and the economy was not very widely known until 30 years ago.

Today, it is understandable that one has to consider the importance of a multilaterally economic trading situation if one wishes to research only binational trade/cultural relationships.

Though forgotten by the Japanese people, one of the most populous Indian merchant and banker groups in Japan and other East Asian areas is the Indian Zoroastrians, an insular community. Finally, however, researchers have started to point out that some parts of the leading players of Britain's opium suppliers in the Ching Dynasty of China were Zoroastrians from India, though this conclusion was too pioneering an idea in the 1990s. So researchers might not have accepted this readily at that time¹⁰. Consequently, it was natural for Tatewaki, in his book, to illustrate that the critical role of *the Oriental Bank Corporation* from 1870 to 1880 in Japan, where had no natural functioning banking system, was to act as an Anglo-Indian bank, involved in both India and the British empire's economies.

Since 2002, Tomotaka Kawamura (川村朋貴) has published several excellent articles and papers on the exact historical relationship between the Anglo-Indian Bank and Japan. From 2004, when his books began to appear¹¹, the history of Anglo-Indian banking during the Meiji period has finally come to be discussed

¹⁰ Aoki, T. (2008). *Zoroasutākyō shi: Kodai Āria, chūsei Perushia, gendai Indo* (青木健『ゾロアスター一教史——古代アールリア・中世ペルシア・現代インド——』(刀水書房、2008)) .

¹¹ Kawamura, T. (2020). *Tobira no mukō no teikoku: "Isutan banku" hassei shiron*. / 扉の向こうの帝国: 「イースタン・バンク」発生史論 = The British empire behind closed doors: The Eastern Exchange Banks and their activities in Asia, ナカニシヤ出版.
Hamashita, T., Kawamura, T., Kobayashi, I., & Nakai, S. (2008). *Kaiiki sekai no nettowāku to j s sei*. Toyama-shi: Katsura Shobō. / 海域世界のネットワークと重層性, 桂書房. Kagotani, N., & Wakimura, K. (2009). *Teikoku to ajia nettowaku: Choki no 19 seiki*. / 帝国とアジア・ネットワーク: 長期の19世紀, 世界思想社.

comprehensively in a multiphasic relationship to the developments in India, Singapore and Britain.

4. Revitalization of colonial finance and intra-Asian trade through the weakening of British East India Company between 1830s and 1850s

Initially, *the Oriental Bank Corporation* and other Anglo-Indian banks in Japan were founded in Mumbai, which had a collection of Japanese swords, as mentioned above. If so, were these banks not Anglo-Indian but owned by India itself?

From the 1830s to the 1850s, the British financial system was reorganized several times.

The British East India Company was a patent company with monopolies in Asian trade and controlled an exchange and remittance operation in the colonies due to its vast colonial bank. Between the 1830s and 1850s, this company lost many rights in India and China for multiple reasons on the British side.

At that time, the British colonial finance gradually began to transfer several authorities from the British East India Company to British chartered banks. For example, many of them, such as *the Oriental Bank Corporation*, was established in 1842. The Mercantile Bank of India, founded in 1853 both in Mumbai, moved their headquarters to London and obtained royal letters of a charter, became chartered banks dealing with colonial finance¹².

Finally, in the 1850s, the Anglo-Indian banks transformed into chartered banks. Their head offices were also in London, with branches in British colonial cities like Shanghai and Hong Kong. They became more conducive to international imperialistic economic politics and intra-Asian trading.

Also, geographically-speaking, from London's point of view, Yokohama and Kobe were merely trading ports on the outer periphery of the British Empire, far beyond the shipping routes of Shanghai and Hong Kong.

In parallel with this expanding global Anglo-Indian banking system, the Indian spinning industry boom began in the 1860s. The British cotton textile industry held the most significant global market share.

By the late 19th century, 30% of the markets in Asia like Japan were imported from India¹³. Especially in the 1890s, the trade volume between these two countries soared mutually.

¹² Sugai, S. (2011). *Indo zaibatsu no subete: Yakushinsuru indo keizai no gendōryoku*. Tōkyō: Heibonsha (須貝信一『インド財閥のすべて』(平凡社新書、2011), 34-35.

¹³ Akita, S., & Akita, S. (2012). *Igirisu Teikoku no rekishi: Ajia kara kangaeru*. (秋田茂『イギリス帝国の歴史: アジアから考える』(2012、中公新書).

As a result, one can assume a severe credit crunch concerning trade settlements from Japan to India in the currency market. More so, as mentioned above, there was no modernized banking system in Japan other than *the Oriental Bank Corporation* and others like the Anglo-Indian banks, which had been set up to expand their roles as chartered banks in the world of the British colonial economic system after the 1860s.

5. How reliable was the Japanese yen before the First Sino-Japanese War (1894 – 1895) overseas?

The third point is Japan's economic history, such as the monetary system, a depressed economy and social disruption.

The overseas merchants and bankers belonged to Britain's most advanced cutting-edge financial organizations in those days. Therefore, India and China had no other choice but to negotiate with bankers in Japan, who had an undeveloped banking system, an unreliable currency and a paralyzed financial market with a severe economic crisis.

Without a modernized system and a stable currency, the Tokugawa government took the bold step of concluding the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with America in 1858 and similar pacts with Britain, France, the Netherlands and Russia. After the rapid changes of the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and a complex process of trial and error¹⁴, the first Japanese national bank was established in 1880.

However, no Japanese banking system could open accounts with the Bank of England at that time due to a lack of international credit, little experience in global finance, and no credible administration. However, as Japan had first-rate products being traded at high prices throughout the British Empire and Europe, namely, Japanese arts and crafts, which became popular worldwide between the 1860s and the 1900s and struggled to pay off its trading debt, these items were substituted instead.

For example, according to Teramoto, Japanese crafts were highly valued in Shimla, a luxury mountain summer resort in India for the British Raj. Therefore, Indian merchants and bankers could recover their financial losses by reselling them later in India.

There were three types of species currency in the Edo period: gold, silver, and coins issued by the Tokugawa government. As a substitute for the regular ones, there were

¹⁴ In the late 19th century, Japan did not have a modern financial system, with a large number of incomplete "National Central Banks" being established. Therefore, the role of the Anglo-Indian Bank was significant, but until now, there has been a tendency to misunderstand that this was a UK bank. https://www.boj.or.jp/about/outline/history/his_1850.htm/

many types of regional currencies called clan or domain notes (藩札) and private notes (私札) in each clan.

After starting overseas trade, the Tokugawa government lowered the gold and silver ratio to align with international standards to prevent a massive outflow of gold from Japan. This minting of money, in the first year of the Man'en Era (1860, 万延元年) was called "recast in Man'en (万延の改鑄)". As a result, the Japanese money supplies increased, and the Japanese economy fell into inflation. In addition, the opening of trading ports led to a sharp rise in prices. Simultaneously, the number of clan notes and private notes issued increased dramatically from the Edo period to the Meiji period¹⁵. From the first year of the Meiji Era (1868) to 1870, counterfeit money was rampant in Japan, and this trouble became an international problem. At the same time, local currencies like clan notes and private notes continued to be over issued, but the newly-established Meiji government did not have sufficient power to stop them¹⁶.

In the end, the new Meiji government had no choice but to create a Japanese national currency, i.e. the Yen (円) in 1871, to resolve the economic crisis and modernize the financial system. However, it was still unable to keep inflation under control.

There are still many unknown facts about the trade between Japan and other countries due to a lack of primary sources.

Nevertheless, many excellent articles and research papers have been published in this area over the last 25 years. As a result, the process by which modernizing Japan was incorporated into the development of inter-Asian trade within the British Empire has become reasonably clear¹⁷.

¹⁵ Shikano, Y. (2011). *Hansatsu no keizaigaku*. (鹿野嘉昭『藩札の経済学』(東洋経済新報社、2011)), i-v.

¹⁶ Shizume, M. (2020). *Shin'yō kahei no seisei to tenkai: Kinsei-gendai no rekishi jissō*. (鎮目雅人編『信用貨幣の生成と展開 近世～現代の歴史実証』(慶應義塾大学出版会、2020)), 178-179.

¹⁷ See Sugihara, K. (1996). *Ajia-kan bōeki no keisei to kōzō*. Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō. /アジア間貿易の形成と構造, 杉原薫, ミネルヴァ書房.
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In 2019, Haruhito Takeda (武田晴人) indicated in his book *The History of Japan Economy* (日本経済史) that the large trading companies and foreign banks expanded into the new Japanese markets, based on the silver currency in the late 19th century and gave economic opportunities for Chinese and Indian merchants to increase their activities¹⁸. As he remarks, *the Bank of Calcutta*, in India, had been established in 1806, and the modernized Indian banking system had become functional overseas after the 1830s. In particular, historical records show that the Anglo-Indian banking system started its operation in Japanese port areas as the earliest modern bankers in Japan from the 1860s onwards.

If there was no trustworthy currency there and trade had to be conducted, foreign merchants would often have no other choice but to retrieve highly exchangeable goods from Japan. Also, at the end of the Edo period around 1868, economically-strapped Japanese samurai families and merchants had nothing left to sell but their possessions like the Japanese swords, *ukiyo-e*, kimonos, i.e. so-called *Japonisme* items.

6. Conclusion

As we continue this study of *Japonisme* in South Asia, understanding the history of its concept in the 19th century will probably change further in the future.

Of course, there are several problems with this multidisciplinary study. One of the most prominent beings is that such old art objects cannot be authenticated unless well preserved. For example, whether the original containers for the objects and the records of purchase for them as primary source material still exist or not. Although each museum in South Asia may have inadequately kept these artefacts, they could still be valuable materials for understanding the history of the exchange between Japan and such areas. Apart from this, they might also reveal valuable information in the field of Japanese studies as well.

For the reasons mentioned above, there is a great deal of potential, in the future, for this multidisciplinary approach to the study of *Japonisme* in South Asia.

¹⁸ Takeda, H. (2019). *Nihon keizaishi*, 44-45pp./日本経済史, 武田晴人, 有斐閣.

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BOSOZOKU- Violent Speed Tribes in Japan

Ahmad Shadaan*

Abstract– This article explores one of the post-war Japanese subcultures known as Bosozoku, who were biker gangs and groups defying state, police, rules and regulations through speed, noise, violence and symbols during the 1970s and 1980s. Bosozoku was a youth subculture that emerged due to discontentment against the post-war establishment in Japan with capitalism and westernisation from the deprived youth who eulogised native Japanese culture and the emperor’s authority. This article briefly explores specific characteristics of the Bosozoku subculture like symbols, attire, styles and tools used to attract the authorities and people. Furthermore, how Bosozoku subculture has inspired pop culture in Japan by looking at the popular anime movie *Akira*. Also, looking into this subculture’s sociological and historical aspect by examining Japanese society and *Akira* and drawing parallels between them. This article examines the Bosozoku subculture and its delinquent behaviour, which directly challenged Japan’s established order and dominant culture and behaviour.

Keywords *Bosozoku* . Violent speed tribes in Japan . Movie- *Akira* . Youth subculture . Pop culture .

1. *Bosozoku*: A social issue

Post-war, Japan went through massive transformations, mainly focusing on economic endeavours, i.e., full-fledged Capitalism can be seen in Japan in this period. The economic transformation led to several societal and cultural phenomena, many good and many bad. Many subcultural phenomena emerged in the 1950s because of the kind of economic system taking place in this period. If we see from a Marxist perspective, these economic systems decide how society operates or rebalances itself, and slowly, a pattern starts to develop like class structure and the roles played by the people from different classes, cultures and

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subcultures belonging to different classes takes shapes. Although Japan managed to soar high as far as the economy, development, and achieving high-income level and standard of living are concerned, there emerged several social issues that have taken a toll on Japanese civil society. These social issues mostly emerge among the depressed sections of the society or those who do not belong to the dominant section (reap maximum benefits from the system) of the society. One of such social issues which emerged in post-war Japan was *Bosozoku*- the violent speed tribe subculture.

Bosozoku are Biker Gangs consisting of youths, primarily males, gained momentum and mushroomed in Japanese urban areas during the 1970s and 1980s. Following World War II, a burgeoning community of motorcycle fanatics — comprised of returning soldiers looking for a spark of adrenaline and disgruntled youth influenced by foreign films like *Rebel Without a Cause* - emerged in Japan. Though first known as the ‘kaminari zoku’ or ‘thunder tribe,’ the term ‘Bosozoku’ (roughly translates to “violent speed tribe”) was coined in the 1970s when riots broke out, and biker culture became more criminal (George, n. d.). This Japanese subculture revolves around speed, thrills, extreme customisation of bikes and cars. This subculture showcases the deviant elements present in Japanese society contrary to the general picture of Japan. The famous picture of Japan around the world is about politeness, discipline, workaholic people, hospitable people, always smiling, and well-defined societal norms which the Japanese people conform seemed there is no deviant or opposing elements or ideas in the Japanese society. However, the Bosozoku subculture has defied and did not conform to societal norms and showed the world that there are deviant and opposing elements in Japan. How they defied Japan’s dominant culture and elements, which also threatened the dominant aspect of society. Members mostly belonged to the low-income group and lower rungs of society, i.e. deprived section of the society; therefore, they challenged the state and dominant elements of the society by accepting their position in the society and showcasing their deviant and opposing characteristics through different means, and one of the means was forming bike gangs and showing the people and state that they are different by making noise, showing of motorbike skills, customised bikes which are different from ordinary vehicles or which people use daily, and dressing sense (tokkofuku-special attack suit) different hairstyle, which is not seen among the ordinary people or those who conform to societal norms.

2. *Bosozoku*: the key traits

The appearance of the Bosozoku is unique and different, and they symbolise their opposition against state and dominant societal norms and class differentiation. The appearance, symbols and meanings used by these groups or gangs are the

resistance shown to the dominant order. The recognised uniform of Bosozoku is the *tokkofuku*, a modified working clothes version of WWII kamikaze pilot uniforms embroidered with the specific Bosozoku group name on the back, nationalist phrases, kanji, imperial flags, personalised slogans which often ridicule Police and state, and stitched on nationalist symbols like the Rising Sun flag. These kanjis and signs are symbols showing their allegiance to the emperor and authentic Japanese culture or ‘Japanese spirit’ (Yamato Daishi), and therefore they believe that the true Japanese spirit or uniqueness of Japan is lost post-world war (Callahan, 2014). Other aspects of Bosozoku styles include greaseresque hairstyles, *dokajan* (jumpers worn by construction workers), *sentofuku* (overalls originating from right-wing organisations), *jimbei* (summer clothes), flu masks (to prevent recognition by the police), group flags, lighters, and matchbox. Bosozoku often sports accessories like wraparound headbands (*hachimaki*) bearing battle slogans (i.e., ‘police be damned’ or ‘bring it on.’), round sunglasses, surgical masks, dangling earrings. Bosozoku tends to avoid wearing any protective gear when driving as it adds an extra thrill to the ride (Davis, n. d.). These are some of the essential appearances of the Bosozoku, and it shows how they look entirely different from the common perception about Japanese people and their appearance. The idea behind this subculture is to show that alternate Japan exists, and they are most deprived, neglected, denied opportunities and frustrated from their conditions and the state themselves. They showed rebellious characteristics against the dominant order.

Another thing which Isolde Standish talks about the Bosozoku is their style and gaining attention (Medatsu koto) of media and people. ‘Fiske had argued that the pleasure ‘style’ affords its ability to empower the creator then he gives an example, how Madonna through style, turns herself into a spectacle’ (Martinez, 2001). In doing so, the creator or performer completely controls the show and denies the onlooker any part to play, i.e., the onlooker is just a spectator. Medatsu koto (being seen) is another aspect of Bosozoku pleasures in which they derive the attention of media and people through this style by creating the spectacle.

3. *Bosozoku*: Analysis in literature

Ikuya Sato’s book ‘Kamikaze biker: Parody and anomy in affluent Japan (1991)’ depicts the Bosozoku phenomenon, which achieved prominence in the 1980s and Sato during this time many other articles analysing and explaining the phenomenon (Sato, 1991). Sato’s in-depth analysis of biker gangs in Japan showcases the contradictory picture of Japan, which is believed to be coherent and harmonious. The research is primarily based on first-person eyewitness interviews and accounts of the members of the Biker gangs and onlookers or spectators of the Bosozoku ridings. Based on personal accounts, Sato mainly focuses on the

behavioural pattern, appearance, what they feel, and why people join the gangs or enjoy the rides. Also, feelings and the opinion of the spectators regarding the Bosozoku subculture and their activities disrupt the regular proceedings of the day and disturb the ordinary people. Sato also vividly explains the activities and actions performed by the members on the street, which includes customisation of bikes, speed thrills, organising and planning of rides, meeting point and ending points, deciding the routes and action plan, techniques and stunts used in riding, hairstyles, clothing, evading the police, and the consequences and the effects of the activities performed. According to Takeyuki Tsuda's review of the book, 'the anthropological study of the Sato, the Bosozoku is analysed from a symbolic, interpretive perspective as the cultural text of 'play' and 'fun' that the deviant youth actively construct and define in their attempt to impose meaning in their life' (Tsuda, 1993). In order to achieve meaning in their lives, these youths are involved in 'delinquent' behaviour but are not as severe as American biker gangs who are indulged in serious crime. Though Bosozoku is considered as the entry point for the Yakuza (organised crime network of Japan) system and involvement in the petty crimes, they are most aggressive in behaviour only, and actions performed by them are, however 'playful' in nature to satisfy their angst and frustration against the typical Japanese setup according to Sato.

For example, Sato describes the 'driving techniques used by the bikers to show their fellows, passers-by, curiosity seekers. Techniques used are 'yonshasen kama' (zig-zagging across four-lane), 'hanabi' (fireworks, or making sparks by striking the asphalt pavement with the kickstand of the bike), 'raidaa chenji' (rider change, changing the rider's position while driving the bike)' (Sato, 1991, 14). In this way, Sato vividly describes the subculture's physical characteristics and then gives them symbolic and ritualistic meaning.

In the first chapter itself, Sato discusses the reason behind the people joining the Bosozoku groups and recognises two reasons. The first reason he recognised those given by scholars and psychologists is that the frustration, inferior status, and lack of success led them to become one of Bosozoku and use it for personal satisfaction and driving attention and show their dissatisfaction and rage against the state and society. However, Sato recognises the second reason as more plausible based on research and literature review of Bosozoku. In this view, Bosozoku activities are seen as 'asobi' (play). Two words 'speed' and 'thrills' are seen as most important in this approach as most of the answers in the interview corresponds to these two words. The people in the Bosozoku groups show delinquent behaviour in a playful manner, which means playing and creating minor chaos for the state and society as they ignore these individuals. The intrinsic enjoyment that this driving gives to individuals is the real reason for the expansion of Bosozoku. Sato talks about the concept of 'flow' (given by Mihaly

Csikszentmihalyi), which he explored during the personal interviews, which means 'the holistic sensation that the people feel when they act with total involvement' (Sato, 1991:18). He then recognises several characteristics of experience in Boso driving related to personal experience and enjoyment of the driving. Sato's work describes and explains the Bosozoku phenomenon, which is very contemporary and limited in scope, and it does not look deeper into the phenomenon based on sociological and psychological perspectives. In other words, what motivates these youths in such a deviant and socially rebellious manner.

Another work that is an excellent addition to the study of Bosozoku and, most importantly, its popularisation worldwide is the Japanese animated movie and Manga series 'Akira (1988)' directed by Katsuhiro Otomo became a massive hit around the world. The movie is set in a dystopian Japan where civil wars, rebellions, public outbreaks are common, and it consists of dysfunctional and highly stratified societies. Otomo's main issue is the 'lost youth' resulting from World War III, where the atom bomb destroyed Tokyo city. Otomo creates a parallel post-war Japan where the Japanese world is in complete chaos and is different from the real Japan of that time. However, one link between Japan is the 'lost youth'. He also recreates the Bosozoku subculture, in which these lost youths are involved. The lead characters Kaneda and Tetsuo are friends and members of the Bosozoku gang, and basically, it is a story of their friendship and rivalry with other issues of saving Japan from upcoming catastrophe in which these both play the most critical role.

Otomo very nicely showed darker and more chaotic Japan as an alternate future of post-war Japan in Akira. The movie demolishes the view of Japan as a homogenous society based on economic and social development, and it showed there was the existence of parallel Japan which is opposed to mainstream Japanese society. It was aimed at youths, more clearly deprived and neglected youths as an audience, but it became a sensation worldwide. The movie concentrates on the more deprived section of Japanese and how they are divorced from mainstream Japanese society and Japan's more vulnerable and darker side. The connection between the movie and real Japan is the Bosozoku subculture which showed Japanese vulnerability and negativity.

Another scholar named Isolde Standish brings up the criticism of Ikuya Sato's study about the Bosozoku subculture. He says that 'Sato fails to adequately explain the social and historical causes behind the manifestation of this particular form of delinquent behaviour' (Martinez, 2001:57). Standish stresses post-war polarisation based on occupational status and recognised several factors for developing youth subcultures in the post-war period. Some of the factors are post-war changes in the Japanese education and work systems, meritocracy and

achievement-oriented social status, the gradual decline of extended family, and the proliferation of mass media. 'Bosozoku subculture, seen as an outward manifestation of a new generational consciousness, poses a direct challenge to the traditional 'work ethic' and achievement-oriented ideology of the previous generation' (Martinez, 2001: 58). Standish also argues that the 'polarity of occupational status in society can be divided along the lines of blue-collar/low-status workers, and the salaryman/white-collar/high-status workers. The polarity of occupation is determined by education. It is reflected in the emergence of distinct youth cultures divided along these lines' (Martinez, 2001:59) By looking at this backdrop, the emergence of Bosozoku can be explained in Cohen's (1955) view that 'working-class youths who under-achieve at school and who cannot conform to 'respectable' society. Often resort to deviant behaviour as a solution to their problems' (Martinez, 2001:59-60). The discontent of the Bosozoku youths with mainstream society led to the adoption of standards that are the antithesis to the dominant standards.

Standish examines the Manga series 'Akira' and relates to the Bosozoku subculture. How director Otomo 'legitimises and mythologises the position of Bosozoku youth on the periphery of Japanese society, and so becomes a sharp critique of contemporary corporate Japanese society' (Martinez, 2001: 62). Standish explains that Akira is set in the futuristic present while deriving meaning from present social, political and economic conditions. The movie gets its meaning by adopting four historical signifiers that led to contemporary Japanese society's corruption and degeneration. The first historical signifier is pre-war Japan when right-wing military factions and Zaibatsu (prominent industrialists) controlled the country and drove Japan into the world war. The second historical signifier in the movie relates to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the movie's opening scene where the atomic explosion destroys the city of Tokyo. The third historical signifier relates to the Tokyo Olympics (1964) and the fourth to the political unrest and student demonstrations against the revision of the US-Japan security treaty in the 1960s (Martinez, 2001). Kaneda and his Bosozoku friends exist in the movie with all the evils of the degenerated society, symbolising real Japan's post-war condition. Also, Kaneda and his friends are the product of this degenerated society. Otomo in Akira creates the imagery of the subdued voice and suppressed feeling of the depressed section of the Japanese people, which means how Japan looks like in the eyes of this depressing section. The depressed section which is shown in the movie is the Bosozoku group.

Standish also examines other technical and aesthetic aspects of the movie, but the main thing we are concerned with is its connection with the Bosozoku subculture and Japan's deviant aspect, which it clearly shows. The movie shows all the negative aspects of dominant cultures and setups like corruption among the elites,

revealing the dark side of scientific experimentation and technology and the gloomy and murkier picture of the city. Also, the qualities shown in the lead characters (Kaneda and colonel) of the movie corresponds to the deviant characteristics of what is expected and found in Japanese people. Both Kaneda and colonel are 'koha' types, which embody rugged masculinity especially aspired by the Bosozoku youths, whereas college students are considered 'nanpa' or soft types, which is in clear contrast to masculinity bravado, and chivalry (Martinez, 2001). The lead characters have purity of motives ('makoto') which means neither have been corrupted by the degenerative society. Standish sees the incorporation of Confucian ethics and drawing from the glorious Japanese past by this Bosozoku subculture depicted in the movie's lead characters. So, a different kind of nationalism is seen among the Bosozoku youths as they try to incorporate from Japanese ancient traditions and cultures to legitimise their position in Japanese mainstream society. The movie eulogises the deviant elements and characteristics, criticises the dominant elements of society, and puts it in a negative light. Akira became a worldwide phenomenon as a science fiction Manga series and movie. However, with time, it achieved cult status for its content and became essential for understanding the Bosozoku subculture and questioning the popular idea that Japan is a homogenous and classless society with overall development.

Another valuable work in understanding Japanese deviant behaviour where writer Karl Taro Greenfeld in his book 'Speed Tribes: Days and night with Japanese next generation' examines Japanese youths post bursting of the bubble. The book is a non-fiction work written in 1994 when Greenfeld worked as a journalist in Japan and interviewed Bosozoku drivers, Yakuza members, nightclub hostesses, ultra-right-wing nationalists. He wanted to look into where the new generation of Japan is heading, search for why the Japanese economic crackdown happened, and find its social impact. With this economic depression, the image of Japan as a classless and orderly country was broken. Therefore, Greenfeld tried to look into the underground realities for which he went to murkier alleys, lived with Yakuza gangsters and watched late-night proceedings on the Japanese streets. The book is written in individual and group stories based on interviews and eyewitnesses. The book has been used to study Japanese society in a more organised way and helps in a deeper understanding of Japanese society. Therefore, we see several scholars have reviewed and used this book to understand different Japanese subcultures. Greenfeld questions mainstream Japanese society through this book based on conformity, control, and order. He questioned everything about Japan, like the polite language and gesture, which in the case of Yakuza and Bosozoku is contradictory where these people use rough and vulgar forms of the Japanese language, and they are far from being polite. Greenfeld tried to everything antithesis about Japanese mainstream Global image.

However, the Bosozoku subculture declined rapidly with the dawn of the new century. According to Japan times, National Police Agency statistics show that Bosozoku members peaked at 42,510 in 1982 but steadily declined, hitting a record low of 6,771 in 2015 (Osaki, 2016). Bosozoku achieved its peak as a cultural phenomenon in 1980, but it steadily declined because of several reasons. The laws have become stricter where members are jailed for long terms, and their lives get spoiled very young. With improved surveillance and the help of cyberspace technology, the police can take stricter actions and keep watch on the bikers' activities. The laws on modifications of bikes and cars have also been becoming stricter. The state has dealt with the Bosozoku gangs with an iron fist and has almost ended the youth rage against mainstream Japanese society trying to control everything. With the decline of Bosozoku, new groups known as 'Kyushakai' (old bikers) have emerged to prominence, with their numbers increasing rapidly (Osaki, 2016). According to the NPA official, some of them are believed to be old Bosozoku members, and they insist that they follow traffic rules, but police are largely unconvinced, seeing them as "a secret nest" of Bosozoku. Kyushakai and Bosozoku are similar in modifying their bikes, such as cutting off mufflers for louder sounds and tilting their license plates to avoid identification. There is some continuity from the past, but there is an overall decline in the popularity of Bosozoku subcultures.

4. *Bosozoku* subculture: Towards a conclusion

As in Antonio Gramsci's 'Hegemony', the state always tries to suppress the voices or deviant behaviours and ideas that threaten the power or legitimacy of the state and dominant section of society. Therefore, to remain in power, the state has to suppress everything against its existence and always propagate, strengthening the legitimacy of those in power. However, it is challenging to suppress voices, ideas, and deviant behaviour. Japan, such a controlled society and country itself, has shown deviant behaviours such as the Bosozoku subculture, which threatened the existence of dominant ideas and culture of Japan and achieved worldwide popularity through popular culture like Manga and Anime and also through sufficient amount of literature and journalistic works and articles. Another reason cited for the decline of Bosozoku groups is that most teen members during 1980 have become middle-aged now trying to reintegrate into society to spend a normal life or form groups like Kyushakai. Also, Bosozoku members find it very difficult to reintegrate into the normal society as after one phase of life ends, a person wants an everyday life. The life of the members becomes tough. Either they indulge in criminal activities like joining Yakuza, or their life gets spoiled because of serving in prison and charges of criminal cases. Therefore, one needs to be very hardcore to involve in Bosozoku activities. However, the Bosozoku subculture has inspired teens for its distinct clothing styles and fashion and inspired Japan's popular culture to drive inspiration for its distinct style.

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US's Response to 'Rise of China': Assessing India and Japan's Security Challenges and Dilemmas

Shamshad A. Khan*

Abstract – America's strategic response to the rise of China and the perceived security challenges it poses to the West-led liberal international order are mainly based on China's projected economic strength. A group of observers have taken China's economic strength into account to predict its future behaviour. It is true that China had surpassed Japan as the number two economy in the world in 2010 and will likely surpass the US in 2028, as a study conducted by the Centre for Economics and Business Research suggests. Undoubtedly, China will have sufficient capital to invest in its defence modernisation. However, while speculating on a perceived threat from the 'rise of China,' many other factors must also be included to reach a correct assessment. These include China's internal challenges, such as economic and demographic vulnerabilities, which have been largely ignored in the studies on the Chinese threat theory. More so, a counterbalancing strategy against China, which a group of experts suggests, will likely lead to an arms race between the US and China. The arms race will have a ripple effect on Asian security. The two regional powers and immediate neighbours of China - India and Japan - are also expected to augment their security by increasing their defence budgets, given the imminence of the arms race. However, while these reports suggest that New Delhi and Tokyo join the US efforts to counterbalance a rising China, India and China's economic conditions and domestic factors must also be considered, which have been mainly ignored by the security analysts while framing the Chinese threat theory. It must be assessed whether the two Asian democracies have the economic wherewithal to tackle China's strength. The paper, against this background, maps the US's strategic response to tackle China's rise and the challenges and dilemmas it poses to India and Japan

Keywords US-China rivalry · Indo-Pacific · Quad · Rise of China · India-Japan Relations · Global Order · Liberal International Order ·

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1. Introduction

As China's 1978 economic reforms started bearing results and pushed the country on the path of economic ascendancy, the rise of China gained traction in strategic circles. Observers, however, remain divided over whether Beijing will pose a new security threat to the US-led world order or continue to live within the existing world order, an order that has helped it prosper. The scholars belonging to the Realist school of thought believe that a rising China would pose a military threat to the US and its interests. They suggest Washington prepare for the worst-case scenario and adopt a counterbalancing strategy by ramping up an alliance and forging security ties. However, the scholars representing the Liberalist school of thought suggest that China is unlikely to challenge the world order from which it has benefited, and thus "containment" of China will be counterproductive.

China's GDP has increased manifold after the 1978 economic reforms initiated by the Deng Xiaoping regime and carried over by the successive regimes. After surpassing Japan in 2010 as the number two global economy, China is at the cusp of overtaking the US in terms of nominal GDP. The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) has forecasted that China will overtake the US by 2028, five years earlier than expected (Elliott 2020). Undoubtedly, the growing economic size of the Chinese economy has given Beijing political clout, which its leadership is leveraging to achieve its national interests. As China closes the gap with the US economically and militarily, various experts speculate that China will overtake the US-led liberal world order. It will pose new challenges and threats to liberal democracies worldwide. As a result, democracies, including the Asian democracies, are gearing up to meet the perceived threat emanating from the rise of China. This paper examines the "Rise of China" phenomenon by looking into external and internal factors against this context. For clarity, the paper has been divided into various sections. After the brief introduction, the paper examines the divergent thinking within the US strategic circles on the rise of China. Then the paper examines how the ongoing debate on the rise of China has influenced the US's policy response vis-a-vis a rising China. Next, the paper critically examines the inconsistencies in Western responses to the rise of China. Finally, it assesses the security challenges and dilemmas the two Asian countries - Japan and India - face when balancing China.

2. Rise of China: Mapping the divergent US strategic thinking

The American strategic thinking over the rise of China remains divided into "engagement" and "containment" camps. While the liberalists suggest the US administration engage China, the realists have suggested adopting a "counterbalance" strategy. The realist examines the history, starting from the

Peloponnesian War to World War II, and based on their reading of history, suggest maintaining the balance of power to avert an imminent war between the existing power and the emerging power. Taking cues from history, Graham Allison (2015) predicted that both China and the US might enter into a situation that Athens and Sparta had faced in the past. This situation, Allison terms as the Thucydides Trap. A war between the two powers will have a catastrophic impact on people beyond China and the US as well, points Allison. On a similar line, John Mearsheimer (2015) speculates that "if China continues its impressive economic growth over the next few decades, the US and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential of war." In an interview with the *Asahi Shimbun* (Minemura 2020), Mearsheimer speculates a "serious possibility" of using nuclear weapons during the US-China war. In brief, realist scholars predict that the world will witness "tension, distrust and conflict"- the typical features of a power transition. In their prediction, there is a message to the existing power US- to maintain a balance of power unilaterally or collectively through forging a partnership with like-minded countries.

However, a group of liberal scholars argue that China will not unshackle the existing global order, which has helped it prosper. Instead, Beijing will use the existing international order to enhance its economic interests further. Joseph S. Nye (2017) differs from his realist counterparts. Nye asserts that "contrary to the current conventional wisdom, China is not about to replace the United States as the world's dominant country." He is of the view that "...even if China does surpass the United States in total economic size in some decades from now, economic might is just part of the geopolitical equation.... Although Chinese capabilities have been increasing in recent years, serious observers think that China will not be able to exclude the United States from the Western Pacific much less exercise global military hegemony." Similarly, G. John Ikenberry (2008) argues that the rise of China will not turn into a hegemonic transition. Beijing is likely to join the liberal rule-based order. He opines that "the rise of China does not have to trigger a wrenching hegemonic transition." It can be very different from those of the past emerging powers as "China faces an international order that is fundamentally different from those that past rising states confronted." Ikenberry asserts that the current order is "hard to overrun and easy to join."

3. US's response to a rising China

With the two alternatives available with the US, between "containment" as suggested by the Realists and "engagement" as suggested by the Liberalists, its leadership chose the propositions offered by the liberals. Liberalists strongly believe that counterbalancing China would be counterproductive. The US administration decided to engage China, as is evident from the policy decisions

the US took vis-à-vis China starting from Bill Clinton to the Barack Obama period. It includes George W. Bush Jr's administration, which was keen to accommodate China in the West-led international system in return for Beijing's support to the US's global war on terror. The US's China engagement strategy aimed to integrate China in the exiting global order and thereby make Beijing a responsible stakeholder in the international system. The US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick (2005) observes that after joining the WTO in 2001, China has "nearly completed the process of integrating itself into the established world order." He pointed out that Beijing has joined most of the significant institutions it once opposed. He argued that the US's policy vis-à-vis China "needed to be changed dramatically as a result." He urged China to become a "responsible stakeholder in the system." Fast forward to the Obama administration, his policy of "offshore balancing" and drawdown from Iraq and Afghanistan gained accolade domestically but created unease among its security allies, including Japan.

Meanwhile, the discussion over America's "relative decline" gained traction in the Japanese strategic circles and found expression in its defence planning. Tokyo added a "third pillar"- strengthening security partnership with ASEAN, India and Australia- as it believed that the "second pillar" of its security policy - the US-Japan security partnership - is weakening (Khan 2011). However, the US's announcement of a "pivot to Asia" policy emphasising deepening security, diplomatic and economic engagement with Indo-Pacific countries emboldened the confidence of the US allies in East Asia, especially Japan (Khan 2013). Tokyo joined the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) despite resistance from its farming sector. The "Pivot to Asia", also termed as rebalance to Asia, hinted that the US is slowly departing from its liberal paradigm towards the balance of power paradigm as suggested by realist scholars. One of the ambitious plans by the Obama administration, as part of the rebalance-to-Asia policy, was the formalisation of TPP - a free trade agreement with negligible tariffs and a high standard of products - to ensure the free flow of goods and services among the partner countries. One of the unstated objectives of the TPP was to limit access to Chinese goods to these markets and thereby weaken China economically while keeping the economy of the partner countries buoyant.

However, much before the TPP could come into effect, change in the US administration led to its withdrawal from the free trade treaty. President Donald Trump approached the TPP from his "America first policy" perspective and withdrew from the preferential trade treaty. On the other hand, Trump followed the previous administrations rebalance to Asia policy with added vigour. In the new National Security Strategy adopted during the Trump administration in 2017, the US termed China a strategic Competitor who wants "to shape a world

antithetical to US values and interests.” It was followed by an Indo-Pacific strategy in 2019 which noted that “the Indo-Pacific region is confronted with a more confident and assertive China that is willing to accept friction in the pursuit of a more expansive set of political, economic, and security interests” (US Department of Defense, 2019).

A declassified document about the US's Indo-Pacific strategy, released weeks before the transition of government in the US, hints that the Indo-Pacific strategy is aimed at maintaining America's “Strategic primacy in the Indo-Pacific region and promote a liberal economic order while preventing China from establishing a new illiberal sphere of influence...” (US's Indo-Pacific Strategy, 2021). The document noted that “shifting regional power balances will continue to drive security competition across the Indo-Pacific, leading to increased defence investment by many countries in the region, including India and Japan” (US's Indo-Pacific Strategy, 2021). The declassified document unveiled that the US would align its Indo-Pacific Strategy with that of India, Japan and Australia and will “aim to create a quadrilateral security framework with India, Japan, Australia, and the United States as the principal hubs” (US's Indo-Pacific Strategy, 2021). Additionally, the US also declassified a statement known as Robert O' Brien statement in which it noted that “Beijing is increasingly pressuring Indo-Pacific nations to subordinate their freedom and sovereignty to a ‘common destiny’ envisioned by the Chinese Communist Party.” The O' Brien statement expressed commitment that America and its allies “will preserve and protect their sovereignty” (The White House, 2021a). The Biden administration expressed commitment to continue the policies agreed during the Republican administration to contain China.

The current US Indo-Pacific strategy enjoys bipartisan support in America and has deepened over the years. The Indo-Pacific policy has three precise dimensions: military, economic, and infrastructure. The Quad, revived in 2017, is anchored towards achieving military objectives. At the consultative level, it serves as a mechanism to discuss various security issues, and at the operational level, the navies of the four countries have revived the Malabar naval exercise. An apparent aim of the naval exercise is to keep the sea lanes of communication free and open so that the trade flow takes place without the interventions from both non-state and state actors.

Moreover, the Malabar exercise is likely to add a new dimension. As of 2020, the Malabar naval exercise took place in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Now, the Navies of Quad countries are planning to hold the exercise in the Western Pacific to strengthen its reach beyond the traditional theatre.

Another emerging strand of the Indo-Pacific is focused on geo-economic strategy. This strategy aims to counter China's growing economic clout in Asia and beyond and seeks China's economic isolation. It stems from the assumption that China has financially benefited from the post-war liberal economic order created by the West after joining the WTO in 2001 but has not democratised itself as per the western expectations. As the economic interdependence between the US and China has not yielded expected results, Washington and its Asian allies are mulling on various strategies, from easing their economic interdependence to "decoupling of China." The Japanese administration's policy to provide subsidies to its companies to move out its production bases from China to other countries, including ASEAN, India and Bangladesh, is aimed in that direction. In addition to this, India, Japan, and Australia have launched a new Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) with an apparent American backing. The new supply chain initiative aims at easing their economic dependence on China, especially after the Covid-19 crisis. The efforts are also on not to let China dominate the telecommunication sector with its 5G technology. Most of these mechanisms and strategies are aimed at China's economic and technological isolation, the way the United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR) was isolated from the West-led liberal order during the Cold War period, leading to its political demise.

Infrastructure is another area where the democracies try to match China's strength to strength, especially following China's Belt and Road Initiative, which has given Beijing enough political and diplomatic clout in the recipient countries. The democratic countries have various plans, including Japan's Partnership in Quality Infrastructure and India and Japan's bilateral cooperation in Asia Africa Growth Corridor. However, the infrastructure push in the Indo-Pacific region got a major push with the announcement of Build Back Better World (B3W) by the Joe Biden administration. It has been termed as "the bold new global infrastructure initiative." The US administration defines it as "a values-driven, high-standard, and transparent infrastructure partnership led by major democracies to help narrow the [US] Dollar 40+ trillion infrastructure need in the developing world, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic" (The White House, 2021 b). The B3W has been endorsed by the G-7 countries. It is being viewed as a "counter to China" (Meek, 2021) by a group of experts. Fine prints of the B3W and its implementation are yet to be unveiled. However, the commentators suggest that the US is keen to invest big in the Indo-Pacific region to overtake China's infrastructure plans with leading economies. All the three dimensions of the Indo-Pacific strategy mentioned above aim to achieve one objective: balancing China.

The Biden administration has added a new angle to the US's China containment policy by giving Quadrilateral Security Initiative a formal consultative structure and signing an AUKUS deal. The trilateral arrangement between America, the UK

and Australia is primarily aimed at helping Canberra acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines, and however, it is also aimed at counterbalancing China. In an editorial, *The Japan Times* notes that “this is a big deal. The technology, which will allow those boats to go farther, faster and longer more stealthily, is one of the US’s “crown jewels,” and has only been shared with the United Kingdom. The new submarines will now be able to patrol the South China Sea and as far north as Taiwan, which could shift the military calculus in the event of a contingency in either area” (*The Japan Times* 2021). Even though the AUKUS is yet to take a firm shape, the mechanism is seen as another grouping, and the Quad consists of the US, Australia, Japan, and India to tackle China. “The new agreement seeks to deter better, and if need be, defend against revisionist powers in this region. If that describes Chinese behaviour, then it is a target” (*The Japan Times* 2021), noted the *Japan Times* in its editorial.

In short, the analysis above suggests that the US has completely dumped its “engagement of China” strategy with that of “counterbalancing” China strategy. It has taken various economic and military measures to challenge China’s growing preeminence, including forming a Quadrilateral Security Initiative and the AUKUS.

4. US’s policy response to the rise of China: A critical assessment

Following the analysis of debates and responses over China’s rise briefly captured above, the research paper focuses on the core questions as to whether these strategies and mechanisms will help challenge China’s growing preeminence at the global level? Will the US-led global order end, and what should be the India-Japan strategy amid the rise of China and the changing regional and global order?

First, the analyses regarding China’s rise and the threat it may pose is too focused on China’s present economic strength. While it must be acknowledged that China will continue to maintain its number two global position in terms of nominal GDP and may register economic growth once it overcomes the aftereffects of the pandemic, at the same time, China’s vulnerabilities and demographic issues must not be missed in strategic analysis when a case is built regarding the Chinese threat theory. Moreover, while China claims to have tackled the poverty issue, the experts do not subscribe to the claims. “China’s unemployment and poverty are proportionately much lower than in other Third World countries like India, but they have not disappeared,” writes Prabhat Patnaik (2021). As the gap between rural and urban China widens, the government is making several course corrections “to ensure that popular anger against its economic policies does not reach a flashpoint” (Patnaik 2021). Apart from the rural and urban divide, many issues on its periphery, including Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Tibet (which is expected to come to the fore over Dalia Lama’s succession), confront China.

These issues are not easy to tackle and will continue to keep the Chinese authority's focus inwards.

Ageing society is another internal challenge that China and other East Asian countries face. Beijing relaxed its one-child norm, but it has not helped it beyond a point. The Total Fertility Rate in China has gone down below replacement level. In an analysis, Tsuchiya Hideo (2020) highlights that China is greying much faster than expected. The "population bonus," meaning that the working-age population is still large enough to offset the economic impact of the declining birth rate, will soon become "population onus," as the people born soon after the Great Leap Forward will retire, and this will have "serious economic repercussion as fewer workers will have to provide for the growing non-productive section of society", notes the analysis. China has been able to drive its economic growth because of its working-age population, but "China's TFR remains at the current level of 1.6, the country's population will start to shrink before the end of the 2020s."

Given the falling birth rate, China will not sustain its economic growth even though it may briefly surpass the US GDP. Various domestic issues, including the unrest in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, will seek China's focus inwards rather than outwards. Against this context, it is safe to say that China will not challenge the existing order even though it will have more economic strength than the US in terms of nominal GDP.

Third, the strategy of the US (and, to some extent, its allies) remains inconsistent and incoherent when dealing with China. The rise of China, especially its economic growth, which gave it the political clout, was imminent. The US started a policy of engagement and accommodation, and some observers suggested that the process would lead to democratisation and end the Communist regime. Now when the strategy has not yielded the expected result, the US has turned to the balancing China strategy, and efforts are being made to isolate it. They are looking at history to avoid the "Thucydides Trap" to balance China without paying sufficient attention to whether a balancing strategy will work against a country that is very much economically integrated with the West.

Moreover, the balancing strategy has been identified very late and remains incoherent. It must be noted that Winston Churchill, the former British Prime Minister identified the challenge of a communist threat much before it appeared in his "sinews of peace" speech of 1946. He observed that the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) may pose challenges to the "freedom and democracy" of the Christian civilisation and suggested to "face them squarely while time remains (Churchill 1946)." When it comes to China, the liberal world's strategy remains inconsistent. After trial and error, a new balancing strategy dubbed Indo-Pacific has been unveiled, and an Anglosphere alliance AUKUS has been mooted. It has been adopted too late and is still evolving.

Further, it can be noted that the previous effort by the liberal world to meet a perceived threat of the USSR was based on liberal "values." The liberal world gave up its economic interests and remained firm on safeguarding the liberal values. However, the West has deep economic interests with that of China in the economically interdependent world. They are finding it difficult to forgo their economic interests, and this is evident when we give a cursory look at various nations or groupings' Indo-Pacific policies. During the Cold War, the US allies steadfastly adhered to their policies, especially when safeguarding sensitive technology and gave preference to values over their business interests. However, in the economically interdependent world, when dealing with China, the national and economic interests of the Western countries prevail over the values that bind them.

Moreover, reluctance is also visible in democratic countries' formulations of countervailing China strategies. Indo-Pacific and Quad can be cited as examples. In the case of the Indo-Pacific, while the US focus is more on the military aspects, Japan's focus is on the economic aspects. The AUKUS is another example where the policy has caused more wedge than unity in the liberal world. The AUKUS has created a huge diplomatic rift in the US-France partnership. France termed AUKUS as "a stab in the back" by Washington as it lost a multibillion-dollar submarine contract with Australia (Tanaka 2021).

Differences of opinion can also be seen on other fronts. Let us take AIIB, for example. The US did not join the AIIB and urged its allies to do so, and only Japan agreed. Two major US allies joined, including the UK and South Korea (Khan: ICWA). India remains the second-largest contributor and a founder member of China-led AIIB headquartered in Beijing. Of late, Japan has also done some cost-benefit analysis, and Japan-led ADB co-founded some AIIB projects. When it came to China led OBOR/BRI, India ignored the concerns. Other democracies, as well as US allies, are keen to invest and participate in the BRI.

When we analyse America's and its allies' strategies directed towards Beijing, it seems it is geared towards achieving economic isolation of China. The economic isolation strategy takes a cue from the experience of the USSR's economic isolation from the world economy undertaken by the West during the Cold War period, which in the long run led to the USSR's economic and political meltdown. However, it is very unrealistic to speculate that China could be isolated with the strategy of forced economic isolation. China seems more competent than the erstwhile Soviet Union. While the USSR chose to remain isolated, creating a parallel block, China's strategy is to remain integrated with the existing institutions and mechanisms wherever possible while making its institutions assert their influence. For example, when China created the AIIB, which was viewed as a challenger to existing financial ADB and World Bank, it tried to dispel the concerns by arguing that AIIB is complementary to the existing

institution rather than a competitor. China has not abandoned the ADB, where it is the third-largest funder. At the same time, it has not lowered its stake in the World Bank. It has joined the Regional and Economic Comprehensive Partnership (RCEP) and has applied for joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Notably, India and the US have kept themselves out of the RCEP and CPTPP. China remains much more integrated economically than the USSR. Therefore, economic isolation that worked in the case of the Soviet Union may not work against an economically integrated China.

5. Rise of China: Assessing challenges and dilemma of Japan and India

Finally, this section examines the implications, challenges and dilemmas of the two regional powers and the US's strategic partners - India and Japan. How the US's deterrence strategy will impact India and Japan has not been given specific attention while analysing the US's containment strategy against China. As the US and its western allies, the UK and Australia, up against China, Beijing further strengthens its military capabilities. China's recent test of hypersonic missiles is one such example. The strategic circles and media speculate a stand-off between the US and China over Taiwan. A hard balancing strategy by the US and its western allies against China is likely to lead an arms race between China and the US. An imminent arm race between the US and China will also ripple effect on China's two neighbours- India and Japan. The calls that Japan and India- two regional players in Asia must shoulder the responsibility in safeguarding the regional order will grow further from the strategic communities and allies.

The two Asian democracies, however, have a more significant task to fulfil at the domestic level and are also undergoing economic stress. For example, while Japan faces security challenges from China and North Korea are on the external front, on the domestic front, it has been facing the problem of an ageing society and a slowing economy. Death has surpassed birth, increasing stress on the working-age population and adversely impacting economic growth. The successive governments have undertaken various financial contributions to encourage families to produce children. The previous government led by Yoshihide Suga had extended fertility treatment under insurance coverage. Stimulus and other support packages during pandemics have increased the country's fiscal debt. A *Japan Times* analysis noted that "public debt stood at ¥1.12 quadrillion - 198% of GDP - at the end of fiscal 2019 and will exceed ¥1.2 quadrillion" during the coming fiscal year (Nagata 2020). The newly elected Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has acknowledged that the gap between rich and poor has increased. He has announced a policy dubbed "New Capitalism" to bridge that gap between the rich and the poor. He has also called for a "revival of the Reiwa middle class" with more support in education and housing costs for families with children (Masato

2021). Implementing these policies will undoubtedly mean more focus on the domestic front and poses a dilemma on managing the external threats.

Moreover, an ageing population has pushed Japan's social security budget too high. At the same time, Japan has increased the defence budget for the tenth consecutive year to meet the challenges posed to its security. The call is growing within Japan to increase the defence budget from 1% to 2%. However, the call to increase the cap on the defence budget faces resistance from Japan's pacifist constituencies, especially those who have witnessed war and want the state to avoid war at any cost and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's coalition ally-the New Komeito (Ota, 2021). Meeting the domestic and external challenges simultaneously amid an economic slowdown and budgetary constraints poses the most significant dilemma and challenge for the Japanese establishment.

As regards India, it has a demographic dividend, but at the same time, unemployment has hit a high level, and the corona crisis has further aggravated the situation. Like Japan, India also faces security challenges from China. India's response to hedge rising China militarily has resulted in a soaring defence budget amid an economic slowdown. Moreover, youths in India have high hopes with the government to address the growing unemployment issue. Despite being the sixth-largest economy in terms of nominal GDP, India has a deplorable medical infrastructure. COVID-19 crisis has exposed this weakness further. The demand to upgrade health infrastructure has grown from the domestic constituencies.

On the other hand, India ranks very low on various development indicators, and its performance is not commensurate with its global GDP status. For example, India ranks 131 at the UN Development Programme's Human Development Index (The Economic Times, 2020) out of 189 countries surveyed by the international agency. India's performance is abysmal on the Global Hunger Index (GHI). In 2021, it ranked 101 out of 116 countries. Even though the Indian government has questioned the survey's methodology, its challenges to bridge the growing gap between the rich and the poor cannot be swept under the carpet. While an authoritarian regime like China and North Korea can ignore the internal problems and diversify their resources for external defence, democracies like India as well as Japan cannot ignore these issues for too long. Thus, amid the rise of China, both Japan and India face almost similar problems. Both have gigantic tasks to balance their domestic and external challenges. The leadership of both countries face a dilemma whether to prioritise domestic challenges or external ones.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be observed that while the rise of China is a reality, it is yet to pose a significant threat to the existing liberal order. Following Chinese aircraft's incursion into Taiwan's airspace in October 2021, it was speculated that

a stand-off between the US and China is highly likely. The recent incidents and statements by Taiwan, the US, and China must be seen as sabre-rattling. A war between China and the US will only occur if Taipei declares Taiwan's statehood. While Taiwan awaits China's aggression to declare its 'statehood', China awaits Taiwan's declaration of statehood to use it as a pretext to seize territory, which it claims as its renegade part (Khan 2021). Given Taiwanese leaderships' stance on maintaining the status quo over the issue of Taiwan's statehood, war does not seem in the offing, and thus China challenging the existing regional order is primarily based on speculations. However, given China's ambiguous strategic behaviour, both Japan and India must continue their bilateral and multilateral consultation, including through a quadrilateral security dialogue, to tackle challenges posed by China. They have already adopted a soft-balancing approach by entering into the consultative mechanism with other powers, including the US and Australia. China has started taking it seriously, which has dismissed the Quadrilateral Security Initiative as a "foam" in the ocean that will dissipate. Calls from China are growing for a "coopetition (cooperation + competition) rather than competition" (Fu Ying, 2020) between Washington and Beijing. Fu Ying, a former Vice Foreign Minister of China in an opinion piece published in *TheNew York Times*, observes that "both governments have heavy domestic agendas to attend to, and so even if competition between China and the United States is unavoidable, it needs to be managed well, cooperatively." If the purpose of the Quad is to challenge China to moderate its aggressive behaviour, the olive branch offered by China must be taken seriously.

The financial conditions and domestic challenges do not allow India and China to undertake a hard balancing approach vis-à-vis China. Therefore, they must tread cautiously and prudently when it comes to tackling China's perceived threat. The Quad mechanism at present must be kept at the consultative level. An institutionalisation would further embolden the hands of the authoritative Chinese regime, which will drive home a threat theory to consolidate its power further. At the same time, a hard balancing approach towards China through Quad will cause stress on the security budgets of both countries. The consultative mechanism of Quad can be elevated to a higher level as a last resort. A conflict must be avoided to the extent possible as it has chances to escalate into a nuclear war, which would be catastrophic for the region.

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India-Japan Partnership and Northeast India

Rajaram Panda *

Abstract– India-Japan partnership has moved to a new level committing development of the long-neglected region of India’s northeast. After the Narendra Damodardas Modi government launched its Act East Policy, India and Japan have found new added value in collaborating to develop this part of India. Many hurdles exist in achieving their objectives. India looks at the northeast region not just as a window for ASEAN in the context of its Act East Policy but as the epicentre of the three pillars- 3Cs – Communication, Commerce and Culture. Any partnership between India and Japan will find a sound foundation with the Northeast as a springboard. The main thrust in developing the region is cross-border connectivity and market linkages for the northeastern region with the ASEAN. Institutional forums are already worked out through which project management agrees to be executed. Some are already done, others are in the process, and new ones are being planned. India and Japan have identified three key areas - infrastructure development, institutions, and governance to make the partnership effective. Modi’s government focuses on exploring the extraordinary opportunities in the northeastern states and other states to enhance productivity for rapid growth. In this mission, Japan is a willing partner. Because of strategic reasons and the sensitiveness of the region, India has shied away from involving other countries in the development activities in the region. However, Japan’s position is unique because of both bonds and trust. Northeast India also serves as a bridge between India and the ASEAN region. So it is a win-win situation for both. The paper attempts to address some of these issues to understand the India-Japan partnership better to develop India’s northeastern region and see how both countries benefit in the process.

Keywords Act East Policy · Indo-Pacific construct · Connectivity · Infrastructure development · Seven Sisters · Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiatives · Maritime security · Fumio Kishida · Narendra Modi · International politics and diplomacy ·

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1. Introduction

Ever since India launched its Look East policy in the 1990s following its liberalisation of economic policies, its engagement strategy has been complemented by its civilisational links with Asia's East and Southeastern regions. The government of Narendra Modi injected a new element of dynamism by rechristening it as Act East policy, implying thereby a departure from mere rhetoric to the practical execution of projects embraced in the policy.¹

During the period that Modi has been in power, it is not difficult to discern the extent of understanding India has achieved in the political, economic and security/strategic domains vis-à-vis the region. One significant example of this engagement strategy was when India hosted all the ten heads of the ASEAN member states as its special guests instead of the customary one at the 69th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, 2018.

In this strategy to reach the ASEAN and bid to push its economy to integrate with the world's economies vigorously by more forward-looking policies, the Modi government worked out a specific foreign policy strategy. As India shares borders with the only member of the ASEAN, Myanmar, developing this gateway through connectivity projects and strengthening the infrastructural base in India's Northeast received priority. In this strategy, India joined hands with Japan in launching several developmental projects in the northeast. The development of India's Seven Sisters, as the seven states in India's northeast are often known, shall have deepening economic ties with neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The focus of this paper is limited to this aspect of cooperation between India and Japan to understand the enormity of economic and strategic significance of deepening relations with Southeast Asia by both India and Japan. Indeed, ASEAN is the fulcrum around which both India and Japan see sense to cooperate and develop the northeast region of India.

2. Geographical context

India's northeastern region has a unique standing in India because of several factors. The region has a complex ethnic composition, different experience of British control compared to the mainland, insurgency problems in the post-independent period, and a sensitive location bordering five countries. Due to these factors, the government in New Delhi has been careful that the involvement of foreign countries in the region is controlled. Such a line of thinking constrained the region's economic development and fuelled the sense of alienation among the region's people from the mainland. After Narendra Modi came to power in 2014,

¹ See, Prabir De, *Act East to Act Indo-Pacific: Expanding Neighbourhood*, (2020), K.W. Publisher, New Delhi, pp. 348

this policy changed. Intending to economically develop this region and remove the sense of alienation by the region's people, India decided to join hands with Japan to develop the region by launching several connectivity projects.

During World War II, the advancement of the Japanese army into the present Manipur and Nagaland states brought massive destruction and precipitated infrastructure development in the region and impacted the livelihood of the residents. However, this fact has hardly caught the public's attention in India and Japan. This paper intends to examine the changing narrative in the current times; investigate the conditions of connectivity in terms of economic and infrastructure development and human mobility within the region and with the neighbouring countries. The decision of India to cooperate with Japan for the development of northeast India presents a potential boost for the Modi government's Act East policy.

3. Strategic factor

The northeastern region of India is strategically important. The region is endowed with vast reserves of various natural resources such as uranium, coal, hydrocarbons, forests, oil and gas. However, the biggest shortcoming is poor connectivity, which hinders the full exploitation of such rich resources. In a far-reaching change of the narrative of keeping foreign powers away from this region, India invited Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo to visit New Delhi as the Chief Guest of India's 65th Republic Day Parade in 2014. It extended an invitation to Japan for partnering with India to invest and build overland infrastructure in the region.

After assuming power in May 2014, when Modi chose Japan for his first visit overseas in September 2014, it signalled a new approach to deepen ties with this friendly country. Interestingly, other issues such as the nuclear deal, deepening defence ties keeping in mind the changing geopolitical dynamics in the region, and the contract to build India's first bullet (Shinkansen) train network to connect Mumbai and Ahmedabad with the construction cost of \$18,148.15 million took precedence over the issue of developing India's northeastern region.² Subsequently, negotiations with Japan fructified to build better road connectivity and transform the region into a manufacturing hub. It was agreed that the Japanese state-owned development agency, Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA), would be the donor agency through which the aid would be disbursed. The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) were identified as the local Indian partner delegated to work with JICA in the region. The projects to be undertaken by JICA and NHIDCL began in April 2016 after a detailed project report got the nod from JICA and the Department of Economic Affairs via the Ministry of Roads Transport and Highways.

² Ateetmani Brar, "Japan in Northeast India: A Potential Boost to New Delhi's 'Act East Policy'", 18 January 2016,

4. Defined projects

The two main projects defined were the widening and improving the Aizawl-Tuipang NH54 route (380 km) in Mizoram to connect India to Myanmar and the Tura-Dalu section (48 km) of NH51 in Meghalaya. This narrative's most considerable strategic significance can be deciphered from the fact that the northeast Indian states share 5,000 kilometres of international borders, with Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, Bhutan, and Nepal, providing vital links to foster economic development integration with both South and Southeast Asia. If the full potentials are realised, ensuring better connectivity between the northeastern states is central to ensuring border security and maintaining peace and stability. Such a policy option could probably also address the insurgency issue that has plagued the region for a long time.

As a critical driver of India's Act East policy aimed to sculpt partnerships with key states in the Indo-Pacific focusing on Japan, Vietnam, Australia and other ASEAN countries, developing the region economically can serve many economic, political and strategic objectives. In order to achieve this objective, improving connectivity in the region is of utmost importance. The path to do this is not easy. The challenges are enormous. It includes low road density, poor quality of existing roads, and inadequate intra-regional connectivity. Silchar and Dimapur are the only two main rail-heads in the area. Other existing rail and road infrastructure connecting to various state capitals cannot cope with the increase in goods and passenger traffic over the years.³ Changing this was felt necessary urgently. Indeed, if connectivity is improved by expanding road and rail links, it will provide a fillip to the local population who can find their produce better market access with remunerative prices, besides facilitating imports at competitive prices.

Japan is the only suitable country to partner with India to help in the socio-economic development projects in the country's northeast region. Though Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been made available since 1981 in critical fields such as energy, water supply, forestry and urban development, there is a need to augment the loan component. JICA's known expertise in constructing durable and environmentally sustainable roads access through mountainous terrains could help. Japan's JICA has executed similar projects in several countries such as in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Ghana, Morocco and Tanzania in critical areas such as building roads, railways, seaports and airports, all of which have helped quicker routes for trade and transport of critical raw materials to the resource deficient Japan, besides contributing to the economies of the host countries. Better connectivity with JICA participation also helps other Japanese companies to operate, thereby creating a win-win situation

³ Ibid.

for both sides. If the connectivity projects are successfully executed, India's Act East policy would receive further boost.

The other area that demands attention is cross-border connectivity and market linkages between ASEAN and the northeastern region. A long-term vision for the India-Japan partnership for economic development in the region can be envisioned.

India is one of the fastest-growing countries today and catching up with the world in its growth rate, there is a greater need for convergence within the country, particularly between the central government and the states that are gradually growing economically. Therefore, three key areas need extra attention – infrastructure development, institutions, and governance. It goes to the credit of the Modi government that in this era of competitive federalism, he focused attention on exploiting the extraordinary opportunities that exist in the northeast states and other states across the country so that their productivity for rapid growth can be unleashed. However, the pandemic outbreak could slow down the process for some time. In such an endeavour, Japan appreciated the central government's commitment to develop the country's northeastern region and welcomed India's invitation to participate. In January 2017, the Japanese ambassador in India, Kenji Hiramatsu, visited Imphal, Kohima, and Assam to study on the spot and convey Japan's interest in engaging with the region.⁴ Hiramatsu discussed with Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal various issues such as investment promotion, people-to-people exchanges and connectivity between Assam and Japan to boost bilateral relations. The potential areas for Japanese investment were identified, such as the state's organic sector, power distribution and transmission sector, besides teaming up with Assam in Start-up and Stand-up initiatives.

The government of Assam offered a chunk of land if the Japanese companies were eager to set up their plants. Hiramatsu evinced interests and was committed to encouraging Japanese companies to invest in organic sectors like tea, agriculture, horticulture, tourism, food processing and facilitating frequent student exchange programmes. The dredging of the Brahmaputra and setting up skill development centres were other areas that were identified for India and Japan to team up.

Besides the popularity of Assam tea in Japan, Japanese people are also familiar with Imphal and Kohima due to the fierce battles fought there more than 70 years ago against the British. For Japan, the expression North-East evokes a special meaning as the thoughts of a special relationship between India and Japan and global and strategic partnership instantly comes into mind. Viewed from a larger

⁴ "Japanese Ambassador to India meets Assam CM, discusses bilateral issues", 21 January 2017,

context, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced his foreign policy strategy as a “free and open Indo-Pacific”, which treated the Pacific and the Indian Ocean as a single vast entity resonates throughout the region. It creates the domain for improving intra and inter-region connectivity to promote the flow of people and goods. Given the thrust in Japan’s foreign policy and relations with India, one did not see any departure from Japan’s committed policy during the Yoshihide Suga administration and his successor government by Fumio Kishida.

To ensure maritime security to protect the free movement of people and goods, there exists a synergy between Japanese strategy and India’s Act East policy. Both India and Japan have strategic and political dialogues at various levels, including annual summit meetings and ministerial levels meetings, including 2+2 meetings between foreign and defence secretaries of both the countries. This 2+2 dialogue has now been elevated to the ministerial level. In Tokyo in October 2018, Prime Minister Modi announced that high-level ministerial dialogue involving their respective foreign and defence ministers to work for peace and stability in the world with Japan would commence soon. In a joint address, Modi remarked: “Without India and Japan’s cooperation, the 21st century cannot be an Asian century”.⁵ India started a similar 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue with the U.S. in September 2018. During the visit of Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono to India in early January 2019, it was agreed that the 2+2 dialogue framework be upgraded to the level of ministers.⁶ Kono reaffirmed the importance of cooperation in third countries and India’s northeastern region, thereby realise the shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Since India and Japan are already working closely to improve connectivity in India and between India and its vicinity, cooperation between the two countries in the northeastern region can be placed in this broader strategic context. India and Japan agreed to work together in third countries like Bangladesh to boost connectivity. Also, agreements were signed on cooperation between the two countries’ naval forces, healthcare, digital and new technologies, and food processing.

The long-festering perception that infrastructure and connectivity are the biggest impediments to economic development in the northeastern region is now being addressed, and Japan has joined to partner India in this mission. Like Japan, the northeastern region is mountainous and very vulnerable to the damage caused by heavy rain and natural disaster. It is one area where Japan’s role can be crucial since it has the expertise and the required technology.

As the Indian economy registers steady growth, more and more Japanese companies see business opportunities and are ready to invest in India. In the past

⁵ “In Tokyo, PM Modi Announces High-Level Ministerial Dialogue With Japan”, 29 October 2018,

⁶ “India, Japan will upgrade 2+2 dialogue”, *The Times of India*, 9 January 2019.

decade, Japanese direct investment in India has grown significantly. The Northeast region has vast economic potential – agriculture, food processing and many other industries – and by exploiting these potentials, the region can benefit. Abe often observed that a strong India is in Japan's interest and vice versa. A prosperous and peaceful region is therefore welcome. This new paradigm in India-Japan's partnership for the Northeast region's development will be a permanent strategy of the Seven Sisters and Sikkim. The states need to be proactive and become stakeholders in trade and commerce.

The Assam government has rightly announced a separate department for Act East Policy. The region is not just a window for ASEAN in the context of Act East Policy but would be the epicentre with three Cs as three pillars – Communication, Commerce and Culture. If realised, the corridor could turn into a golden corridor. Any partnership between India and Japan will find a sound foundation with the Northeast as a springboard. The Modi government has the vision to make the region an organic hub of the country. Assam is positioned to become a global business hub with Guwahati at the epicentre. The time is opportune for both India and Japan to partner to make the Northeast the new jewel of India.

While developing the region economically by joining hands with Japan is laudable, other challenges cannot be overlooked and must be factored in while making and executing projects. Not all the Seven States are at the same level of development. Even resources are scattered and unevenly endowed. For example, while Assam is a large state, it is not wealthy. On the other hand, Sikkim is a tiny state with a high per capita income. Therefore, the region cannot be considered one single entity in terms of economic development. Besides, the multiplicity of social systems prevalent in the region poses challenges, especially in very heterogeneous states. Manipur has a vast plain area, and the tension between plain and hill has been there for a long time. The three main tribes – Meitis, Kukis and Nagas – are not always on the same page. Therefore, such deep social and economic diversity needs to be considered while planning to develop the region economically through connectivity and infra projects. The governments in the states ought to ensure peace so that the private sector will have no worry to do business there. Besides Assam, Arunachal Pradesh is positioned to attract the private sector. However, what is shared among all seven states in the region is low population density. A development strategy in the region ought to begin from the agricultural sector. Farmers can benefit if they have better market access to their products, and therefore connectivity between states assumes greater importance.

Indeed, to attain inclusive, sustainable development for the whole of India, the northeastern region ought to get primacy of focus as it is also an essential gateway between India and ASEAN. Improving rural roads and forest projects could get priority. As the region is mountainous, the existing roads have little scope for

widening, and the existing road transport network is limited. In order to secure technology for the maintenance of soil and structures, JICA is implementing capacity building projects in the mountainous region.

There could be other reasons why infrastructure development in the region was delayed. Reasons for slow development could be geological issues, the soft soil, undulating terrain, law and order issues, and lack of equipment and human resources. The capacity and skills of the contractors need to be developed. The involvement of the community in infrastructure development is equally important.

While there may be no disagreement on acknowledging the importance of connectivity, it cannot be looked at in isolation as other issues come into perspective. Connectivity could be of many forms and dimensions: physical and non-physical connectivity, financial connectivity, people-to-people connectivity, and telecommunications connectivity. Similarly, infrastructure has three effects – one direct and two other indirect effects. Private businesses will be attracted if the developed infrastructure is available. There should be no compromise on quality, lest maintenance costs over the years shall skyrocket. The same argument shall apply beyond the region if integrating the economies of the ASEAN is aimed. There shall also be a need to open the window for small businesses along the highways and railways, and this home town investment should have easy access.

Regarding the people-to-people connectivity, private and personal education would require focused attention of the northeast expected to be an education hub with the ASEAN countries. Even here, if linkages are established with Japanese counterparts, that shall help enhance the quality of delivery of technical and professional education system.

Both the governments in India and Japan face new challenges in developing India's northeastern region as state-centric security issues could delay projects. The region remains underdeveloped because the triadic linkage between resource, production and trade could not occur in the past and changing this narrative quickly may face a roadblock. Markets of the neighbouring countries have remained important so far, and the main obstacle in the region remained market connectivity. This narrative can be changed in two ways: either through Bangladesh or South East Asia. The region has not benefitted as the whole trade takes place through the maritime route. However, there are potentials for trade-in items like pineapples, ginger and fish from the region.

As the northeastern region is an agriculture-based economy and agricultural revolution preceded the industrial revolution, India and Japan became natural partners as envisioned by India's Act East Policy. With Myanmar as the gateway to the ASEAN, this partnership looks promising. The military takeover in

Myanmar has not diminished a bit the relevance of engaging with Myanmar. Both India and Japan have a long history of engaging with previous military leaders, and therefore the current situation does not impact the military's foreign policy towards India and Japan. The strategic consideration remains overwhelming for India and Japan to keep both engaged lest China spreads its influence in Myanmar. Such a situation could adversely impact India-Japan cooperation to develop the northeastern region. Prime Minister Modi's vision about the northeast is changing and aims to fulfil people's aspirations. Japan is aware that the northeastern region is strategically vital for India to preserve the country's territorial integrity and, therefore, willing to work with India to develop the region. What both sides need is a result-oriented focus? Friendship with Japan is time immemorial. Memories of Japanese soldiers reaching India for the first time at Moirang in Manipur and Kohima in Nagaland during World War II are fresh in mind. The mantra for the region's development should be focused on three Es – Education, Electricity and Employment.

5. India-Japan Forum

An MoU was inked between Prime Minister Modi and his Japanese counterpart Abe in September 2017 at the end of the annual summit, and both agreed to establish the India-Japan Act East Forum. Subsequently, the Act East Forum aimed to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration under the rubric of India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" was launched. The aim is to identify specific projects for the economic modernisation of India's North-East region, including those about connectivity, developmental infrastructure, industrial linkages, and people-to-people contacts through tourism, culture, and sports-related activities.

To give a big infrastructure push in the northeast, both India and Japan set up the India-Japan Coordination Forum for North East to aggressively develop strategic infrastructure projects such as connectivity and road network development, electricity and disaster management. The first meeting was held in September 2017. The forum was tasked to identify priority development areas of cooperation to develop the northeastern region (DONER). The forum has representation from India's ministries of external affairs, road transport and highways, power and the department of economic affairs. From the Japanese side, the forum has representation from the Japanese Embassy and other government-affiliated Japanese organisations based in New Delhi. Sceptics sometimes view this partnership as an attempt to check China's influence through the Myanmar corridor.⁷ It is a strategic compulsion for both India and Japan, and this aspect

⁷ Utpal Bhaskar, "India, Japan join hands for big infrastructure push in Northeast", 3 August 2017,

cannot be discounted. However, the cooperation between India and Japan goes deeper than this. It is time-tested, and both continue to explore new frontiers of cooperation if such initiatives fetch them mutual dividends. This initiative came in the backdrop of Chinese troops making repeated incursions into the Indian territory. India and China have sparred over hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh, which borders China and has the highest potential for hydropower generation in India. Several multilateral lending agencies, including the World Bank, have been unwilling to fund projects in the so-called disputed border state in India's northeast region—seen as sensitive as parts of the region are claimed by China. More recently, China irked India by renaming many districts of Arunachal Pradesh in maps with Chinese names, implicitly telling India that the state is Chinese territory. India issued a demarche and warned Beijing not to interfere in India's internal matters. Such incidents provide additional heft for both India and Japan to find common viewpoints to partner in projects.

While for India, the development of the northeast is a priority and a key to promoting its Act East Policy, Japan places particular emphasis on cooperation in the northeast for its geographical importance connecting India to Southeast Asia and historical ties. Experts say that Japanese involvement in these projects may get expedited, triggering the Doklam incident.

India's decision to partner with Japan in the northeastern region has, therefore, substantial strategic significance as well as advantage. The region is adjacent to China, claiming Arunachal Pradesh as its territory, referring to it as "South Tibet". China is opposed to any foreign investment in the "disputed areas".⁸ Chinese discomfort is on expected lines, but India and Japan do not worry much but remain on guard. Indeed, with an eye on China, India is working on a slew of road and bridge projects to improve connectivity with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Myanmar. India is also keen on expediting the South Asia Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) road connectivity programme in the backdrop of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to connect around 60 countries across Asia, Africa and Europe. The BRI lacks transparency, and many small countries risk falling into a debt trap. Even Malaysia scrapped some projects that it had earlier agreed to join. India has been critical of the BRI from the very beginning. It has raised serious objections to developing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as part of BRI, as it cuts through Gilgit and Baltistan areas of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Both India and Japan held the second meeting of the Japan-India Act East Forum in October 2018 in New Delhi ahead of the annual summit between the two countries in November when Modi visited Tokyo. Both sides agreed to deepen

⁸ Debarshi Dasgupta, "Strategic location of region seen as gateway to Asean markets", *Straits Times*, November 14, 2018,

cooperation in various sectors, including building infrastructure in the northeastern region and the forest management projects of Tripura and Meghalaya. A new initiative to utilise bamboo, available in abundance in the region and people-to-people exchanges were discussed.⁹

Elsewhere, Japan has been helping India with infrastructure projects such as the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridors, bullet trains, Delhi metro, and others through JICA. Japan has been India's partner for a long time, and there is a certain degree of comfort. This aspect is beyond the scope of this paper.

To take the development further and reinforce Japanese commitment to engage with India in the northeast, JICA signed an agreement on October 30, 2018, to provide an ODA loan of 25,483 million Japanese yen (Rs. 1,575 crore) to improve the road network by constructing India's longest bridge across river Brahmaputra. Once constructed, the 4-lane bridge across the Brahmaputra would bridge the long-awaited gap between Meghalaya and Assam, and the travel time will considerably be reduced. The Project is expected to contribute to the "Japan-India Act East Forum", which aims to expand the cooperation between Japan and India in the northeast. The Executing Agency for the Project is National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).¹⁰

The Phase-III of the Project includes constructing about 20 kilometres long four-lane bridge between Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya over the Brahmaputra River. The bridge will be built with emergency staircases, approach sections and necessary traffic facilities. Under the Indian Road Congress (IRC), the width of each main road lane is 3.5 meters, with the design speed at 100km/h. The bridge structure comprises the navigational portion with 125 meters and the viaduct portion with 60 meters. When completed, it will become India's longest bridge, spanning more than 19 km, surpassing the Bhupen Hazarika Setu in the state of Assam, which is 9.15 kilometres across.¹¹ The bridge is expected to be completed by 2026-27. The bridge will cut the distance from 250 km to 19 km. The bridge would also prove significant for international traffic movement to other nations.

⁹ Huma Siddiqui, "Japan-India Act East Forum plans major projects for north-eastern region", Financial Express, 10 October 2018, <https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/japan-india-act-east-forum-plans-major-projects-for-north-eastern-region/1344590/>. See also, <https://www.thestatesman.com/india/india-japan-to-step-up-cooperation-for-developing-north-eastern-states-1502695622.html>

¹⁰ https://www.jica.go.jp/india/english/office/topics/press181030_02.html

¹¹ Rupakjyoti Borah, "Japan's Infrastructure Push in Northeast India Builds on Trust Factor", 25 July 2018, <https://japan-forward.com/japans-infrastructure-push-in-northeast-india-builds-on-trust-factor/>

Including the amount extended for Phase–III, JICA has extended a cumulative ODA loan of 184,895 million Japanese Yen (approximately over Rs. 11,900 Crore) for the North East Road Connectivity Project. Phase-I covered improvement of National Highway (NH)-51 and NH-54 in Mizoram and Meghalaya states, respectively. Phase-II helped lay bypasses for NH-40 in Meghalaya and National Highway 54 bypasses in Mizoram. Both the Phases helped improve connectivity in the NER by upgrading Transit infrastructure.”¹²

Established by a specific law as an incorporated administrative institution under the Government of Japan, JICA aims to promote international cooperation as the sole Japanese governmental agency in charge of ODA implementation. JICA is the world’s largest bilateral donor agency. JICA works as a bridge between Japan and emerging countries and assists in loans, grants, and technical cooperation to strengthen their capabilities.

6. India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project

As a part of a larger initiative and besides cooperating with Japan, India is involved in the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. The 1,360 kms long India-Myanmar Trilateral Highway is an initiative of India, Myanmar and Thailand. India is undertaking the construction of two sections of the Trilateral Highway in Myanmar, namely, the construction of the 120.74 km Kalewa-Yagyi road section and the construction of 69 bridges along with the approach road on the 149.70 km Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa (TKK) road section.¹³

It was expected to be operational by the end of 2019 but is delayed because of the pandemic. Tokyo, which had deep engagement with Myanmar even during the rule by the military junta, now sees greater relevance to deepen ties with Myanmar as the country serves as India’s land-bridge in the ASEAN region. Japan has partnered with India, and other projects are the Guwahati Water supply scheme and the Nagaland Forest Management Project.

Why is this project important?

Under the rubric of India’s Indo-Pacific strategy with Act East policy as the anchor, Prime Minister Modi’s vision of SAGAR – Security and Growth for all in the Region - underpins India’s vision of the Indian Ocean region and the greater Indo-Pacific region.¹⁴ In this strategy, ASEAN countries remain central to

¹² https://www.jica.go.jp/india/english/office/topics/press181030_02.html

¹³ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=187130>

¹⁴ See, Subhashis Sarangi, *Maritime Corridors in the Indo-Pacific: Geopolitical Implications for India* (2021), USI, New Delhi. Also see, Subhashis, *Unpacking SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region)*, USI Occasional Paper, No. 2-2019,

realising India's vision of the Indo-Pacific. India's BIMSTEC¹⁵ and IORA initiatives and frameworks like Ganga-Mekong Cooperation bring India closer to the ASEAN.¹⁶ India's northeast, which is being transformed by connectivity projects in cooperation with Japan, provides a land bridge with ASEAN. If understood from this larger perspective, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway currently under construction is an important project in India's Act East strategy. When completed, it will connect Moreh in India with Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar. By linking other highways in other ASEAN states such as Vietnam and Laos, this project will boost economic growth in the region.

What is the project's history, and how did it originate? The trilateral highway project was first proposed during a ministerial meeting in Yangon in April 2002. The approximate length of the highways is 1,360 km. The 160 km long India-Myanmar Friendship road linking Moreh-Tamu-Kalmey-Kalewa forms the trilateral highway. It was built first by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and was inaugurated on February 13, 2001. The BRO maintained it until 2009 when full ownership was transferred to Myanmar. India and ASEAN plan to extend the Trilateral highway route to Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. This connectivity will generate annually an estimated \$70 billion in incremental GDP and 20 million in total aggregate employment by 2025.

India initiated a preliminary survey to determine the feasibility of establishing a rail link parallel to the trilateral highway in January 2018. Japan expressed interest in collaborating with India and funding the proposed rail link. The trilateral highway project is crucial because it opens the gate to the ASEAN through the land. The project will boost trade and commerce in the India-ASEAN Free Trade Area and the rest of Southeast Asia.

In order to deepen people-to-people contact, Japan has introduced the IRIS programme, named after a mysterious link between Japan and the northeast region of India, linking one species of iris called *Kombirei* that grows mainly around Loktak Lake near Imphal and is commonly used in festivals and was found to be a new species in India and identical with "Kakitsubata", which was known as "Japanese iris"¹⁷ and considered an indigenous species of Japan for more than one thousand years. Under the IRIS program, 23 young talents from Manipur and Nagaland were invited to visit Japan from October 28, 2017, to November 4.

¹⁵ See, "BIMSTEC: A Desirable Alternative to SAARC and an Extra Feather to India's Act East Policy", 12 OCTOBER 2017, [HTTPS://THEKOOTNEETI.IN/2017/10/12/BIMSTEC-A-DESIRABLE-ALTERNATIVE-TO-SAARC-AND-AN-EXTRA-FEATHER-TO-INDIAS-ACT-EAST-POLICY/](https://THEKOOTNEETI.IN/2017/10/12/BIMSTEC-A-DESIRABLE-ALTERNATIVE-TO-SAARC-AND-AN-EXTRA-FEATHER-TO-INDIAS-ACT-EAST-POLICY/)

¹⁶ Rajaram Panda, "Significance of the Mekong-Ganga Initiative- Analysis", 5 August 2021,

¹⁷ Borah, n. 10. Also, see https://www.in.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/00_000442.html

During the visit, the group visited Tokyo, Saitama, Chiba and Hiroshima and had wide-ranging experiences such as participating in environment and disaster prevention programs, besides meeting Parliament Secretary for Foreign Affairs and learning a local government's efforts to boost eco-tourism. Japanese Ambassador Hiramatsu announced the program at the commemoration of the 73rd anniversary of the Battle of Imphal in May 2017. Japan hopes that the IRIS program shall bear fruits and seeds and eventually bloom as flowers between Japan and the Northeast region of India.

Notwithstanding the thrust to boost such soft power diplomacy, the challenges are enormous. Besides the lack of good quality infrastructure that requires the infusion of a large amount of capital, employment opportunities are few. However, the level of literacy rate is relatively high than in many parts of the country. An insurgency may have waned, but stray incidents of extortions in some states in the region could pose a security risk for foreigners to work there. All the seven states being stakeholders, proper coordination in executing projects shall be extremely important.

Being a sensitive region from the security point of view, India has welcomed Japan to partner in the region's development, demonstrating the level of trust, confidence, and bonhomie that both share. If projects are executed as planned, one can expect a dramatic turnaround in the region's economic prosperity and its people.

Like the outgoing ambassador Kenji Hiramatsu, his successor Satoshi Suzuki too is upbeat about deepening ties with the northeast region of India by partnering with India to enhance connectivity. The ambassador is convinced that connectivity is the best area to showcase how both countries can bring about tangible benefits to the entire region.¹⁸ Indeed, Japan's decision to become the lead country for the connectivity pillar of IPOI was a strong reaffirmation of Japan's commitment to the enhancement of connectivity. India and Japan have been advancing various connectivity projects in India and third countries.

There is no difference of opinion that both India and Japan are committed to developing India's northeast region in the quest for a free and open Indo-Pacific. Since none of the northeastern Seven Sisters has an outlet to the sea, both India and Japan work closely to upgrade highways to the border with Bangladesh. It has emerged as a vital footprint of India-Japan collaboration in the northeast.

Indeed, linking the northeast region with the outside world is the new narrative in the Indo-Pacific construct. To take the initiative further, Prime Minister Modi inaugurated

¹⁸ Ateet Sharma, "India, Japan to step up work to link northeast region with Indo-Pacific", 20 March 2021,

the 'Maitri Setu' bridge between India and Bangladesh in March 2021. It has been built over the Feni River, which flows between the Indian state of Tripura and Bangladesh. The 1.9 km long bridge joins Sabroom in south Tripura with Ramgarh in Bangladesh. Tripura is set to become the 'Gateway of North East' with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, just 80 km from Sabroom. From Ramgarh to Baraiyarhat, India builds a road while Japan constructs eight bridges. Ambassador Suzuki explained that if one looks at all these joint efforts by India and Japan in a holistic way, one can notice a dynamic connectivity network in which India-Japan collaboration provides the landlocked northeast with access to the Bay of Bengal and beyond, most notably to ASEAN countries. Indeed, the Indo-Pacific maritime domain is the source of growth and prosperity, and therefore better access to these Oceans is vital for improving people's lives. Japan is also partnering with India in building the 20km, a four-lane bridge between Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya.

Under the aegis of the Japan-India Act East Forum, both countries are also committed to boosting health care in the northeast, including a 400 bedded hospital in Kohima, Nagaland, and a Super Speciality Cancer and Research Centre in Mizoram, besides the project on Strengthening of Health Systems and Excellence of Medical Education in Assam. In January 2021, the two countries also discussed other areas of cooperation besides reviewing the status of projects under implementation in India's sensitive northeast, including roads, water supply and hydel power. The discussion took place under the Act East Forum framework, headed by India's foreign secretary on the Indian side and the Japanese ambassador in India on the Japanese side. As mentioned earlier, the Act East Forum was established in 2007.¹⁹ It frames, evaluates and facilitates Japan-India collaboration in connectivity and developmental projects in and with the northeastern region of India.²⁰

The ongoing projects in the region are worth 231 billion yen or approximately ₹1,600 crores. Other potential areas of cooperation include agriculture, fisheries, agro-industries, tourism promotion, urban development, forestry and connectivity.

A Japanese embassy official observed: "Japan attaches great importance to the cooperation for developing India's North East, anchored by its historical ties, trust and friendship. The North East stands at a place strategically important to realise a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific; and Japan is proud to have been a partner with the people of North East in their aspirations for a better and sustainable future".²¹ Japan is one of few countries involved in development activity in the

¹⁹ https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/29154/Launch_of_IndiaJapan_Act_East_Forum

²⁰ Elizabeth Roche, "India, Japan review implementation of projects in North-eastern region", 28 January 2021,

²¹ Quoted in Ibid.

region – one of the others being Singapore. New Delhi views the region as a natural link with Southeast Asia. New Delhi has been looking to step up cooperation between its northeast and the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar besides the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to raise people's living standards given that the region has been under-developed a hotbed of militancy and separatists' groups. In recent years, the Indian government has signed peace pacts with key militant and separatist groups, which has brought peace to the region.

Indeed, enhancing connectivity in the Indo-Pacific region by utilising their expertise and complementarities is the broader vision of the India-Japan partnership. Modi and Suga also highlighted this important issue during the Quad Leaders' Summit in March 2021. India-Japan collaborative initiative is a step in honing the synergy between India's Act East policy and Japan's Partnership for Quality Infrastructure. Both are committed to developing and strengthening reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructures that augment connectivity within India and between India and other Indo-Pacific regions. For a long time, India has stressed the importance of connectivity in the Indo-Pacific region as a uniting factor rather than just enhancing trade and prosperity. Indeed, near or far, robust connectivity with regional countries is deep-rooted in Indian civilisational history. Indian culture has been enriched by ancient linkages with the rest of the world, just as the light of the Indian culture has shone in lands connected across land and seas by emissaries and merchants.²²

The Indian diplomats stress that India has devoted more resources to building connectivity in its immediate neighbourhood. Since 2005-06, India has extended Lines of Credit worth nearly \$ 31 billion to more than 64 countries. Its Act East Policy is at the centre of its connectivity orientation and a fulcrum of its broader approach to the Indo-Pacific. India's efforts are focused on connecting the North-East with the dynamic economies of South East Asia and enhancing connectivity within the North East itself. Given Japan's expertise in the development of quality infrastructure, India hopes that Japan's lead on the connectivity pillar of IPOI will give a boost to connectivity in the region and contribute to unlocking the potential for an equitable, positive and forward-looking change in the region contributing to security and growth of the Indo-Pacific.²³

²² https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/33680/Address_by_Secretary_East_at_the_Virtual_Seminar_on_Connectivity_Cooperation_for_a_Free_Open_and_Inclusive_IndoPacific

²³ Premesha Saha and Abhishek Mishra, "The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative: Towards a Coherent Indo-Pacific Policy for India", ORF Occasional Papers, 23 December 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/indo-pacific-oceans-initiative-towards-coherent-indo-pacific-policy-india/>

Japan finds compelling reasons to collaborate in Northeast India's development. Japan is convinced that this is an integral part of India's Act East Policy with its technology and infrastructure development. If both sides partner with commitment, it can help lift the region's economy.²⁴ Indeed, interest in Japan's development assistance and technology is high in northeast India. Ambassador Suzuki's visit to Assam in February is therefore significant. Japan's interest in India's northeast region stems from historical connection with Japanese troops fighting in Nagaland and Manipur, which gels with India's Act East Policy.²⁵ JETRO is also trying to set up an industrial township in the region. Another reason for Japan's attraction to India's northeast that is often overlooked is that both India and Japan have not participated in the China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is why collaboration between the two countries to develop India's northeast region assumes added significance.

Because of strategic reasons and the sensitiveness of the region, India has shied away from involving other countries in the development activities in the region. However, Japan's position is unique because of the bond and trusts both India and Japan share. Northeast India also serves as a bridge between India and the ASEAN region. So it is a win-win situation for both.

However, several hurdles have to be overcome in taking the joint India-Japan development projects to fruition. Coordination between Japanese entities and different northeastern states is necessary at the local level, and it is not easy given the cultural differences and exclusive mindsets of peoples of which there are many tribes with varying priorities. Moreover, the level of development in the Seven Sisters is not uniform. The positive aspect of these projects is that the region's people are willing to welcome the Japanese as a brother. Therefore, coordination between different agencies at the central and regional levels and the corporate and national levels are unlikely to face many hurdles.

As it transpires, Northeast India has been an essential part of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific vision, which has been the highlight of Japanese foreign policy ever since the administration of the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. It continued into the Suga Administration and will continue during the Kishida administration as well. Change in leadership in Japan does not affect Japan's priority focus towards India. So, there shall be continuity. India-Japan collaboration for developing India's northeastern region is a true example of their commitment, trust, and friendship, which will hone the partnership's broader security and strategic visions.

²⁴ Rupakjyoti Borah, "Japan Shares Good Reasons to Collaborate on Northeast India's Development", *Japan Forward*, 15 March 2021, <https://japan-forward.com/japan-shares-good-reasons-to-collaborate-in-northeast-indias-development/>

²⁵ *Ibid.*

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Japan's Shifting Foreign Policy to South Asia: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract– Due to the geographical distance and cultural diversity, South Asia was considered a ‘distant neighbour’ to Japan’s foreign policy and retained diminutive relations during the early post-WWII period. To amplify its ‘bubble economy in the cold war era, Japan moved towards China immediately after the ‘Nixon Shock’ and towards Southeast Asia, following Fukuda’s ‘heart to heart’ strategy in the 1960s and 1970s, respectively. Since the end of the cold war, the world has witnessed several new incidents in the new world order, ranging from Japan’s ‘lost decade’ to China’s rise. Understanding the changing geopolitical realities of the global order, increasing strategic demand of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and huge potential market for Japanese goods, Japan has now broadened its foreign and defence outlook and economic engagement with this region. Moreover, South Asia will soon be an ‘economic hub’ with middle-class consumers. In that case, China’s growing investment and proximity to South Asian countries, particularly Xi’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under his ‘China Dream,” has been seen as a significant threat to Japan’s new strategy. Besides, South Asia became a crucial part of the Asia-Pacific region to implement Japan’s new Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP) policy and make Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) effective. From this strategic point of view, Japan already has maintained warm relations with India and swelling its relations with other South Asian countries. Given the above circumstances, this paper aims to figure out the prospects of Japan’s new shifting foreign policy towards South Asia and identify the critical challenges of Japanese engagement with this region, where China is already a decisive actor. The methods and tools employed in this paper include lexical scrutiny’s, mapping, contextual analysis, and qualitative and mixed methods data analysis

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software (MAXQDA) to analyse the current state of knowledge and development. This paper is context, theory, and case dictated.

Keywords Japan-South Asia · Foreign policy · Economic hub · BRI · FOIP · QUAD ·

1. Introduction

Japan gives utmost importance to maintaining peace and stability to the region where they intend to invest and strengthen their bilateral relations. In this regard, from the very outset of the Cold War, East Asian countries, particularly China, South Korea, and ASEAN member states, have been prioritised in Japan's diplomatic agenda. Japan was a significant factor in the economic development and regional politico-security ties to the said region (Jain, 1997). Endowed with natural resources compounded by less product and labour cost and the most significant trade market, China became the target area for Japanese investors post-war. On the other hand, following '*heart to heart*' contact, Japan moved towards Southeast Asia under the '*Fukuda Doctrine*' in the 1970s. By the end of the 1980s, Southeast Asia had become the centre for Japanese investment destinations where the Japanese business community was keen to establish their companies. Again, due to the ideological inhibitions and the insularity (Hirose, 1996), South Asia has played a minor role in Tokyo's strategic-diplomatic agenda (Moni, 2008) and remains at the periphery of Japan's 'Asianization' values in the post-war period. This early stage of Japan-South Asia relations was termed as 'the dark age' by Takako Hirose (Hirose, 1996).

On the other hand, since the demise of the Cold War, the new world order forced Japan to transfer its old-fashioned diplomatic style (Furuoka, 2002) following several challenges, including post-bubble recession in the Japanese economy, China's growing coercive economic diplomacy in Asia (Lai, 2017), and maintaining a stable 'balance of power' in Indo-Pacific Ocean region. Though Japan's global political activity is hardly visible (Jain, 1997), as a critical regional geopolitical position (Blechinger & Legewie, 2000), its intention to be an active actor in international politics has grown enormously. Addressing the new global hurdles and its desire, Japan realised the importance of expanding its engagement and cooperation with South Asian countries where China is already a significant actor by pushing its BRI concept. Besides, other factors, including increasing strategic demand of the IOR, cheap and flexible labour market, increasing the purchasing power of the South Asian people (Morsalin & Akon, 2021), and huge potential market for Japanese goods, have also played a crucial role behind Japan's growing interest in South Asia.

Furthermore, due to the enthusiasm of the Abe administration, Japan has become one of the most trusted friends and development partners to most of the South

Asian countries. Japan has been providing economic assistance, i.e. official development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment (FDI), and technical support (Akon, Rahman, & Bhuiyan, 2019) to maintain the peace process in this region. Besides, several high-profile Japanese companies have shown eagerness towards South Asia, particularly India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. On the contrary, South Asian countries have pursued economic liberalisation policies to reach Japanese investment. A series of political reforms (Jain, 1997) -democracy and political stability-have also been undertaken by several countries. Considering these different aspects, the paper's objective is to discover the issues and challenges of Japan's shifting foreign policy towards South Asia in the 21st century.

Despite the significant progress in Japan-South Asia relations, the existing literature has mainly emphasised Japanese relations with South Asian countries from economic and historical perspectives. Very little literature focuses Japan-South Asia relations from a political and strategic point of view. A clear gap exists in the entire spectrum of literature, particularly on Japan's strengthening South Asian chapter in the contemporary era considering several facts, including FOIP, QUAD, and BRI. Under this backdrop, this paper strives to explore why South Asia has become increasingly crucial in the scope of Japanese foreign policy objectives and what types of issues and challenges exist while shifting the foreign policy? The paper consists of four major sections. The first section delineates Japan's hegemonic role in South Asia from a historical perspective. The second section covers the current pattern of Japan's shifting foreign policy to South Asia and its changing nature of relations with other South Asian countries. The third part focuses on the geopolitical importance of South Asia to Japan for both geo-economic and geostrategic considerations. The final section of this paper tries to articulate the major challenges that Japan might face while moving toward the South Asian region.

2. Methodology

The study follows the qualitative research approach –a popular research method in social sciences that works with non-numerical data by analysing the facts and opinions. To understand the current nature of Japanese engagement with South Asian countries, the study relies heavily upon text analysis and oral questioning to different respondents by using MAXQDA data analysis software to code qualitative data from documents and interviews. Data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. In terms of primary sources, the study involves conducting in-depth interviews (IDIs) with a few specialists to explore their perspectives on Japan's recent association with this region. On the other hand, the study follows both academic and non-academic sources for the

secondary literature. For academic articles, books and journals were explored. At the same time, newspapers, magazines, reports, official and non-official websites were used for non-academic sources, which help to understand the historical and current state of relations between Japan and South Asia and the driving factors that pushes Japan to redefine its relationship with South Asian countries. After reviewing the literature and interviews, the paper critically analyses the issues and challenges of Japan's shifting policy toward South Asia, where China is already a significant factor.

3. Japan's quasi hegemony in South Asia: From a historical perspective

Due to the preoccupation with economic reconstruction (Beeson, 2001), Japan heavily relied on the US during the post-war period, making Japan reluctant to adopt an independent foreign policy, mainly to expand its bilateral relations beyond the capitalist block. In the post-WWII defeat, US forces under General Douglas MacArthur wielded a profound influence upon Japan (LaFeber, 1997) by depending on the US with its new constitution and incorporating Japan into the new world order with economic development (Beeson, 2001). According to Beeson (2001), Japan's rise from the war devastation is an unparalleled and unprecedented achievement that sets as an exemplar of a state-led economic reconstruction with miraculous development to other states (Amsden, 1995). Despite having significant economic development, Japan played little hegemonic influence over the Asian region during the Cold War by emphasising economic cooperation, which was highly different from other historical examples.

Like other parts of Asia, Japan's involvement with South Asia was overwhelmingly economic, spearheaded by the business. Besides, trade and investment have been the most tangible aspects of Japan's engagement with the region. During the late 20th century, South Asia became the biggest recipient of Japanese economic support, especially in car manufacturing and textiles. Japan highly emphasised the economic development of South Asia by providing ODA to promote peace and prosperity (Reza, 2014). With its economic status, Japan hardly translated economic power into political influence in South Asia. However, though Japan only focuses its economic engagement with South Asian countries after the Cold War's demise, this economic dominance, sometimes, has imposed some political and ideational influence, highlighting its quasi-hegemony nature. India and Bangladesh have adopted the 'Look East' policy to emulate the Japanese economic development model- an example of Japan's ideational influence.

On the other hand, even in response to China's growing assertiveness in South Asia, initially, Japan was reluctant to pursue its politico-strategic interests.

However, over time, particularly since the start of Prime Minister Abe's second stint in 2012, Japan has emphasised pursuing its political determination by taking solemn strategic policies, i.e. broadening and deepening its political relations with South Asian countries, which are also reflected in Hirabayashi (2000) and Reza's (2014) statement- '*South Asia and Japan are inclined to strengthen their ties not only in the economic area but also in the political sphere*'. However, addressing the new challenges and understanding the necessity of new mechanisms in relations, Japan has transformed its quasi-hegemonic nature to hegemonic power in South Asia.

4. Pattern of Japan's shifting foreign policy in Asia

Japan maintained close relations with the East Asian region from the very beginning. Its foreign policies primarily focused on neighbouring countries like China, Korea, and other Southeast Asian nations. In the post-war period, South Asia did not play a significant role in Japan's foreign policy as it has been irrelevant to Japan's security needs. Besides, South Asia was considered a distant land to Japan with internationally low profile features. Because of having some least developed countries in the region, Japan had hardly interest to invest in South Asia. However, since the 1990s, economic malaise portentous changes have been undergone in Japan's relations with Asian countries. Japan needed to strengthen its relationship with South Asia as it has substantially developed itself politically and economically with geostrategic advancement.

From the very beginning, Japan maintained intense relations with East Asian countries, and during the 1960s, Japan started its investment in China, particularly in the post-Nixon shock period. Having available natural resources, less product and labour cost, and the most significant trade market, China became the target area for Japanese investors. Besides, Japan's continual endeavour since the 1970s to play a leading role in maintaining peace and stability and socio-economic development in Southeast Asia is considered a game-changer in the Southeast Asian region. However, its expansion into Southeast Asia was an altogether more uncertain enterprise. By the beginning of the 1990s, Japan's cooperation with most Southeast Asian countries, notably its expanding economic relations, had manifold intensified. The anti-Japanese movement in China in 2005 provided fuel to this Japan-Southeast Asia relations through adopting the '*China plus one*' strategy by Japan.

On the other hand, despite Justice Radha Binod Pal's crucial role at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in acquitting the Japanese of war crimes, and India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka's peace treaties with Japan following the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan's relations with South Asia lag far

behind other regions in Asia. According to one of the IDI respondents, Japan was sceptical about its engagement in South Asia due to the Cold War complexities in world politics. Even due to the obligations in the 1992 ODA charter, Japan's relations with India and Pakistan came almost to a standstill following the nuclear tests in 1998 by both non-signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) (Varma, 2011). However, after the end of the cold war, South Asian countries witnessed substantial progress in relations with Japan (Reza, 2014). Since the early 21st century, Japan has emerged as the largest donor and ODA provider to all South Asian countries.

Again, understanding the changing geopolitical realities of the global order, increasing strategic demand of the Indian Ocean, and China's growing influence, Japan has now broadened its foreign policy, particularly defence outlook and economic engagement with South Asian countries. Moreover, with middle-class consumers, South Asia will be an '*economic hub*' shortly. At the same time, Japanese investors are keen to invest in South Asia due to low labour costs – a natural competitive advantage in the region. Since the re-establishment of Japan-South Asia relations in the early 21st century, Japan has profoundly influenced South Asia, particularly shaping South Asia's economic development despite China's presence. Japan remains a prominent economic actor in South Asia in this new identity. Besides, this economic superiority and economic engagement also help Japan establish a broader political and geostrategic order in the region to address the contemporary global intention in the Indo-Pacific region.

Currently, Japan is involved with multiple mega projects in South Asia, including the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative and Dhaka Metro Rail in Bangladesh, Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), and Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC) in India. Besides, Japan is also involved in rural development and economic infrastructure development, i.e. road network development in most South Asian countries. Besides these megaprojects, Japan has increased its FDI to all South Asian countries. For example, in 2015, the inflow of FDI from Japan to Bangladesh was US\$45 million, which increased in 2019, worth US\$72 million, while in India, the inflow of Japanese FDI in 2019 was US\$2.7 billion.

Besides these economic relations, Japan has also been focusing on political and geostrategic issues related to South Asia. The region is crucial for Japan for the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal, where the Japanese sea-trade route heavily relies on. The Indian Ocean, for its sprawling vibrant scape, is significant for both China, India, and Japan as their trade with the Middle East to supply crude oil is passes through this sea lane. Moreover, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) reserves 40% of oil and gas and consists of 25% of the world's land (Shepard, 2016). Here, Japan's primary concern is China. It has already developed strong strategic ties

with some South Asian nations by building deep seaports, i.e. Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Gwadar in Pakistan.

Indeed, the post-Cold war mechanism was also a decisive factor for Japan, particularly the collapse of the Soviet Union the emergence of the US as the only superpower in the then world order to shift its policy to South Asia considering the security issues. Japanese policymakers were aware to search for alternative security ties beyond the US's security umbrella which Ozawa Ichiro (1994) points out that, "*The post-Cold War security environment in Asia is fragile. We need to develop a new security framework that can respond to the power vacuum that an American withdrawal would leave*". The statement of Ozawa clearly shows Japan's intention to expand its security cooperation beyond its immediate neighbours in East Asia. In this regard, the Japan-India ties, particularly to counter the concomitant rise of the Chinese military in the Indo-Pacific, are seen as significant security cooperation in the contemporary period. Japan-India defence and security cooperation were jump-started during then-Prime Minister Abe's visit to India in August 2007. Since then, both parties have issued the 'Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation' and signed an agreement allowing the Indian Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Forces (JMSDF) to conduct regular joint training. Besides, during the 2014 and 2015 Japan-India annual summits, both countries issued the 'Tokyo Declaration for Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership' and the 'Japan-India Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership' to enhance their bilateral security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region where China is already a decisive actor. However, considering the contemporary issues and challenges, it has broadened its outlook to pursue Japan's intention to be a powerful state. It has come forward to play a significant role as the South Asia region become the centre of world politics.

5. Geopolitical importance of South Asia

The south Asian region has gained considerable importance in contemporary global politics. However, the concept of South Asia as a separate region has been recognised relatively in recent times (Mahan, 1991). For a long time, the South Asian region was attached to the Southeast Asian region. This region had no separate regional identity. It was considered a part of greater Southeast Asia. There is no authentic unanimity and exact definition of South Asia so far. In academic discourse, the South Asian region was also known as the Indian subcontinent. Usually, the South Asian region comprises seven countries, such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal, and Bhutan. After the incorporation of Afghanistan in 2006, it has been considered a South Asian state. However, the location of Afghanistan is highly debatable to be part of South Asia. The world's largest populated region South Asia is vital for its geostrategic

location and a potential market. The post-colonial South Asian states have witnessed many challenges, such as socio-economic turmoil, political unrest, ethno-religious conflicts, poverty, environmental hazards, terrorism, etc. The South Asia region has been one of the core regions of global politics, security, trade, and cooperation. However, this region's economic development and technological advancement have attracted many advanced countries, like Japan. In the post-second world era, the proliferation of regional organisations is found across the globe. South Asia is not exceptional as a regional SAARC started its journey in 1985 to promote a couple of interests of South Asian states. BIMSTEC is another intra-regional organisation formed in 1995 that comprises both South and Southeast Asian countries.

In the 21st century, the Indian Ocean has been a substratum of international economic maritime movement. The Indian Ocean littoral states of South Asia have been getting global attention. The IOR is very potential in terms of oil and minerals, affecting it as an energy heartland both in the supply and demand. The region is strategically important because of bridging the Indian Ocean to the Pacific in the East and the Mediterranean in the West. Moreover, this region has appeared as a vital juncture of maritime trade, linking the countries' producers of natural resources with the consumer states. More than two-thirds of worldwide oil and over eighty per cent of China's and Japan's oil has been shipping through this region. About half of the global container shipments navigate through the Indian Ocean.

India is very much concerned about the security of its 1382 islands. The growing Chinese dominance has been an immense threat to Indian security. Apart from India's independent policy persuasions, from Washington to Tokyo and Beijing to Perth, India has emerged as a common thread and point of convergence for most Indo-Pacific security and engagement models. Since 2014, India has formally engaged with several island nations in the entire Indo-Pacific through the forum of India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) (Pradhan and Singh, 2020). The Indian littoral small island states Sri Lanka and the Maldives jointly conducted coast guard exercise several times (Nandy, 2020). The puzzling fact is that the Chinese hegemonic presence in Sri Lanka and the Maldives is unprecedented. However, these island states are afraid of China, but the debt trap compelled both island states to continue their Chinese dependency. China almost occupies the open and free sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. Although Indo-American joint naval forces are trying to counter the Chinese presence, it is insufficient to counter Chinese economic and military dominance in the South Asian region. Since China's rise is primarily seen as a hegemonic power, India has leaned towards Japan and the USA for securing this region collectively.

The Chinese economic dominance in the South Asian region through BRI, CPEC, and maritime silk routes has exposed China as a significant power in this region. China has already signed several treaties to develop maritime engagements with various countries of South Asia, especially Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Nepal. The American South Asia policy has been loosening due to the Chinese 'string of pearls policy'. In the post-Cold War era, the economic and strategic synergies between New Delhi and Washington are considered an initiative to maintain a balance of power in South Asia. However, America has lost its dominance in South Asia, and China grabbed the opportunity to fill up the power vacuum. The initial objectives of China in South Asia were economic later on, and it has become military. The Chinese investment in South Asian countries is much ahead of the USA and Japan. The investment of Japanese companies is very selected in some particular sectors, such as electronics, chemical, technology, vehicles, and banking. However, China has expanded its investment in a large number of sectors. The Japanese government has emphasised economic and technological affairs in South Asia and soft power. The policy of Japan is non-aggressive, but Chinese policy is more hegemonic, where South Asian nations have had to witness hard conditional loans or financial assistance or defence engagements. Geographically, China is in an advantageous position than Japan.

The Japanese government has invested a significant amount of capital in India. Apart from India, the Japanese government has already established economic and technological linkages with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The relations between Bangladesh and India are very positive. Japan invested millions of dollars in Bangladesh, and hundreds of Japanese nationals residing in Bangladesh associated with different projects. Japan is the largest donor for Bangladesh. In 2018, Bangladesh received US\$1.8 billion as a loan. In Sri Lanka, China has invested a lot and given conditional load with high interest. The due inability of the Sri Lankan government to pay off its taken debt, the Chinese government took over the Hambantota deep seaport. The Japanese government is taking the initiative to counter China's presence in Sri Lanka and South Asia (Nath, 2019). The growing relational synergies between Beijing and Kathmandu have been a primary concern to India and Japan. The Chinese investment in Nepal is much higher than in other countries. The potentiality of Nepal's market is not viable. They are a land-locked country and share a long land border with India; since 1950, the entire maritime trade of Nepal has depended upon India. So, considering India's cordial relations with Japan, the government of India is very much interested in giving access to Japan to do naval trade and investment with Nepal. In 2017, the Japanese government agreed to invest US\$ 1 billion in Nepal. About 60,000 Nepali people live in Japan. Increasing Japanese influence in Nepal is also a challenge for China.

Japan has also shown interest in investing in Bhutan, and Japan agreed to provide higher education and training to young Bhutanese civil servants to increase professional proficiency. Pakistan is also seeking Japanese assistance, especially capital investment, and the critical sector of the investment may be Information Technology. There are two challenges to Japan investing in Pakistan: (1) the Chinese unprecedented economic dominance in Pakistan and (2) Pakistan's unstable security environment.

Japan has already invested a lot in India in various sectors. In the financial year 2021, India has attracted over US\$72 billion. Japan has invested in hydroelectric power and forest management in technology, IT, chemicals, banking, vehicles, and road construction. Due to geostrategic importance, the Indian North-eastern region prioritises Japan. This region shares borders with Bhutan, China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. So Japan is gradually being active in this region to counter China through economic engagements.

5.1 Strategic demand of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

South Asian region has been a region of rivalry between extra-regional powers, like the USA and China. Even a few years ago, both India and China were considered the rising power of Asia. However, the Chinese dominant economic and military in South Asian politics is far more prominent and robust than India. In the Asian context, until World War II, Japan was the most powerful state of Asia with advanced military equipment. After being defeated in World War II, the Japanese government has abandoned its aggressive policy and military intervention in this region. Emphasising economic and technological development, Japan has taken a peace policy and economic and scientific engagements with South Asian countries. The vital sea lens of IOR is strategically important and economically viable. The Indian Ocean region has become a region of naval rivalry between the superpowers.

There are some significant challenges of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)— (1) The rivalry between the Chinese naval forces and the US naval forces (Akon, 2020). The naval dominance in this region has been started after 1945. There is no doubt that China's rise has posed a challenge to the USA. The naval activism of Russia in this region has been added as an additional hazard. (2) This region may be led by the USA and other local partners, like India, Australia, Indonesia, and South Africa. The proposal of Quad was raised in 2007 to strengthen security in this region jointly by India, Australia, Japan, and the US. The purposely anti-Chinese stance has been taken in Quad. The small and militarily weakened states of IOR face challenges in deterring their relational equations. (3) India's ambitions to be a great power largely depend on its managing capacity and dominance in IOR and Counter-Chinese strategies. The limitations of New

Delhi's naval strength have compelled it to emphasise enhancing more connectivity with Quad. India's rivalries with China and Pakistan to pull strategic attention of allied power of India to probe forcible entity of China and illicit activities of Pakistan. The importance of St. Martin island of Bangladesh is strategically essential. So, the security of South Asian islands is becoming threatened gradually. (4) The functions of IOR have been challenging for Chinese dominance in South-East Asia, especially ASEAN. On the other hand, SAARC, and BIMSTEC, as regional and interregional organisations, are in a dilemma to formulate official policy regarding the security of IOR, considering the importance of leading countries of IOR. (5) To develop security designs in the Asia-Pacific, the 'Bottom-up' model can be implemented to give importance to the demands and suggestions of small islands. The small-scale 'bottom up' exercises is effective in IOR's security cooperation. The Tsunami Core Group was formed with the US, Japan, India, and Australia provided an early indication of the practical dividends (Phillips, 2012).

The IOR has also taken non-traditional security measures for the member states, such as anti-piracy, counter-terrorism activities, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance. India's South Asian neighbours need to work with New Delhi to peacefully accommodate the South Asian region free from extra-regional great powers. China has challenged the Indo-US presence in the energy-rich Indian Ocean Region (IOR). To restrict China's 'String of Pearls Strategy', the USA has shifted 60% of its naval forces to the Asia Pacific Region (APR). Both Japan and India will be benefited from the American decision. The US has been a naval partner of India in the Indian Ocean to counter China (Malik, 2014). To counter Chinese economic dominance through Pakistan's Gwadar port, India has established Chabahar port in Iran, where Japan is the key supporter of India. The activism of Japan in IOR is more sophisticated and moderate than in China. China, India, and Japan have been more active in connecting with energy-rich Hormuz in IOR.

5.2 FOIP and QUAD strategies

Japan and the United States have some common interests in the Indo-Pacific region to maintain prosperity, security, and a rules-based order. This region is diverse, and this region has both developing and developed economies and democratic and authoritarian governments. To tackle several challenges in this region, Japan and the United States thought about an umbrella-based forum. Tokyo and Washington have formed Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) to execute regional frameworks and strategies. In 2016, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had formally introduced FOIP. Tokyo argues that FOIP has formed to counter Beijing's strategic output and the region's development. The US

administration has outlined FOIP, emphasised trade and investment, and ensured open access to sea lanes. The US-China trade war has started in 2017 that is beneficial for the future of FOIP. The U.S.-Japan dialogue could prove critical in developing the FOIP.

In 2017, the quadrilateral cooperation framework or Quad created a new equation in global politics that includes Australia, India, Japan, and the USA (Hanada, 2019). The significant initiative within Quad is the formation of the framework of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). The Quad is extensively considered in security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region. The Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has played a crucial role in forming the Quad. The growing assertive acts of China have been instrumental in forming Quad to ensure maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region. Through several high-level meetings and negotiations among the member countries, several pertinent are given priority in Quad. The issues like maritime security, terrorism, cyber security, and connectivity have been priority issues.

The Quad has been formed to serve several activities, which can be briefly discussed-(1) The Quad is not an alliance. However, intelligence-sharing is one of the critical objectives of Quad (Hanada, 2019). The members are sharing information about maritime domain awareness. The significant areas of maritime security of Quad members are the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific region. (2) Introducing joint exercises for defining interoperability, (2) military technology and defence equipment transfer among the Quad, (3) initiative to enhance capacity-building of Indo-Pacific region. (4) To counter the growing military dominance of Russia and China in the Indo-Pacific region. (5) China's Belt and Road Initiative has created a meaningful impact in the South Asian region. The competition between Japan and China in the South China Sea is confined within that region. The challenge of the Japanese government in South Asia is economic, but considering the aggressive economic and strategic acts of China posed a threat to Japan. So, Japan is very active in the Quad to suppress China collectively. In November 2018, the Quad consultation was held and widely touched upon regional connectivity. The Quad aims to fulfil broader regional interests, connecting the Bay of Bengal region to the Indian Ocean through India.

5.3 Emergence of South Asia as 'New Economic Hub'

South Asia's diversity offers enormous potential for commerce, investment, and economic progress, as seen by the region's extraordinary achievements in recent decades. Its economies have thrived, becoming more linked with one another and the rest of the globe. South Asia as a whole, and its largest economy, India, in particular, are now playing an increasingly vital role in the world economy. Economic integration between South and East Asia is anticipated to accelerate

with India's free trade agreement (FTA) with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2010 and the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) accord in 2006. Suppose the regional economy is appropriately supported by cross-border infrastructural facilities, including hardware and software, further dispersion of production and services across the two areas. A well-planned regional infrastructure would decrease trade costs and stimulate industry restructuring to increase efficiency.

The potential of creating uniform product standards and aligning such standards with equivalent international standards as a "regional block" is an incentive for regional cooperation and integration. Like with the EU, common standards would draw South Asia into the global marketplace. Adopting best practices to harmonies standards would enhance dependability and satisfy health, safety, and environmental criteria, resulting in the broader market and greater worldwide acceptability of South Asian products. Regional collaboration like SAARC, BIMSTEC, and BBIN will improve infrastructure and transportation links, facilitating trade. Not only will this facilitate commerce in the area, but it will also open up new trade prospects given the region's strategic location at the crossroads of Asia between oil-rich West and Central Asian countries and the dynamic economies of Southeast Asia. Regional cooperation would expand the market and provide multilateral organisations and the private sector with appealing investment possibilities in improving the region's physical infrastructure.

Economic corridors have emerged as a powerful accelerator for regional commercial integration in South Asia, owing to the fast expansion of regional economic activity. Infrastructure development across the area, particularly transportation linkages and energy pipelines, is projected to help integration by lowering transportation costs and enabling intraregional commerce and services (De, 2014). South Asia's commercial trade is anticipated to grow significantly in the future years due to regional and bilateral free trade agreements. It will be accompanied by a growth in demand for national and international infrastructure services, both for production and consumption and international trade. Failure to meet this demand will impede commerce and stifle growth in the region. As a result, improved knowledge and sufficient assistance are required for the infrastructural issues that South Asian countries confront.

Economic corridors serve as a blueprint for enhanced connectivity, increased competitiveness, and a greater sense of community in a region. It will improve national and regional connectivity by making it quicker, cheaper, and simpler for people and products to move across and within borders; promoting greater national, regional, and worldwide integration, and therefore quicker economic growth; and reducing the cost of national, regional, and global commerce, so improving the competitiveness of national and regional production networks and

encouraging more investment. South Asian economic corridors can reduce trade costs, resulting in greater commerce and investment. They can also indirectly promote higher FDI, mainly through cross-border intra-firm integration capitalising on each location's comparative advantages. Such increases in FDI boost regional commerce even further. International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), linking India, Iran, and Russia, the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, and the Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor are significant initiatives in the region.

Regional cooperation will eliminate trade obstacles, increase competitiveness, and increase productivity through improved industry allocation and restructuring. A faster growth rate would alleviate poverty and raise living standards. In this sense, the industrial sector offers enormous potential for job creation. Increased integration will result in increased access to technology, infrastructure, scalability, and infrastructural improvements, all of which are now barriers to the sector's growth. A more active manufacturing sector with more capacity would generate enormous possibilities and lift many South Asians out of poverty.

The region is changing rapidly, as are the economic and political realities. South Asian states also understand the need to encourage regional cooperation in South Asia and prioritise economic development, growth, and poverty reduction over political difficulties and problems. It recognises that clinging to historical distinctions may lose its position in the global economy, given the growing competition, the present global economic climate, and other countries' protectionist inclinations. The rest of the globe is increasingly acknowledging the importance of the region.

6. Challenges of Japan's shifting policies to South Asia

While Japan's catalytic role in modern Indo-Pacific economic success continues to grow, the only backward sub-region in this region's broad vivid terrain has not yet caught pace with this shifting trend in South Asia. Despite the size of Japanese development funding to all South Asian nations, the region's portion of Japan's worldwide commerce and investment is little enough to need special attention. Furthermore, South Asia has figured little in Tokyo's strategic-diplomatic agenda for a long time since it is important neither to Japan's security concerns nor the demands for a global economic governance framework. Nonetheless, in the backdrop of rising Chinese influence in the area, Japan has recently shown a renewed interest in strengthening its collaboration with South Asia (especially India). As a result, the economic and geostrategic cooperation between Japan and South Asia must be nurtured more effectively and constructively for shared values and advantages. However, such collaboration is not without pre-existing strategic and political obstacles.

6.1 Efforts towards countering Chinese hegemony in the region

Japan has traditionally been a key development partner for smaller South Asian governments. However, the second Abe administration has expanded these connections beyond developmental collaborations to include strategic involvement. This tendency is part of the administration's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) agenda and a more comprehensive policy to increase its worldwide outreach under the banner of "*diplomacy with a broad perspective*". On the other hand, Tokyo's strategic engagement with South Asia is selective, and it has few direct critical interests in the subcontinent; therefore, it is not a priority for Tokyo compared to others such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Japan has already formed a strong alliance with India, the regional hegemon, largely to counterbalance China globally. Against this context, Japan's present South Asian policy might be characterised as "*India-plus*" (Kurita, 2020). In particular, while increasing collaboration with Delhi, Tokyo has deliberately redefined and reinforced ties with some geopolitically significant nations in the area, in line with India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.

Apart from India, Japan is trying to increase its presence in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka to counter Chinese hegemony in the region. Japan has a generally good reputation in Bangladesh, thanks to millions of dollars in direct investment and hundreds of Japanese nationals living there. A Japanese partnership is developing the Matarbari deep seaport, which will relieve strain on Chittagong port (Barua, 2018). The port's strategic position and Bangladesh's growing economic potential led Japan to invest in the project, which is expected to provide long-term advantages. According to Tokyo, Bangladesh's geographical significance stems from inter-regional connectivity: Bangladesh is located at the "*intersection of India and ASEAN*", focusing on Japan's strategic and economic growth. Japan has been the most significant donor to Bangladesh, with over \$1.8 billion in financial support in 2018 (UNB News, 2018). Naval ships from Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force recently visited Chattogram, Bangladesh, and participated in goodwill drills (TBS Report, 2019). These measures align with the Modi administration's regional diplomacy, which prioritises relations with Dhaka and has cited Bangladesh as an example of its Neighbourhood First approach (Kaura, 2018). Bangladesh's position is crucial to Delhi's aspirations to deepen India's relationship with Southeast Asia, and it has sought to develop road and rail ties with the country (PTI, 2020). Tokyo and New Delhi's overlapping interests have resulted in joint efforts in the field of connectivity in Bangladesh, such as improving the road link between Ramgarh in northern India and Baraiyarhat in southern Bangladesh, as well as building a bridge and providing rolling stock for the railway over the Jamuna river in Bangladesh (MOFA Japan, 2019).

In Sri Lanka, China has been in charge of important infrastructure projects and has taken over the Hambantota deep-sea port due to the Sri Lankans' failure to repay their loans efficiently. It would significantly strengthen China's capacity to control the critical commercial routes through the Indian Ocean area. Japan recently gifted two patrol boats to the Sri Lankan coast guard, each worth almost \$11 million (Mourdoukoutas, 2018). Japan's move indicates its willingness to respond to China's more established influence in the region. Because of its closeness to Indian Ocean trade routes, Japan considers Sri Lanka a key partner in ensuring the safety of its sea lines of communication (SLOCs). China's growing influence in this island country has also raised concern in Japan, highlighting the need for Tokyo to engage with Colombo. The present Japanese policy toward the nation is centred on strengthening a marine security relationship. When Abe visited Sri Lanka as the first Japanese prime leader in 24 years in 2014, the two nations started a bilateral conversation on maritime security and oceanic problems.

Nepal is another attractive market for Japan right now. Japan is an important commercial partner for Nepal, accounting for a significant portion of the country's Foreign Direct Investment. At a 2017 investment forum in Kathmandu, Nepal, Japanese businesspeople proposed investments worth up to US\$1 billion in the nation (MOFA Nepal, 2019). More than 60,000 Nepali nationals live in Japan, and the figure is expected to rise as more Nepali students travel to Japan to further their education. Koyasan, Japan, and Lumbini, Nepal, have also formed sister city connections (Nath, 2019). Increasing Japanese influence in Nepal will irritate China, especially since Nepal shares a border with Tibet. However, Japan has failed to advance Bhutan and Pakistan instead of taking cautious investments and increased involvement. Japan has committed to giving higher education to young Bhutanese public workers at Japanese institutions and is looking into expanding its commitment in the nation. Pakistan is likewise looking for Japanese investment, with the government focusing on the country's information technology industry. However, Pakistan's uncertain security situation has dampened Japan's desire to engage in the nation, while China continues to be Pakistan's "iron brother".

India serves as a pillar for Japan in South Asia, and Tokyo is expanding its collaboration with New Delhi in economic, political, cultural, and military areas. Japan is considering joining India in developing the strategically important port of Chabahar in Iran, which would serve as a counter to the Chinese-backed Gwadar port in Pakistan. There are also proposals for Japan to build an industrial complex, representing a substantial investment in the project (Parashar, 2018). Japan has also promised billions of yen in funding for projects in India's Northeast, including hydroelectric power generating, sustainable forest

management, and road development (Dasgupta, 2018). Because it shares borders with China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan, the Northeast is a strategically significant region. It is a component of the Indo-Japan corridor, the more significant Asia-Africa Growth Corridor. China believes Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian state, to be part of its territory and refers to it as South Tibet. China professes to be opposed to foreign investment in “disputed zones”, but this has not stopped Japan from doing business in the region, proving that Tokyo is not afraid to ruffle a few feathers.

India and Japan share close defence cooperation, and discussions between the two countries are underway to sign the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which would allow both countries to supply supplies and support services and access each other's facilities (Nath, 2019). If Japan obtained access to bases, it would use India's bases in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep Islands. The Japanese navy's operating reach would be expanded, allowing it to effectively protect its interests in the region. Japan's long-term position in South Asia is strengthened through agreements with regional powers such as India. It uses a partnership approach in South Asia, engaging with nations on equal terms to lay the groundwork for future collaboration.

As a result, for Japan to preserve its standing as a significant force in the area, it must maintain a visible presence in the region's countries. It is in Japan's best interests to offer the region's governments as an alternative to China, especially given that animosity toward China and its intrusive influence is growing in Sri Lanka and even Pakistan. To that aim, Japan is working quietly but steadily to solidify its strategic presence in South Asia.

6.2 Ineffectiveness of SAARC

Since 1945, one of the most notable characteristics of international politics has created regional groups linked by shared interests and, ideally, geographical closeness. These links spawned a slew of regional organisations. One such organisation is SAARC. The basic concept of SAARC is to promote peace, tranquillity, and economic progress via the cooperation of South Asian governments by available pooling resources, building confidence among parties and promoting collaboration and regular communication between leaders (Nag & Bandyopadhyay, 2020). However, for South Asian governments, the nationalist view outweighs the international outlook. The complexities of South Asia's political conflicts have made regional cooperation challenging at best. Although the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) successfully brought warring states together, no significant progress toward a functioning union has been made in recent years. Given South Asia's internal and foreign

political conflicts, it is evident that regional cooperation through SAARC has broken down due to broad distrust.

SAARC, like other regional intergovernmental organisations, has the potential to become a significant political and economic bloc in its global context. South Asia is described by the World Bank as “the fastest-growing area in the world”, with an economic growth rate of 7.1 per cent expected in the coming year (World Bank, 2019). The rising trend among regional entities to enhance economic integration as they succumb to market forces gives trade possibilities and more security connected to economic interests (Hassan, 2001). However, successful relationships between SAARC member nations do not reflect this potential. In compared to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at 32%, the European Union (EU) at 50%, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) at 65%, intra-SAARC trade is at 5% (Khasru, 2014). According to Indrajit Coomaraswamy, Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, a lack of confidence between South Asian countries impedes commerce, resulting in South Asia being the world’s least connected area. Preferential treatment under SAFTA, in particular, permits political reasons to obstruct real free trade, as seen by Pakistan’s unwillingness to award India’s Most Favoured Nation’ designation.

It is important to recall that the foundation of regional cooperation is equal interest in mutual benefit and equal engagement in increasing collaboration. However, there is no comparison between India and the other seven SAARC states regarding geographical size, population, military strength, economic growth. India would utilise SAARC to increase its control in the region - SAARC’s minor nations have expressed similar concerns since its inception. Indian hegemonic design, distrust, and a negative attitude toward South Asia’s smaller states stymie any efforts for deeper regional integration. Furthermore, increasing mutual collaboration among the people of different South Asian nations through SAARC would help grow democratic thought in those countries, and it could lead to mass protests against the authoritarian rulers of those countries. This concern, they believe, has resulted in an unfavourable attitude toward India. As a result, with the assistance of external powers (especially China), several neighbouring nations have dedicated themselves to diminishing India’s dominance in South Asia.

Furthermore, due to hostility between India and Pakistan, they cannot trust each other. Pakistan has repeatedly attempted to raise the Kashmir issue in SAARC meetings, despite the SAARC Charter. Tensions between the two rivals have harmed SAARC’s collaboration significantly. The persistent Kashmir problem has also been a significant impediment to development and collaboration. Furthermore, South Asian countries compete to sell their products globally, such as tea and jute. Such rivalry has been a thorn in the side of SAARC’s smooth

operation. The SAARC-states have failed to show themselves as a unified force in economic affairs on the International Forum.

Japan has been a strong supporter of the SAARC in economic growth, democracy, freedom, and the rule of law. It encourages regional cooperation based on a long history of friendly ties, and Tokyo saw multilateral involvement with South Asia as a chance to weaken China's hegemony. Japan has sought to solidify its goodwill as a friendly power through programs such as the Japan-SAARC Special Fund, Student and Youth Exchange (JENESYS), and human capacity development efforts. Japan's interest in SAARC might also be connected to its broader geo-economics ambitions. However, the inoperability of SAARC remains a big challenge for Japanese interests in the region.

6.3 Political instability

A faltering and fragmented political organisation is one of the fundamental reasons for Pakistan's unstable political situation, which every administration faces. On the other side, weak political parties forced every administration to seek coalition assistance to gain power. As a result, every government makes every effort to satisfy all of its coalition partners and remains in power at all times. Furthermore, forming domestic and foreign policy becomes difficult for the government since it needs the support of the masses within a party. It has been stated that a stable political system cannot be created until all members of a party work together. It should also be noted that inept governors contribute to an unstable political environment. The position of a leader is critical, especially in Pakistan, which has different races and sects. Without a doubt, when the masses of a state are not served equally and express dissatisfaction with the performance of the authorities, the state experiences an identity crisis, and people from various communities begin to harbour negative sentiments toward the ruling party; as a result, people lose faith in institutions and pursue their interests (Memon, Memon, Shaikh, & Memon, 2018). Eventually, a fragmented society emerges, with each faction preferring its perks above the state.

The stumbling and destabilised Democratic governments have painted a bleak future for Pakistanis. Due to political instability, the country has already lost its East wing and constantly suffers from rising tensions. Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are now the most susceptible regions where the consequences of political instability may be felt most acutely. Another difficulty that Pakistan faces due to uncertain political conditions is misrepresenting the issue of terrorism, making it hard to develop practical answers and strategies to the long-standing problem of terrorism. The country's economy has been completely devastated due to the continuous poor domestic circumstances caused by internal and external attacks, and the door has been closed to international investment. It has become a

significant problem for Pakistan to cope with international pressure while dealing with internal issues such as a crumbling economy, widespread complaints, and losing the nation's support for the government and military.

Political instability is a deep-seated concern in Pakistan, shaking the economy's leg, interfering with social progress, and displacing people for various reasons. However, the primary causes of a paralysed political system are inappropriate functioning of political parties, ineffective leadership, and fragmentation of unifies. As a result, Pakistan is dealing with several challenges, including public discontent, a weak economy, and threats from both external and domestic forces.

Bangladesh is ranked 172nd in political stability, with an index of -1.15. It shows that Bangladesh is mainly afflicted by political insecurity (Rahman & Md. Mamunur, 2018). The primary causes of this political instability include conflict between political parties, incompetence of local administration in holding a legal and transparent election, good governance and corruption at the government levels (Islam, 2016). Moreover, these reasons are aided by other variables such as a lack of a seamless transition of power, investment in research and education, substantial economic disparity. These issues have a stronger impact on political and social aspects. Due to political insecurity, the venture has had a fall in financial growth, infrastructure destruction, individuals getting involved in political confrontations (Duchesneau & Gartner, 1990).

Bangladesh has been a parliamentary democracy with a distinct judiciary and an active civil society since 1990, yet it is nevertheless classified as "partly free". Despite being a democracy, Bangladesh has two significant challenges to establishing a functional democratic system: freedom of expression and political opposition. With the advent of radical Islam in Bangladesh, these democratic practices will become increasingly difficult to achieve, as extreme Islamists regard democracy as heresy in and of itself. Political insecurity denotes a schism in the attitudes of political parties. There is no continuity of stable political policy to provide a stable environment for all types of growth. One political party regards the other political party as an enemy. They are always more concerned with the development of their party than with the country's development. On the other side, many political party leaders in Bangladesh have been corrupted. They make use of the party platform for their ends. Bangladesh's political turmoil has resulted in corruption, poverty, and significant difficulties in the educational system. The country is becoming increasingly unstable. Radical Islamists are filling a political power vacuum, posing a danger to the secular-democratic system. Liberal minds are being threatened and brutally murdered.

With the restoration of multi-party democracy in the 1990s, aspirations and ambitions for a free and prosperous Nepal were substantial. The outpouring of

passion was understandable because the system they envisioned meant that everyone, including those who did not belong to the upper class, had an equal opportunity to prosper. Unfortunately, their aspirations and vision have yet to materialise despite three decades of democracy. Nepal embraced federalism in 2015, reviving the promise of economic development and attempting to address the plethora of difficulties surrounding years of ethnic groups' non-participation (Thapa, 2021). The country entered a new era of political stability with a two-thirds majority administration in its Parliament. However, persistent political unrest has again distracted attention away from strengthening federalism and adhering to the economic development objective of establishing an enabling climate for entrepreneurship and investment to achieve long-term prosperity. One might even argue that federalism was never the main emphasis of Nepalese political parties except for a few parties. While the concept of market-preserving federalism is valid for many federal nations, old and new, Nepal's federal system appears to be a sudden event with little internalisation of concepts among Nepal's main political parties (Gill, 2021). Nepal's economic, political, and societal spheres have shrunk over time.

The political infighting has aided neither the government nor the opposition parties. One might even claim that the contemporary political instability we are seeing is the consequence of conflicts amongst political leaders. There is some consolation in the knowledge that one may still turn to the courts in these trying times. However, even a robust and sturdy judicial system cannot compensate for a mediocre executive. The recent political instability, which saw two House dissolutions and resulted in a change of government with the involvement of the Supreme Court, demonstrates that the people's shared vision is not secondary to political benefits for their leaders (Chaulagain, 2021). For a citizen, this indicates that Nepali politics has fragmented and that Nepal is once again struggling to defend democratic values. Attempts to smooth up politics have come at a high price.

7. Conclusion

South Asia has long been characterised as a conflict-prone region, with Kashmir serving as a nuclear flashpoint. However, there is no disputing that the nations of this region, although being among the greatest sufferers, were eventually able to loosen the two-century-old colonial stranglehold after a valiant battle for freedom. The end of the Cold War has undoubtedly had several significant ramifications for South Asia, which may legitimately compel Japanese attention to be more attentive to the region's changing requirements. While most South Asian nations now have democratically elected governments, they have realised that their previous restricted economic policies would no longer be compatible with the changing realities of the globalisation process. They now understand that they

must resolve some of their fundamental political disagreements to improve economic cooperation with one another.

With a particular focus on India, the number of countries is paying increasing attention to the country due to its sustained economic progress in recent years, its technical excellence globally, its diplomatic activism, particularly as a significant player in the Group of 20 developing countries, and its push to secure a G4 membership bidding to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and Japan is no exception. While India is already a prominent actor in Asia, the country's increasing importance on the global scene should be considered. In the future of Asian politics, India and Japan may be powerful and trustworthy allies since they share core principles such as democracy, press freedom, a market economy. Both countries would work together to foster such ideals in Asia peacefully and stably. It should also be noted that, with Japan and India so closely linked, China may offer strategic space to these two nations, paving the path for Asian security. However, for it to happen, Japan must understand how much India has changed, and India must act as a responsible state with its expanding capabilities.

To keep up with changing times and trends, it is reasonable to expect that Japan's foreign policy radar will be oriented toward strengthening coherent strategic ties with South Asia. Because strategic economic cooperation between Japan and South Asia has so many potentials, Japan should do everything to make it a reality. Japan and South Asia would have common strategic objectives to realise an "arc of Asian prosperity" and cope with global dangers and problems such as the environment, energy, terrorism, and UN reform. Tokyo would benefit from continuing to acknowledge South Asia's strategic weight in a fast-moving Asia and demonstrating an ever-growing interest in expanding its uttermost assistance to the area so that it may overcome a slew of global competitiveness barriers.

Finally, it might be claimed that the expanding Japan-India multidimensional relationship would serve as a gear to revitalise Japan-South Asia relations without limiting them to specific industries.

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The Role of Myanmar in India's Look East Policy

Thi Thi Soe San*

Abstract – India has pursued the "Look East" policy to cultivate extensive economic and strategic relations with East and Southeast Asian nations, address its security concerns, and bolster its standing as a regional power. Myanmar is the only land bridge between India and the Southeast Asia countries, and that is why Myanmar's geopolitical location is of crucial importance for India. Balancing China's economic and security interests in Myanmar, India pursued "constructive engagement" to reconcile with Myanmar. Based on these claims, this paper focuses on how the geostrategic position of Myanmar has become a vital role of India's Look East Policy? This article argues that the "Look East Policy" plays a significant role in influencing India's foreign policy behaviour with Myanmar and stresses that Myanmar plays a vital role in strengthening India's geopolitical position in Southeast Asia. It first discusses India's Look East Policy and the position and vitality of Myanmar in the broader framework of India's Look East Policy. It then analyses the factors that have resulted in successfully approaches of Look East policy rely not only on geopolitical position but also on Linkage projects between India and Myanmar, especially Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project. The qualitative research method will analyse primary and secondary data in the open literature.

Keywords India · India's Look East Policy · Constructive engagement ·

1. Introduction

India's 'Look East' policy originated in the early 1990s when the context of the international system was changed. After economic difficulty in India caused by the economic crisis in 1991, India recalibrated its foreign relations to promote economic development and aimed to extend trade relations towards Southeast Asia under its "Look East Policy" (Ergeteau, 2003, p.102). The 'Look East Policy' is a paradigm shift in India's world perspective. It is 'not merely an external

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economic policy, but also a strategic shift in India's vision of the world and India's place in the evolving global economy.' The main objective of this policy is to forge closer and deeper economic integration, physical connectivity and strategic partnership with its eastern neighbours. India's Look East Policy has found its wings to build bilateral and multilateral alliances with most ASEAN member states in the commerce, culture, and defence sectors (Kang, 2010, p.4). For India, Myanmar is seen as a "land bridge" to Southeast Asian markets and important for its "Look East Policy". Therefore, economic interest becomes a crucial factor in the present Myanmar-India relationship. After the Cold War, India pursued "constructive engagement" to reconcile Myanmar. This new policy led to the signing of the border trade agreement in February 1995, and their relations improved to a higher level and became deeper (Ergeteau 2003, p.123). In 2014, the shift of India's new "Act East Policy" from the former approach of "Look East" during the change of government in Myanmar made a more proactive position and became an opportunity to implement relations between the two countries completely.

2. Literature review

Among leading regional powers in the Indo-Pacific region, India adopted the Look East Policy to cultivate extensive economic and strategic relations with Southeast Asia, bolstering its standing as a regional power and counterweighting the strategic influence of China. Chatterjee, in his book, *The Look East Policy and India's Northeastern States* (Chatterjee 2014:1), wrote that the economic regeneration of India's relatively backward Northeastern states sharing linguistic roots, culture, tribal, and physical connectivity between the Northeast of India and some Southeast Asian states via Myanmar makes it possible to realise this vision. However, Boswell (Boswell 2016:16) argued that India implemented a more aggressive engagement strategy with Myanmar responding to Myanmar's domestic political reforms and concerns about rising Chinese influence. The literature mentioned above pointed out that both Myanmar and India desire to strengthen their friendship. These facts partly assist in the preparation to analyse in this paper. This research emphasises Myanmar's geostrategic position in India's Look East by examining the patterns of engagements between Myanmar and India and analysing the community management between the two countries.

3. Methods

This is qualitative research analysing the primary sources of surveys conducted by scholars or media or organisations and official government statements, and the secondary source of scholarly articles. The geopolitics approach is used in doing research.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 India's Foreign Policy

India's foreign policy developed gradually as a "dual" pattern, involving a regional role and global. There were different principles between the two roles as a realistic policy was conducted with its neighbours, in contrast with the moralistic international policy. The dimension of the regional sector was based on the idea that everything would be done to be a hegemon in the region. NAM created it (Non-Aligned movement) to align India's foreign policy towards newly decolonised states, aiming to set up peaceful areas by attacking common dangers of racialism and imperialism together.

4.2 India's Myanmar Policy

4.2.1 India's constructive engagement

The Myanmar-India relationship is based on historical, cultural, and religious ties. Myanmar is an important neighbour for India due to its geostrategic location, linking Southeast Asia, East Asia and South Asia regions. Myanmar-India relations have been long-standing for two millennia. Both countries were British's colonies. So, the leaders from both sides mutually understand each other and have a close connection in struggling for Independence (Mishra, 2014:112). However, India's relations with Myanmar worsened after General Ne Win's takeover in 1962 due to the government's policy of the 'Burmese Way to Socialism' that led to a massive wave of nationalisation. In 1988, relations saw a further downturn because India supported the pro-democracy activities in Myanmar (Saikia 2009:878). The globalisation of the world's economies greatly intensified international competition and has given rise to a new wave of regionalism. In this changing condition, trade and economic dimensions become a tool of India's foreign policy. Policy reforms were immediately undertaken, and the ASEAN region was singled out as an important area with which India sought a formal tie. Since the early 1990s, China has advanced its Asia Pacific region. Growing Chinese influence in some regional countries and its increasing presence in the Indian Ocean have alarmed the other regional powers (Boswell 2016:15). The scholar Ashraf highlights that the progress of India's engagement towards Myanmar has the three main reasons behind; China overwhelming influence in Myanmar, India's northeastern region's stability, and its 'Look East Policy' (Ashraf 2014:3). Therefore, economic reforms associated with globalisation's integrative forces and anxiety about China's rising power in the Asia Pacific region were basic parameters of India's foreign policy. In India's new foreign policy strategy, its geopolitical interaction with Myanmar does not let India be aggressive toward

Myanmar for many years. If the engagement with Myanmar cannot be achieved, it may be difficult for India in achieving its "Look East" policy to be successful.

4.2.2 India's Look East Policy / Act East Policy

India's 'Act East Policy', initiated in the early 1990s as 'Look East' policy by the Government of India, is now an important component of India's foreign policy. Since the launching of this policy, India's relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has become a key feature of India's foreign policy. In May 2014, about six months after taking office, the newly elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the previous 'Look East Policy' would be transformed into 'Act East' Policy. Attending the 12th ASEAN-India Summit in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on 12 November 2014, the Prime Minister along with ASEAN leaders reviewed the current status of the India-ASEAN Strategic Partnership and placed ASEAN at the "core" of India's 'Act East Policy' calling for the strengthening of relations in all sectors (Touthang 2019:9).

Since the Look East Policy initiation, four objectives have been chased under this policy in many years: (a) regional economic integration, (b) reform and liberalisation, (c) sustained economic growth and (d) development of the Northeastern region. The emphasis placed on each of these objectives has been different at different points of time during the past years. More recently, the emphasis has been on developing the Northeastern region through economic integration with East and Southeast Asia. The Northeastern states lag in economic development, and this gap has widened since independence. The sense of neglect has resulted in various forms of unrest in the region. This region can be a gateway to the East, linking the Northeastern region with Southeast Asia through pipelines, roads, and railways. It is expected to initiate economic development and help the eight Northeastern states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura) to develop infrastructure, communication, trade, investment, logistics, agribusiness and other commercial activities (Hoakip 2011:251). The Northeastern states support the 'Look East' policy, knowing fully about its benefits.

The economic cooperation between India's Northeast region and Southeast Asia is one of the main intentions of the Look East Policy. Accordingly, India has undertaken numerous bilateral and multilateral projects for boosting connectivity between its northeast provinces and Southeast Asia. The critical ongoing and potential infrastructures projects in this regard are the Moreh-Kalewa Road, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, the Trans-Asian Highway, India-Myanmar rail linkages, the Kaladan Project, the Stilwell road, the Myanmar-India-Bangladesh gas or oil pipeline, the Tamanthi Hydroelectricity project and

the optical fibre network between Northeast India and Southeast Asia which has been operational since 2009^{fn2} (Chatterjee 2014:2-3). Infrastructure projects, such as the Trans-Asia Highway between Northeastern India and Bangkok passing through Myanmar, are the key to opening new trading routes between India and the Southeast Asian neighbours. All those will lead to further bilateral cooperation and trade, open the Southeast Asian markets to Delhi, and get India more involved in the Asian trade world (Sinha 2009:1-4). Therefore, Myanmar's role is pivotal for developing India's Northeast region. India's investments in Myanmar's infrastructure are more fruitful for Northeast provinces as they can connect physically with the more prosperous markets of Southeast Asia.

4.2.3 China factor

Myanmar's increasing economic and military relations with China are a cause of concern to India. Since the 1980s, China has been intensely involved with Myanmar. In 1988 after the pro-democracy demonstrations were brutally suppressed, most of the world, including India, chose to disengage with Myanmar. It has been believed that India's pro-democracy stance had driven Myanmar to China's den (Singh 2012:34). India was concerned about China's economic cooperation with Myanmar in trade and infrastructure development sectors as a threat to its maritime and economic interest in the Indian ocean. Given Myanmar's long coastline on the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal and its proximity to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India's relationship with Myanmar acquires great importance in the context of the security of these islands as well as India's strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal. If China secures a pre-eminent position of influence in Myanmar, Myanmar could be used as the springboard for China's ambitions in South and Southeast Asia^{fn3}. (Singh 2012:84). As it is evident from the above, amongst all the Southeast Asian neighbours, Myanmar is more important for India's geostrategic rationale, and that is why Myanmar's domestic and foreign policies have the highest potential to impact India's strategic interests directly.

Given Myanmar's geographical location, India's strategic interests in the relationship with Myanmar include the protection of India's territorial integrity in the remote Northeastern part of India. India's six Northeastern states are sandwiched between Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, and Myanmar. Myanmar shares a 1643 km border with four of these six Northeastern states of India, and these four states are the farthest away from India's heartland. On the other hand, China has an 1125 km border with Arunachal Pradesh, which is claimed as China's territory (Gupta 2013:81). If Myanmar is under the strategic control of China, the protection of India's Northeastern states would be impossible for India. Moreover, the economic growth and development

of these four remote Northeastern states of India mainly depend on full-scale economic cooperation with Myanmar.

5. Myanmar in India's geostrategic rationale

Out of all ASEAN member states, Myanmar is the only country that has connecting land border with India. India and Myanmar share a 1,643 km (1021 miles) long unfenced border. Myanmar has a long coastline that shares parts of the Bay of Bengal, notably the Coco Islands and the Andaman Sea. It has the most extensive border with India after China, approximately 4,000 km long. Another critical point is that India has long historical, cultural and religious ties with Myanmar. Buddhism and Hinduism, two major religions of Myanmar, came to Myanmar from India. The majority of the population in Myanmar follows Buddhism, which is a strong link between these two countries. More importantly, Myanmar, strategically located at the tri-junction of South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia, is India's gateway to the Southeast Asian region. In addition, India's willingness to engage Southeast Asia has been a vital component of India's strategic thinking since the 1990s (Mishra 2014:108). So Myanmar plays a vital role in making stronger the geopolitical position of India in Southeast Asia.

Physically, four of India's eight remote Northeastern provinces: Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh sit, between China and Myanmar and are pretty removed from direct contact with New Delhi. Arunachal Pradesh province is the most vulnerable among them, and China is disputing India's claim to much of that remote state's territory. China has an 1125 km border with Arunachal Pradesh, which is claimed as China's territory 9 (Gupta 2013:81). On the other hand, If Myanmar is under the strategic control of China, the protection of India's Northeastern states would be impossible for India. Moreover, the economic growth and development of these four remote Northeastern states of India mainly depend on full-scale economic cooperation with Myanmar. Since India's northeast is also known for geographical inaccessibility, insurgencies, and underdevelopment, improved cross-border relations with Myanmar could also improve New Delhi's access to and governance within these troubled states. India, like China, also desires more efficient overland routes through Myanmar to supply its northeastern security arms forces⁴. (Boswell 2016: 54). It could improve bilateral security cooperation between India and Myanmar and benefit both nations' internal security programs. Moreover, Myanmar is a potentially significant neighbour for India's energy security as it can be a rich source of natural gas.

Currently, India ranks as the 11th largest energy producer of the world, accounting for about 2.4 % of total annual energy manufacturing of the world and the world's six most significant energy consumers (consumption of about 3.3 % of total

annual energy of the world). India is "a net energy importer, " despite massive annual energy production," because of the large gap between oil consumption and production (Routray 2011:312). Myanmar is potentially a prosperous source of natural gas. Geographically, it is the closest source for India. Therefore, in order to be convenient transporting gas from foreign resources quickly and directly to India, it has been proposed to build three gas pipelines: "the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline in the north, the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline in the west, and the Myanmar-Bangladesh-India pipeline in the east" (Rieffel, 2010, p.117). The gas and oil reserves of Myanmar are of vital interest for future energy requirements of India as Myanmar has eighty-eight trillion cubic feet (TCF) of total gas reserves and oil reserves of around six hundred million barrels of oil reserves (Routray 2011:313). Despite objections from the West, investments have been made in Myanmar's energy sector by the Indian companies like Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) and the overseas arm of India's Oil and Natural Gas Commission – ONGC Videsh Ltd. (Rieffel 2010:117). Therefore, Myanmar is potentially vital for India's energy security.

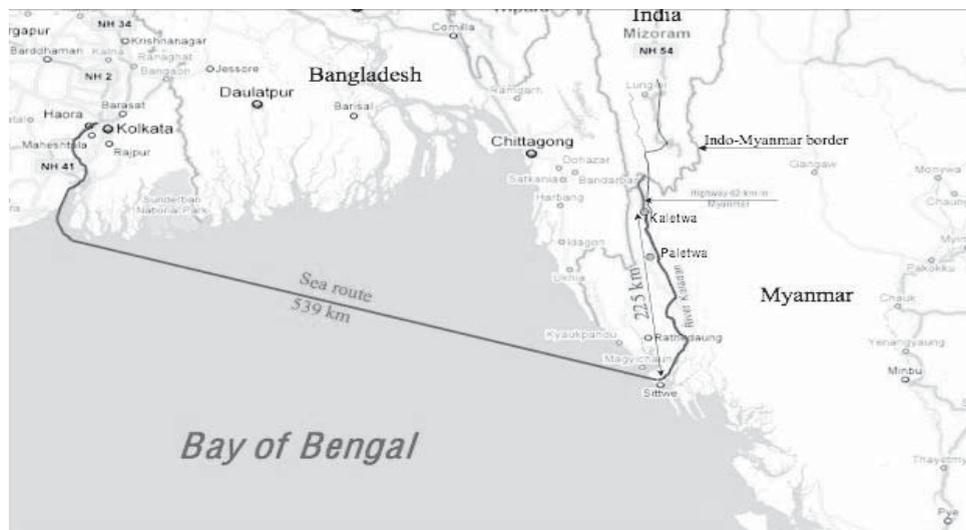
Given Myanmar's long coastline on the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal and its proximity to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India's relationship with Myanmar acquires great importance in the context of the security of these islands as well as India's strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal (Gupta 2013:82). In 2001, India created the Andaman and Nicobar Command to safeguard India's strategic interest in Southeast Asia and the Strait of Malacca and introduced the rapid deployment of military assets in the region. There were several reasons for this creation, including India's greater interest in the Indian Ocean region, the build-up of the Indian Navy, and India's 'Look East' policy of the 1990s that focused on strengthening relations with Southeast Asia (Gupta 2013: 81). India's Andaman and the Nicobar Islands are closer to Myanmar than mainland India. Therefore, improved maritime cooperation with Myanmar would enhance India's sea power projection and help India to check China's regional ambitions.

6. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTT)

Under the Look East Policy, linkage projects between India and Myanmar are several. Some of the important ones are; BLO- Border Liaison Office, KMMTT- Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport, Sittwe port development to improve land/river communication links, Tamu-Kalewa-kalemyo road, Rih-Tiddim (80.17km), Rih-Falm (151.5 km) roads, Tamanthi and Shwezaye hydropower projects, development of Myanmar' off show Shwe oil and natural gas fields. Interestingly, the KMMTT is just one of many infrastructure projects in which India is currently completed involved (Basu 2014:89). Because the Indian

government conceived the KMMTT project to develop a trade route between its mainland and the Northeast as a critical element of the Look East Policy.

The Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTT) was officially signed in April 2008. This \$120 million project, funded by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, began in 2008 and is scheduled to be completed in 2014. It involves private and state-owned Indian companies, such as the Inland Waterways Authority of India and Essar Oil Ltd. Specifically, 'Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit-transport KMMTT Facility' (called Kaladan Project) is to be established through the kaladana river in the Rakhine state of Western Myanmar and the state of Mizoram in India. This project aims to unlock Mizoram by providing southwards a river-cum-road corridor from the Indian border to the Indian Ocean and port facilities in Sittwe. It, therefore, proposes to bypass Bangladesh, with which New Delhi had developed tense relations in the past, very much depending on who is governing Dhaka (Egreteau 2011: 57). After completion, this project will connect the Eastern India seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe port in Myanmar by sea. Then, it will link Sittwe, Myanmar and Mizoram, India, via river and road transport. The complication of this project will reduce the distance from Kolkata (in India) to Sittwe (in Myanmar) by approximately 1328 km (Basu 2014:78).



Source: <http://archive-2.mizzima.com/research/8787-indian-look-east-policy-and-the-kaladan-project-of-western-burma.html>

Given the above argument, the KMMTT projects, when completed, will generate the following possible positive points, impact-wise:

- The implementation of the project will open up many opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds in this region.
- The development of transportation facilities from Sittwe Post, Myanmar, up to Silchar
- Mizoram is to become the gateway to southeast Asia countries after the construction of the kaladana Multimodal Transit Transport Project in neighbouring Myanmar
- The building of a pipeline will bring natural gas from Myanmar via the north-east to the whole of India
- The Northeastern landlocked states will gain easy access to the Bay of Bengal through Myanmar

The region will officially be interested through channels, bringing transparency (Basu 2014:79).

Therefore, KMMTT will become an icon for the 'Look East Policy', aiming to reach out to the ASEAN nations. However, the KMMTT initiative remains focused on the Myanmar region. On the other hand, political instability in the Rakhine state limits KMMTT projects. For India, Kaladan multimodal waterway is strategic in its rights, offering a maritime link and outlet to the land-locked North-East. The seaport is Sittwe, which is also the capital of Rakhine state. The Rakhine State is still disconnected politically, culturally, and economically from Myanmar's heartland (Egretau 2011:17). The construction timetable for this waterway has been held up by armed conflict with the Arakan Army (AA), an ethnic armed organisation fighting the central government, labelled it a terrorist organisation.

The Kaladan Project also has the potential to bring several negative impacts to local communities, such as land confiscation and forced eviction; disruption of and/or complete loss of livelihoods; the increased presence of Burma Army troops; the use of forced labour during project construction; restrictions on freedom of movement and access to river transportation; illegal taxation and extortion; violations of indigenous peoples' rights due to lack of public participation in development decisions through a process of Free, Prior and Informed Consent; and water pollution and environmental degradation (Conference Report, 2015:8). Arakan river network (ARN) argued that the framework of the Agreement of the KMMTT project makes no mention of environmental impact surveys or standards for the development (Basu 2014:67).

Moreover, the youth from the region may have several problems like AIDS. In India, Manipur shares over 11 % among HIV/AIDS cases of about 3.5 million (Routray 2011:316). The tribal farmers and the insurgents are also being encouraged to plant poppies by the drug lords of Myanmar. Therefore, it needs to destroy these plantations and provide agricultural alternatives to the farmers. If not, the border of Myanmar-India will soon be complete with poppy fields and even more supplied for the insurgent groups. Therefore, political instability in Rakhine state, no mention of environmental impact surveys for the development, and the social problem between Myanmar and India border seriously limited for KMMTT project.

7. Conclusion

Geographically, Myanmar is a gateway to Southeast Asia and can be a central hub for exchanging goods, services and technology. To be successful in its "Look East" policy, north-east region stability is a vital determinant. Consequently, cooperation with Myanmar became a decisive factor for India because four of eight northeastern regions, "Manipur, Mizoram, Pradesh, Arunachal and Nagaland", shares border with Myanmar. Therefore, the KMMTT project is vital for India.

India's engagement with Myanmar is a testimony that Myanmar is an integral part of its Look East Policy, and without reaching out to Myanmar, India would not be able to engage ASEAN proactively. Myanmar is indeed India's gateway to Southeast Asia. The KMMTT project is also essential for India's 'Look East Policy' as it further increases the economic relations of Myanmar and India and provides the opportunities to connect six sister's states of India's Northeast. Thus, a win-win situation is provided for both by this project. However, the Look East policy is not yet on firm footing with Myanmar in the northeast.

On the other hand, the KMMTT initiative remains focused on Myanmar. Political instability in Rakhine state, KMMTT project makes no mention of environmental impact surveys for the development and the social problem between Myanmar and India border minimal participation of the economy into the region and global networks. It would be realised through government to government efforts and through community management; both countries need to work together and land together.

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Japan-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship: How It Will Look Like in the Upcoming Five Years

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Abstract – A limited amount of research has been carried out on the future direction of Japan-Bangladesh relations. This article attempts to contribute to Japanese Studies and International Relations literature by exploring the potential direction of Japan-Bangladesh relations for the upcoming five years. This qualitative research indicates that the bilateral relationship between the two countries will be stronger and reach a new level in the coming years. Significantly, the Japanese “megaprojects” in Bangladesh will play a vital role in this regard. However, the Bangladeshi government must address and mitigate the factors likely to hinder the country’s relations with Japan. The research also focuses on the possibility of the Japan-Bangladesh FTA. There are some milestone years ahead regarding the two countries’ bilateral relationship. The research reveals that the potential scenario of the bilateral relationship will be very dynamic and will also be optimum for both countries in the upcoming five years.

Keywords Bilateral relation · Japanese influence · Megaprojects · BIG-B · FTA ·

1. Introduction

Japan is known for its great economic boom, sparkling success in science and technology, and unique cultural heritage. The relationship between Japan and Bangladesh is historical, which mainly gained momentum after the latter’s independence. The people of Japan extended their sincere support and help to the liberation efforts of Bangladesh. Both countries have been maintaining warm and friendly relations over the years. The friendship between these two countries is reflected in their respective flags, where the red circular disc is a common theme. Japan is currently the most prominent development partner of Bangladesh, which has a considerable contribution to improving the latter’s economy and infrastructure. In the previous decades, Japan’s economic and development

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cooperation mainly shaped its relations with Bangladesh. The relationship between these two countries is currently at its peak. However, the next five years are crucial to even further this relationship. This research tries to figure out the nature and possible pattern of the bilateral relationship between Japan and Bangladesh in the next five years.

2. Literature review

Despite having asymmetry in status and economic power, the bilateral relationship of Japan and Bangladesh illustrates a prosperous and harmonious companionship between a developed and a developing country. The two countries have maintained warm relations since 1972 through economic and technical cooperation, cultural exchanges and mutual visits. Japan officially recognized Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state on February 10, 1972, and the Japanese embassy was opened in Dhaka in March 1972 (Rashid, 2012).

From the geostrategic perspective, Bangladesh is critical to Japan, mainly because of its location beside the Bay of Bengal (Akon, 2020). Japan tries to achieve its economic goals in Bangladesh by providing aid, developing trade, and investing in infrastructural projects (Rahman, 2005). As a developing nation, Bangladesh welcomes the flow of foreign investment into the country for creating new ways and means to help improve the job market and economic growth. The contribution of Japan is very significant in this regard. Besides, Bangladesh is a significant source of essential raw materials for Japan and an important market for Japanese manufactured goods (Moni, 2006).

Both Bangladesh and Japan observed the 30th and 40th anniversary of establishing the bilateral relation in 2002 and 2012. Bangladesh adopted the “Look East” policy in 2002 to strengthen its relations with East Asian countries, including Japan (Rahman, 2003). The bilateral relations between the two countries elevated to a “comprehensive partnership” in 2014 during a visit to Japan by the Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (Akon, 2020). The infamous terrorist attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka, which killed 7 Japanese nationals, could not deteriorate the relations between the two countries (Kitaoka, 2016). Both Bangladesh and Japan carefully handled the situation and peacefully moved on.

The relations between the two countries became more dynamic when Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina abandoned her bid for a nonpermanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the term of 2016-2017 to support the candidacy of Japan (The Japan Times, 2014). In return, Japan increased its support for the development of Bangladesh. The government of Japan in 2019 pledged to provide ¥132.7 billion (about US\$1.2 billion) in loans to Bangladesh

to help the South Asian nation improve its infrastructure (The Japan Times, 2019). The Japanese government again pledged to give Bangladesh ¥338.2 billion (about US\$3.2 billion) in 2020 for the same purpose (The Business Standard, 2020). Japan is also one of the biggest trade partners of Bangladesh. The trade deficit between Bangladesh and Japan is comparatively much lower than the trade deficit of China-Bangladesh or India-Bangladesh (Akon et al., 2019). In 2019, the Bangladeshi government approved to set up a 'Special Economic Zone' (SEZ) for the Japanese investors at Araihasar in Narayanganj. This economic zone is expected to go on full-swing operation by 2023, which will attract a considerable number of investments from Japan (The Financial Express, 2021a). More than 300 Japanese companies are operating in Bangladesh, and the number of such companies will likely increase in the coming years (The Financial Express, 2021b).

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) finds the relationship between Japan and Bangladesh for the upcoming five years "significant" since it is helping Bangladesh reach the next level of development with the completion of several mega projects (The Daily Star, 2019). Japan hopes to support the integrated development of the Maheshkhali-Matarbari area to make it an energy and trade hub in the region. The Maheshkhali-Matarbari area is the core area of the "Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt" (BIG-B) initiative, which consists of logistics, energy, trade and waterfront industry hubs (JICA, 2014). According to a senior official of JICA, the bilateral relationship between the two countries are very significant for the coming years because the 'Vision 2021' targets Bangladesh, the 50th anniversary of the Japan-Bangladesh diplomatic relationship in 2022, 50th anniversary of JICA volunteers in 2023, the opening of the Matarbari deep sea-port and Matarbari coal-fired power project and other projects, including the opening of the much-hyped metro rail service (The Daily Star, 2019). These significant events will undoubtedly shape the bilateral relation in the upcoming five years.

Japan also helped Bangladesh control the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The Japanese government gave Bangladesh nearly US\$ 13 million along with a vast amount of 'Personal Protective Equipment' (PPE) as emergency support to tackle the pandemic situation, and under 'The Covid-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan', Japan agreed to give Bangladesh US\$ 330 million (The Financial Express, 2020). Japan will grant this loan with favourable terms for Bangladesh and a low-interest rate, and it will be much helpful for Bangladesh, which is currently struggling to control this pandemic situation.

Another factor is likely to contribute to the bilateral relationship in the coming years. Bangladesh is a 'least developed country' (LDC), and almost all Bangladeshi products currently enter the Japanese market with a duty-free and

quota-free facility. This facility vastly helped this country improve its trade performance with Japan in the previous years, which ultimately positively impacted the bilateral relationship. Bangladesh will graduate from the LDC status by 2026 and lose this benefit. This country needs to pursue Japan to conduct a 'Free Trade Agreement' (FTA) to secure her benefits after graduation (Uddin, 2020). This factor will mainly shape the trade scenario between Japan and Bangladesh in the post-Covid period.

The amity between Japan and Bangladesh is truly remarkable in the international arena. The positive outlooks of the people of both countries have been very helpful to sustain the amity. Although the relations between Japan and Bangladesh are not based on military or security alliance either from the global or regional perspective, Japan has been the most significant development partner of Bangladesh sharing her burden consistently over the years. The people of Bangladesh expect Japan to continue this role in the coming years.

The literature review successfully portrays how the relationship with Japan is essential for Bangladesh, how deep the relationship between the two countries is, and how significant the upcoming five years will be for the bilateral relationship because of the mega projects. It also shows the significance of the BIG-B initiative and how it will transform Bangladesh's Maheshkhali-Matarbari area. However, there exist some gaps in the reviewed literature. The literature review seems to be unable to identify any obstacle or factor that may hamper the bilateral relationship, the overall impact of those megaprojects, and what Japan will achieve from those projects – especially the BIG-B initiative. It also fails to explain how the FTA with Bangladesh will benefit Japan. So, this research intends to fill these gaps by providing a potential scenario of the Japan-Bangladesh relations for the upcoming five years. To underpin this objective, this study answers the following research questions:

- a) What factors may hinder the bilateral relationship between Japan and Bangladesh in the coming years?
- b) What will be the impact of Japanese megaprojects in Bangladesh, and what will Japan achieve from these projects?
- c) If the two countries conduct FTA, how will it benefit Japan?

3. Methodology

This research adopts the interpretivism research philosophy since the research intendsto interpret elements of the study, which are the opportunities and challenges, by involving theattitude and knowledge of others with a common interest. The approach to theory development is

abductive because it enables the researchers to decide the most likely inferences that can be made from a set of observations. Then, the research adopts the multi-method qualitative strategy combining archival research and case study because the research will attempt to light on the factors and the relations among the factors that tend to influence the study by reviewing several pieces of literature. The time horizon is often both cross-sectional and longitudinal. However, the study mainly uses the cross-sectional time horizon. Finally, the study collects data through interviews, web-surfing and documentation. Both primary and secondary data are the sources of this study. Five hypothetical interviews of the Hons. 1st batch students of the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka, were taken on May 23, 2021. All the interviewees have opted for anonymity as they do not want to share their identities. A semi-structured questionnaire written in English has been used for the interview, which is provided in the Appendix section. Several documents have been examined to get secondary data for this research, which have probably not been appraised by previous studies.

This research pays close attention to research ethics. The respondents were informed about the research aim, and however, anonymity is given to the respondents anticipating harm or negative consequences. Braun and Clarke's six steps of knowledge analysis have been followed to research the info (Braun & Clarke, 2006) viz. familiarization with the information, generating initial codes, checking out the themes, reviewing for themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. All the interviews and documents have been read and re-read to familiarize themselves with the five initial ideas. To enhance clarity and a far better understanding for the readers, several interviews have been directly quoted within the analytical sections of this study.

4. Limitations of the study

This study has tried to provide a potential scenario of the bilateral relations between Japan and Bangladesh for the upcoming five years from the perspective of the Bangladeshi people. This research is primarily based on the recent developments in Japan-Bangladesh relations. Only books, articles, newspaper reports, and documents mainly collected from online sources and some interviews formed the base of this study. Most of the other offline data were unfortunately excluded from this research. Examining the official documents of the

governments of both countries would allow the outcome of this research to be more precise and accurate. The primary data of this research was collected only from a few academicians who have a significant level of knowledge in the field of Japan-Bangladesh relations. Therefore, the views of other important people such as government officials, politicians, business people and diplomats of both countries have not been reflected here.

5. Discussion

5.1 Factors which may hinder the bilateral relations

Japan faces many challenges in Bangladesh, and the significant challenges include the dominant influence of China, security issues, poor business environment and cultural differences. These challenges will create factors that may hinder the relations between Japan and Bangladesh in the upcoming years.

There is a strong Chinese influence in Bangladesh, increasing even more, and Japan has a historical rivalry with China. The dominant influence of China in Bangladesh is a direct threat to Japanese interests. If China manages to secure an overall dominance in Bangladesh, it will acutely undermine the interests of Japan in this country. So, this is a significant concern and challenge for Japan to improve its relations with Bangladesh (Interviewee C, 2021). Besides, the activity of the religion-based terrorist groups in Bangladesh is a significant challenge for Japan in terms of security. We know about the 'Holey Artisan Attack', which the Japanese nationals became victims of. Though the activities of these terrorist groups have decreased drastically because of the strong counter-terrorism measures of the Bangladeshi government in recent years, it remains a significant challenge for Japan (Interviewee C, 2021).

The business environment in Bangladesh is not up to the mark for the foreign investors due to the intense corruption, acute bureaucratic red tape phenomenon, procrastination in ports and custom areas, lack of congenial infrastructure, lack of security and lack of political stability. Bangladesh needs to improve its business environment to attract more investments from Japan (Interviewee B, 2021). Moreover, there is a vast cultural difference between Japan and Bangladesh, which is a barrier to bilateral relations. So, this is also a significant challenge for Japan in Bangladesh (Interviewee B, 2021).

The government of Bangladesh must address these issues and start taking the necessary steps. Bangladesh needs both China and Japan to secure its benefits. Though the dominant Chinese influence in Bangladesh handicaps Japanese interests, Bangladesh cannot give up China. What the Bangladeshi government can do in this regard is strengthen relations with Japan without jeopardizing

Bangladesh's relations with China (Interviewee C, 2021). Regarding security concerns, the Bangladeshi government needs to increase its counter-terrorism activities and provide a firm and substantial assurance of security for the people of Japan coming to this country (Interviewee C, 2021).

The business environment in Bangladesh has been consistently poor. Bangladesh must reduce the existing corruption and upgrade its bureaucratic system. The country has achieved some political stability in recent years, and it must be continued for improving the business environment. Besides, the Bangladeshi government must promote 'One Stop Service' for Japanese investors. This system will allow the investors from Japan to get all the investment-related services at a single location. The government of Bangladesh must take these measures to improve this country's business environment (Interviewee B, 2021). To reduce the cultural difference, both Japan and Bangladesh need to increase people-to-people connectivity and promote respective cultures to other countries. The Bangladeshi government has to pursue the Japanese government (Interviewee B, 2021).

5.2 Impact of Japanese projects in Bangladesh

Many development projects in Bangladesh were funded by Japan or completed using Japanese assistance. Meghna Bridge, officially known as the "Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge", was constructed in 1992 using Japanese economic and technical cooperation (Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh, 2020). The Jamuna Bridge, officially known as "Bangabandhu Bridge" and the largest river bridge in Bangladesh, was also built with Japanese assistance (Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh, 2020). The Meghna Bridge made it easier to commute between Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, and Chattogram, where the principal sea-port of Bangladesh is located. The Jamuna Bridge did the same between Dhaka and North Bengal. These two bridges' social and economic impact was immensely positive for Bangladesh (Interviewee D, 2021). In this regard, Interviewee A (2021) opined:

"The two bridges contributed a lot to transport people and goods across the country, which helped increase the economic growth."

Other infrastructural projects assisted by Japan fulfilled the same objective. Japan also extended its support for the development of education, agriculture and rural area of Bangladesh under various projects. The socio-economic impact of such support for this country is beyond imagination (Interviewee A, 2021).

Currently, the works of several major Japanese projects are going on. These major projects are popularly known as 'mega projects'. The Japanese mega projects include 'Dhaka Metro Rail Project', 'Jamuna Railway Bridge Project', 'Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Expansion Project', 'Matarbari Deep Sea-Port

Project' and 'Matarbari Coal-Fired Power Plant Project' (The Business Standard, 2020; Tanaka, 2014). The last two megaprojects are part of the famed BIG-B initiative. Besides, other Japanese projects related to agriculture, education, governance, urban and rural areas are also going on. All the Japanese mega projects in Bangladesh are expected to be completed thoroughly within five years. The impact of these projects will be far more positive than all the previous Japanese projects combined (Interviewee E, 2021). The economic growth of Bangladesh will be highly accelerated along with the considerable improvement of the social standard. These projects will change the look of this country and immensely help achieve its goal of becoming a developed nation (Interviewee E, 2021).

Not only Bangladesh but also Japan will be highly benefited from these projects. Many Japanese companies and organizations are involved in almost every phase of the projects, and those companies and organizations are working in terms of the construction and consultation of the projects. So, the projects derive a handsome amount of economic benefit for them (Interviewee D, 2021). Besides, the accomplishment of these megaprojects will drastically increase the Japanese influence in Bangladesh, ultimately decreasing the existing Chinese influence. So, these mega projects will immensely help Japan secure its economic and political goals in this country (Interviewee D, 2021).

5.3 Japan-Bangladesh FTA

Bangladesh is a 'least developed country' (LDC) according to the United Nations. Because of this, Bangladesh gets an advantage and preference in trade with other countries, allowing it to secure benefits while trading with Japan. Among the products Bangladesh exports to Japan, almost all the products enter the Japanese market with duty-free and quota-free facilities. The graduation of Bangladesh from the LDC group will take place in 2026 (The Daily Star, 2021). The graduation of a country from the LDC group indicates obtaining official global recognition for its development achievements. It will be valid for Bangladesh as well after graduation. However, leaving the LDC group will relinquish many privileges regarding trade that Bangladesh currently enjoys. Significantly, the duty-free and quota-free facility for exports will not be available for Bangladesh anymore. After graduation, Bangladesh will face high export duty in other countries, including Japan.

The bilateral trade between Japan and Bangladesh is currently on the rise. In order to secure trade benefits in Japanese markets, Bangladesh needs to conduct a 'Free Trade Agreement' (FTA) with Japan before the LDC graduation. A 'Free Trade Agreement' (FTA) refers to an agreement that creates a free trade area between the cooperating countries. The FTA usually reduces the tariffs and duties on

imports and exports. If Bangladesh conducts the FTA with Japan, it will enable the Bangladeshi products to enter the Japanese markets at low tariffs and duties. A recent study conducted by the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) suggested that Bangladesh sign the FTA with Japan (Uddin, 2020).

The government of Bangladesh must take the initiative to conduct a joint feasibility study with Japan in terms of the FTA (Interviewee C, 2021). Before conducting the study, it cannot be said clearly whether the Japan-Bangladesh FTA would be feasible or not (Interviewee C, 2021). However, Interviewee B (2021) was optimistic. In this regard, Interviewee B stated:

“The FTA between Bangladesh and Japan is most likely to be feasible, and Japan has signed the FTA in Asia or is involved in similar initiatives with India and ASEAN countries. The economy of Bangladesh is one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, and Bangladesh is capable of fulfilling the prerequisites like those Asian countries to conduct the FTA with Japan.”

Japan will also be benefited from the FTA with Bangladesh. Japan has an economic goal of capturing the big market of Bangladesh for its products. The FTA will help Japan achieve this economic goal (Interviewee B, 2021; Interviewee D, 2021). Japanese products are generally popular in Bangladesh because of their high quality. However, consumers in Bangladesh do not buy Japanese products in a large amount due to the high price. The FTA will reduce the tariffs and duties on products from Japan, ultimately decreasing the price of those products to some extent (Interviewee B, 2021). More Bangladeshi consumers can afford Japanese products after that. It will gradually enable Japan to get a firm foothold in the Bangladeshi market (Interviewee D, 2021).

So, FTA or similar initiatives will play a vital role in shaping the bilateral relation between Japan and Bangladesh in the coming years.

6. Potential scenario of Japan-Bangladesh relations

The upcoming five years will be extraordinary regarding the bilateral relation between Japan and Bangladesh. The year-2022 will mark the 50th anniversary of establishing bilateral relations between these two countries. Both countries are willing to observe the anniversary with great enthusiasm. Once the relationship between Japan and Bangladesh was a somewhat “patron-client” relationship. It has recently transformed into a “comprehensive partnership” because of the strong collaboration between the two countries. The amount of Japan’s ODA and FDI for Bangladesh is currently rising. The bilateral trade is also increasing. These aspects will continue to increase in the upcoming five years as well. The government of Bangladesh must work diligently to mitigate the factors which are likely to hinder this country’s relations with Japan. Significantly, the government

needs to emphasize improving this country's poor business environment. A vibrant business environment in Bangladesh will immensely help strengthen her relations with Japan in the coming years. It is a positive sign that the Bangladeshi government has addressed these issues and taken the necessary steps.

The Japanese megaprojects in Bangladesh will considerably consolidate these two countries' relations. Significantly, the great initiative called the BIG-B will be a 'game-changer' for Bangladesh in terms of its internal and more extraordinary regional affairs. The BIG-B initiative will produce immense benefits for Japan as well. All of these projects will be completed within the next five years. The significance of the Japanese economic zone and the Japanese business organizations in Bangladesh also cannot be overlooked. They will also contribute a lot to further the bilateral relations in the years to come. If the two countries conduct the FTA, it will also become a critical factor in the bilateral relationship. The Japanese influence in Bangladesh will undoubtedly increase in the upcoming five years, and the overall relations between these two countries will be more robust and dynamic.

7. Conclusion

It is difficult to say what wait in the future for sure. The future always remains uncertain. However, the future direction of a particular matter or issue can be predicted based on the prevailing aspects or features. The potentiality of that matter also contributes to the prediction. The more features or potentiality exist, the more accurate the prediction becomes. The existing aspects of the current Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relation firmly indicate a robust and dynamic future in this regard. The historic friendship of the two countries is most likely to go even further in the upcoming five years.

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Annexure

Interview Questionnaire

01. What are the significant challenges that Japan faces in Bangladesh?
02. What can the Bangladeshi government do to mitigate those challenges?
03. How positive was the impact of the previous Japanese projects in Bangladesh?
04. Will the impact of the ongoing Japanese projects be as positive as the previous ones?
05. Is the Japan-Bangladesh FTA feasible?
06. What may Japan gain from the FTA with Bangladesh?

N.B.: All interviews were administered with the Hons. 1st batch students of the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka and anonymity is given to all of them because of their requests (as mentioned in the Methodology section).

Strengthening an Enduring Friendship: Contextualising Japan-Bangladesh Defence Cooperation

Tanvir Habib*

Abstract– Historical amicability, development partnership and mutual trust have shaped Japan-Bangladesh relations. While previous engagements reflected donor and recipient relationships, transformation into more economic cooperation has been observed in recent years. The trajectory of the economic relationship remains strong, and all indications point to them remaining so. However, cooperation related to defence remains non-existent. Although Japan's previous 'peace-state' orientation might answer the historical context, the reformulation of Japan's defence export policy under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe raises the question of the efficacy of non-engagement at present. The paper aims at ascertaining the contexts where cooperation is viable and mutually beneficial. The paper argues that Bangladesh's Abe reformulation and the concurrent defence modernisation drive offer both countries a natural alignment choice. The paper concludes that capitalising on this opportunity, a natural progression through the establishment of the Joint Security and Defence Dialogue (JSDD) Forum, would allow both countries to engage each other under the condition of organisational stability and continuance.

Keywords Japan-Bangladesh relations · Defence Cooperation · 'Peace-State' · Japanese Defence Export Policy · Pivot to Asia · Forces Goal 2030 ·

1. Introduction

Bangladesh and Japan enjoy a long and trusted relationship. Ever since the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation, Japan has remained one of the key development partners. Japanese assistance in various sectors has only increased over the years. The relationship will be further strengthened with the gradual implementation of Japanese funded Deepsea port and associated

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industrial facilities in the Matarbari project (UNB News, 2021). Moreover, Japanese funding of the Metrorail in Dhaka has solidified Japan as a critical investment originator for Bangladesh. While economic engagement and development assistance remain critical drivers of bilateral relations, the defence sector is one key arena with strong potential. Much has been written on its potential since the second Shinzo Abe administration's reformulation of Japan's defence export policy. However, there remains a dearth of academic literature regarding how this opportunity might be realised in the context of Japan-Bangladesh relations. This paper aims to contextualise the implications of Japan's reformulations of its defence export policy and how that might assist in developing Bangladeshi defence capabilities. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the current government articulated a defence modernisation plan termed Forces Goal 2030 after it was elected to power in 2009. The modernisation plan envisages modern weapons platforms and a thorough modernisation of all sectors of the armed forces. Given Japan's aim at defence cooperation with friendly countries and its crucial position within Abe's pivot to Asia (Sakaki & Maslow, 2020), cooperation with Bangladesh can benefit the Japanese strategic interest. With a concurrent development inside Bangladesh that aims at overhauling the military and modernising it to face future challenges, the paper observes a potential natural alignment pattern developing. Realising such a cooperative venture can potentially benefit both the friendly nations and usher in a future where strategic alignment can be envisioned. With a qualitative outlook, the paper aims to understand the implications of Japanese reformulation and identify potential sectors where cooperation is feasible.

2. Contextualising Japan's defence re-orientation

The rampant militarism and the cataclysmic events of the Second World war left a deep scar on the Japanese nation. It, in turn, led to the reformulation of Japan as a Peace State. However, a re-orientation of Japan's pacifist outlook occurred during the Shinzo Abe period, and it can be defined as Japan's emergence as a stable status state. Structural realism posits the influence of international structure on the foreign policy outlook of states (Waltz, 1979).

On the other hand, Neo-classical realism outlines the influence of domestic and external factors on states' foreign policies (Rose, 1998). Keeping in view these perspectives, the paper outlines how regional and domestic concerns shaped Japan's orientation towards defence. The gradual deregulation of Japanese arms control and the successful cases of arms exports, albeit slow, showcases Japan's crawl towards a 'normal state' status in the international system. The paper argues that this reformulation, supported to some extent by techno-nationalism (C. W. Hughes, 2011), should be seen as arising from a complex interplay of aspiring to

achieve 'normal state' status and also responding to an uncertain strategic environment (Grønning, 2014; C. Hughes, 2018; C. W. Hughes, 2017; Jain & Er, 2012; Sakaki & Maslow, 2020). Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has long aspired to shrug off the peace constraints (Sakaki & Maslow, 2020). While Shinzo Abe's reforms finally led it to be more autonomous, the actual shift in Japanese policy regarding arms export or defence cooperation has been long in the making, with the defence industrial complex taking a nuanced but influential role (Sakaki & Maslow, 2020, pp. 653–655). The realisation of a lack of price competitiveness due to lack of international orders was identified as small and medium enterprises were unable to supply the big giants like MHI (Mitsubishi Heavy Industries) or KHI (Kawasaki Heavy Industries) (Lyon, 2011; Sakaki & Maslow, 2020, p. 653). It led the Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), which was supportive of the arms export ban for quite some time, to gradually change its outlook towards Japanese arms export policies (Sakaki & Maslow, 2020, p. 654).

The transformations have been extremely slow to match the pace of other global arms exporting countries, perhaps signifying the structural limitations of Japanese defence exports (S. Takahashi, 2008). However, a growing concern about the emerging uncertainty about the regional security environment has accelerated this transformation. The rapid rise of China, its aggressive posture regarding regional territorial disputes (of which Japan is a part), and the threat emanating from North Korea further accentuated Japan's reproaching towards its arms policy (Chakravorty, 2017; Grønning, 2014; C. W. Hughes, 2017; Jain & Er, 2012; Lyon, 2011; Sakaki & Lukner, 2016; Sato, 2019). Japan, in recent years, has had to reconsider its strategic posture vis-à-vis changing regional environment, and the persistent threat from North Korea has forced it to emphasise its national defence.

Moreover, the regional uncertainties related to the Chinese aggressive territorial dispute stance have forced it to reformulate its defence outlook. In addition to these, Shinzo Abe's 'Pivot to Asia' also envisioned a pivotal role for its defence cooperation with other countries and defence export was seen as a key arena where Japan needed to rethink its traditional approach (Sakaki & Maslow, 2020, p. 656). While we generally take threat perception as emanating from changes in regional circumstances or politico-ideological reasons, it is necessary to ascertain how such approaches are developed within a government to ascertain the policy implications. Recent trends suggest a centralising trend among governments in their threat perception practices (Oren & Brummer, 2020). Noting how governmental threat perception during the second- Abe administration has undergone major changes, Oren and Brummer state that: 'First, Japan has recently undergone extensive centralisation of security policy decision-making power, which enables us to evaluate the potential impact change over the government's

threat perception. Second, since the beginning of the decade, observers both within and outside Japan have portrayed Japan's security environment in increasingly harsher terms (Oren & Brummer, 2020). They further state that: '...considerable explanatory power rests with the domestic structural elements inherent in government centralisation and political instrumentality(Oren & Brummer, 2020, p. 2).' These tie down to Abe's status quo changing determination, i.e. transformation of constitutional provisions regarding defence outlook and arms exports(Oren & Brummer, 2020). In turn, the complex interplay of all these factors accelerated its outlook towards arms export and defence industries.

3. Outlining Japanese defence cooperation

The realisation that Japan needed to reformulate its outlook towards arms exports and its defence industries initiated heated debate inside Japan because of associated sensitivities related to history. However, it became evident that a Japan with a transformed security environment no longer guaranteed its security with efficacy. Domestic factors such as industry inputs through Keidanren and Abe's visions of Japan's role and the external factors like aggressive Chinese posture, realignment of with America's 'Pivot to Asia' through defence cooperation with the USA (C. Hughes, 2018; Wright, 2021) and regional allies and persistent North Korean threat and a lack urgency regarding threat perception of Russia(Oren & Brummer, 2020) all facilitated the policy rebound.

To understand the contexts where Abe's reformulated Three Principles would be applicable (Sakaki & Maslow, 2020), it is necessary to outline these (MOFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014; The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, n.d.). They are:

1. Clarification of cases where transfers are prohibited Overseas transfer of defence equipment and technology will not be permitted when:
 - a) the transfer violates obligations under treaties and other international agreements that Japan has concluded,
 - b) the transfer violates obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions, or
 - c) the defence equipment and technology are destined for a country party to a conflict (a country against which the United Nations Security Council is taking measures to maintain or restore international peace and security in the event of an armed attack).

2. Limitation to cases where transfers may be permitted as well as strict examination and information disclosure
 - In cases not within item 1 above, transfers that may be permitted will be limited to the following cases. Those cases will be examined strictly while ensuring transparency. More specifically, overseas transfer of defence equipment and technology may be permitted in such cases as the transfer contributes to the active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation or Japan's security from the viewpoint of
 - implementing international joint development and production projects with countries cooperating with Japan in security area including its ally, the U.S (from now on referred to as "the ally and partners"),
 - enhancing security and defence cooperation with the ally and partners and supporting the activities of the Self-Defense Forces, including the maintenance of its equipment and ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals.
3. Ensuring appropriate control regarding extra-purpose use or transfer to third parties in cases satisfying 2. above, overseas transfer of defence equipment and technology will be permitted only in cases where appropriate control is ensured. More concretely, the Government will in principle oblige the Government of the recipient country to gain its prior consent regarding extra-purpose use and transfer to third parties. However, appropriate control may be ensured with the confirmation of control system at the destination in such cases as those where the transfer is judged to be appropriate for active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation when the transfer involves participation in an international system for sharing parts, and when the transfer involves the delivery of parts to a licensor (*The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, n.d.*).

Considering the first principle that deals with transfer permissibility, it dawns upon us that any transfers occurring to Bangladesh should follow existing international regulations on such transfers. Considering that Bangladesh does not have any arms embargo placed on it and has never violated any U.N. regulations, transfers are not prohibited. Moreover, in the context of regulations, Bangladesh is a signatory to all U.N. regulations relating to the Chemical, Biological and

Radiological convention apart from being a member of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. Bangladesh is not a party to any conflicts in the third subsection of the first principle. There have been no U.N. Security Council Resolutions prohibiting any arms transfers to Bangladesh; no such statutory regulations remain in potential transfer to Bangladesh.

The Second Principle outlines that: 'overseas transfer of defence equipment and technology may be permitted in such cases as the transfer contributes to the active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation (*The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology*, n.d.)'. Considering that Bangladesh is a crucial Troop Contributing Country to the U.N. Peacekeeping Missions and the track record of Bangladesh contributing to global peace is untarnished, such possibilities of defence transfers and development make the case convincing. Moreover, the arguments become further convincing due to Bangladesh's already existing defence cooperation with the United States and other European countries with whom Japan has signed various deals since Abe's reformulation (Ministry of Defense of Japan, n.d.). Recent news suggests that Bangladesh has heavily tilted towards the possibility of buying American made Apache attack helicopters (Grevatt, 2020). However, delays have occurred due to Bangladesh not signing two defence deals with the United States. The General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA 2019). It might take a few years for the negotiations to complete and for the deal to materialise. Thus, the second principle also appears to support defence cooperation.

The Third Principle focuses on the importance of user control and transfers to third parties. There has been no record of Bangladesh violating the export control regulations or transferring any military equipment to third parties that violate any defence agreements. The legal restrictions towards defence cooperation per se do not apply in the case of Bangladesh. Moreover, the defensive nature of Bangladeshi armed forces and the fact that Bangladesh has never been aggressive in its armed forces further cements the basic principle of international cooperation and contribution to international peace. The added impetus to defence cooperation is provided when considering the already mentioned role of Bangladesh in UNPKO (Peace Keeping Operations) (Anik, 2020; Department of peace operations, 2021; Department of Peace operations, 2021). Given the dynamism of threat scenarios and the general nature of non-state actors being dealt with the PKO operations and the changing nature of such operations, it becomes a natural choice to cooperate.

Interestingly most modern systems that Bangladesh purchases like the Mi-17 helicopters and MRAP (Mine Resistant and Ambush Protected) vehicles are often deployed in U.N. missions (Army Recognition, 2021). Thus further distancing any

potential of Japanese armaments or defence products being used against any state actors in short to medium term. While the paper would argue that even if Bangladesh uses Japanese armaments or defence equipment against nation-state actors, it should still be acceptable. Given good historical relations between Bangladesh and India, it can be stated with a degree of dexterity that the possibility of a war between the two friendly nations is very low and almost non-existent. The possibility of a war with Myanmar is also low, considering Bangladesh's response to all the provocations and airspace violations by Myanmar has been to approach it diplomatically and to diffuse tensions (Bangla News 24 Desk, 2017; Tribune Desk, 2017).

Intending to export defence equipment's, Japan has enacted an Export Trade Control Order for its defence equipment (*Overview of Japan's Export Controls*, 2015). These are outlined as 'Arms and Arms Production-related Equipment Listed as Item 1 of the Annexed List 1 of the Export Trade Control Order'. These are:

1. Firearms and cartridges to be used, therefore (including those to be used for emitting light or smoke), and accessories there of, as well as parts thereof.
2. Ammunition (excluding cartridges), equipment for its dropping or launching, and accessories thereof, as well as parts thereof.
3. Explosives (excluding ammunition) and military fuel.
4. Explosive stabilisers.
5. Directed energy weapons and parts thereof.
6. Kinetic energy weapons (excluding firearms) and equipment for their launching, as well as parts thereof.
7. Military vehicles, accessories, and bridges specially designed for military use and parts thereof.
8. Military vessels, hulls and accessories thereof, as well as parts thereof.
9. Military aircraft and accessories thereof, as well as parts thereof.
10. Anti-submarine nets, anti-torpedo nets, and buoyant electric cable for sweeping magnetic mines.
11. Armour plates and military helmets and bullet-proof jackets and parts thereof.
12. Military searchlights and control equipment thereof.
13. Bacterial, chemical and radioactive agents for military use, and equipment

and parts for dissemination, protection, purification, detection, or identification.

14. Chemical mixtures specially formulated for the decontamination of objects contaminated with biological agents and radioactive materials adapted for use in war and chemical warfare agents.
15. Biopolymers for detection and identification of chemical agents for military use and cultures of cells for production thereof, as well as biocatalysts for decontamination and degradation of chemical agents for military use and expression vectors, viruses or cultures of cells containing the genetic information necessary for production thereof.
16. Equipment and parts thereof for the production or testing of military explosives.
17. Equipment for the production or testing of arms and parts and accessories (*Arms and Arms Production-Related Equipment Listed as Item 1 of the Annexed List 1 of the Export Trade Control Order*, n.d.).

These summarise the list of products that Japan intends to export, but there is a possibility to engage in joint development of defence products.

We also witness transformations within Japanese bureaucracy to better deal with the challenges associated with defence cooperation or exports. It was observed that Japan needed to streamline the functions of its various agencies. To streamline various agencies of the Ministry of Defence into one agency and to help to set up a foundation for smoother defence cooperation with allies and other overseas partners, the Japanese government established the 'Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA) in 2014. The primary mission of ATLA is as follows:

1. Ensuring Technological Superiority and Responding to Operational Needs Smoothly and Quickly
2. Efficient Acquisition of Defense Equipment (Project Management)
3. Strengthening of Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation with other countries
4. Maintain and Strengthen Defense Production and Technological Bases
5. Cost Reduction Efforts and Strengthening of Inspection and Audit Functions (Ministry of Defense, n.d.).

4. Japanese defence agreements and potential challenges

Japanese defence cooperation agreements focus highly on jointness with the USA. With Japan being the regional depot for F-35 aircraft, both countries also have a joint maintenance base for the V-22 aircraft (Ministry of Defense of Japan, n.d.). Japan has also signed deals with the U.K. on UK-Japan High-Level Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation Steering Panel, Cooperation on Future Combat Air System (FCAS) / Future Fighter and also on Cooperative Research on a Joint New Air to Air Missile (JNAAM) that utilises Japanese made Active radar seeker for the Meteor Missile (Allison, 2017; *Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting 2021: Joint Statement, 2021*; "Japan and U.K. to Collaborate on Missile Development," 2017; K. Takahashi, 2020). While the full-blown scope of Japanese defence deals cannot be discussed within the paper's limits, they provide the possibility of defence cooperation between Japan and Bangladesh. It is crucial in the Japan-Bangladesh context as Japan can utilise Bangladeshi labour and have a more competitive advantage. Cooperation with Bangladesh will be helpful as Bangladesh can merge its cheap labour and already existing nascent industrial base with Japanese technological excellence to create better products in terms of quality and pricing.

A few challenges that Japan faces are High labour costs, lack of expertise in previous defence contracts and slow pace of its institutions to defence diplomacy (Pryor, 2016; Wright, 2021; Yeo, 2018). The gradually declining birth rate that has been observed for the past few decades has created a significant hindrance to Japanese defence export potential (Bosack, 2019; Pryor, 2016). The lack of labour means that mass-scale cheap labour needed for such competitive defence trade is absent, thus forcing Japan to utilise its domestic labour forces, further escalating the cost due to unavailability or higher wages. Moreover, Japan's lack of proper guest worker schemes, as offered by Germany during the 1960s, also creates a problem for Japan to effectively address this issue, although Japan has been dealing with this (Menju, 2014; Sekine, 1990). Considering that Japan has one of the lowest immigrant acceptance rates globally, the prevailing mentality regarding immigration and non-Japanese people coming to work and living in Japan can be ascertained (Davison & Peng, 2021). Similar to what we have witnessed during Brexit or the immigration debate in the USA or even in Germany, cheap, abundant labour from abroad might create domestic backlashes from the right-wing as well as other groups because some segment of the Japanese society might feel their jobs, livelihood and culture are being threatened (Davison & Peng, 2021; Menju, 2014; Sekine, 1990; Stokes & Devlin, 2018).

Regarding actual exports, Japan's first successful export was to the Philippines. Japan was selected to supply radars for the Philippines Air Force. The order consists of both fixed and mobile radar systems. The contract is valued at about \$

103.5 million (Roblin, 2020). According to Philippines Defence Resource, the deal reportedly includes one mobile J/TPS-P14ME and three fixed J/FPS-3ME (Philippine Defense Resource, 2020). These are Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radars. AESA in military perspectives form the top tier as they are much more resistant to jamming and other electronic countermeasures. The radar systems which the Philippines Air Force is ordering are better suited for medium-to-high altitude surveillance (Roblin, 2020). So the Philippines will have better situational awareness in the region. Mitsubishi Electric Corporation (MELCO) builds the radars. Japan has also donated five training aircraft to the Philippines Navy to strengthen its capability. The Philippines has already deployed these planes in disputed shoals in the South China Sea (A.P. Desk, 2018; Nikkei Asian Review, 2017).

Moreover, Japan has already signed a deal for logistical supply with India and both countries mull signing the Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) that will facilitate jointness in their defence cooperation (KYODO News, 2020). Similarly, Japan and Indonesia have ironed out a deal to facilitate military sales and defence cooperation with each other (Kobara, 2021). All these points to a more robust approach by Japan regarding defence sales and cooperation.

5. Potential defence cooperation sectors

Submarine: Japan has recently started work on its successor to the Soryu Class of submarines (Mizokami, 2019; Yeo, 2020). Soryu is one of the best diesel-electric attack submarines in the world. Naval Technology report states: 'A diesel-electric propulsion system powers Soryu. Two Kawasaki 12V 25/25 SB-type diesel engines and four Kawasaki Kockums V4-275R Stirling engines provide a total power output of 2,900kW surfaced and 6,000kW submerged. Soryu is the first submarine of the JMSDF to be equipped with Stirling engines manufactured by Sweden-based Kockums. Stirling is a silent and vibration-free external combustion engine. The Kockums Stirling air-independent propulsion system onboard reduces the need for frequent battery charging and increases the submerged endurance of the submarine. Soryu class is fitted with six HU-606 533mm torpedo tubes for Type 89 torpedoes and UGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship missiles. The submarine is equipped with a ZPS-6F navigation or surface search radar. The sonar suite integrates four low-frequency flank arrays, a bow-array, and towed array sonar (*SS Soryu Class Submarines, n.d.*).'

Moreover, the quality of Soryu and the fact that the project started in 2005 means that it is still a very new platform and suits Bangladeshi needs much better than what we have available now (Habib, 2017). While the new Taigei-class submarine is sure to be of much interest to Bangladesh, the pricing might prohibit such acquisition, and instead, Bangladesh should focus on acquiring Soryu class as

they are being gradually replaced by the new submarines. Soryu offers top of the line quality and has the endurance to patrol the depths of the Bay of Bengal (Military Today, n.d.; *SS Soryu Class Submarines, n.d.*).

Radars and Electronics: The recent deal with the Philippines proves that Japan is capable and willing to sell military equipment to countries it considers friendly (Roblin, 2020). Japanese electronics remain a world leader, and Bangladesh requires better quality radars and communication systems to fulfil its Forces Goal 2030. Japan has a plethora of equipment like ground surveillance radars, communication equipment, military radars, various lifesaving products from which Bangladesh can pick and choose what it needs best (Ministry of Defense of Japan, 2020). It would be prudent to assume that not all Japanese products suit Bangladeshi needs and that Bangladesh fulfils some of its needs from other sources. However, the paper aims to identify potential sectors for cooperation and not make any specific suggestion regarding actual requirements as those will be the prerogative of respective defence services of Bangladesh and subject to the success of defence diplomacy between the countries.

Air to Air Missiles: As part of its modernisation drive, Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) has sought high-performance Multirole Combat Aircraft. The need for such a platform has finally transformed into a westward leaning by BAF. While the initial tender was restricted only to Russia, it was later cancelled due to stalled negotiation on various grounds (Rafiq, 2021). Later the U.K. offered Bangladesh to assist it with the procurement of high-performance fighter jets in a strategic dialogue held between both countries, and Bangladesh leaned towards this platform (British High Commission Dhaka, 2019). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office news release stated: 'The U.K. further expressed its readiness to support Bangladesh with procurement of high calibre Multi-Role Combat Aircraft alongside other modernisation programmes (British High Commission Dhaka, 2019).' As the U.K. does not have, in production, any other fighter platform other than Typhoons, the indication becomes clear. The possibility of a Typhoon is very high as it offers unmatched capability in terms of technology, weapons and maintenance.

Moreover, Eurofighter Magazine also mentioned Bangladesh as a potential customer (Garner, 2021). Bangladesh Air Force has also asked the government for more than US\$ 3 billion to solidify the point further to procure a western platform (Rafiq, 2021; Staff Writer, 2021). Due to the nature of modern air combat, where having a proper Beyond Visual Range (BVR) combat capability have become more pressing, any Bangladeshi platform that is due to come will come equipped with such BVR missiles. American BVR missiles might not be a natural choice as the strings associated and the lack of defence deals like GSOMIA and ACSA as

mentioned above (Diplomatic Correspondent, 2019). The other options are French and the latest game-changing Meteor missile. French option is quite old, and even the Rafale fighters that India has purchased from France will be equipped with Meteor missiles (Staff Writer, 2020). It is where Japan can be brought in. Japanese seeker technology is one of the best in the world, and in the UK-Japan strategic dialogue, both countries decided to cooperate on using Japanese seekers on Meteor missiles (Chutner, 2016; "Japan and U.K. to Collaborate on Missile Development," 2017; K. Takahashi, 2020). Any western platform coming to Bangladesh will be naturally equipped with Meteor missiles, and hence this cooperative venture between U.K. and Japan is where Bangladesh can benefit from. Accessing intelligent seeker technology from Japan will enable Bangladesh to enhance its airpower as a credible deterrent force.

Next-Generation Weapons Systems: Japan has invested heavily in next-generation weapons technology like Directed Energy weapons, Hypersonic missiles and Missile defence Systems (Ministry of Defense, 2016). While most projects are still under research, it offers Bangladesh an opportunity to get involved in the process and be prepared for the challenges of the next few decades and the emerging threats. The Japanese Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA) has set up its visions and strategies for successfully implementing its goals, and cooperation is a vital part of that (Ministry of Defense, 2016; Ministry of Defense of Japan, n.d.). Thus the potential benefits to be gained from such a cooperative venture remains enormous.

6. Conclusion

The reformulation of Japanese defence export policy under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has offered a unique opportunity for Bangladesh that requires proper scrutiny. The implications for both countries represent a future trajectory that is congenial to both, and identifying potential sectors for cooperation will remain a key identifier of future success. It is suggested that both countries form a Joint Security and Defence Dialogue (JSDD) forum where regular discussions occur. It will enable institutional stability and continuity in the development of the relationship. Given the nature of future emerging threats, Bangladesh will emerge as a net-gainer of this arrangement, and Japan can envision similar outcomes. With an integrated defence cooperation agreement, joint development and production will permit the economic viability of the projects and competitive advantages for the end products, thus justifying the primary objectives of any such association. As Bangladesh's urgency to modernise its armed forces gradually lean it to the western block, Japan can benefit from the strategic alignment resulting from its defence cooperation with Bangladesh. Given the economic nature of the relationship, the paper believes that broader strategic and regional concerns allow

both countries a natural choice to cooperate in the defence sector and thus elevate the relationship into a strategic one. It will result in more strategic stability in the South Asian region with a trickle-down effect on the broader Asia-Pacific region.

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SHINTO: The Substratum of Japanese Nationalism

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Abstract– Shinto has functioned as the *élan vital* for all the forms and facets of Japanese nationalism. The pervasive presence of Shinto as the substratum of identity is evident from the historical analysis of Japanese nationalism. Shinto is a rudimentary belief system that connects Japanese people's history to their primordial myth. The origin of Japan and its divinity, imperial institution, and infallibility are deeply entrenched in Japanese minds. The imperial house has been the venerated institution, and the emperor serves as the chief priest of Shinto. These are the products of the Japanese myth and Shinto belief system, which translate into the structuring of Japanese identity. The nucleus of the idea of nationalism is identity formation and its articulation through innumerable media at different junctures. Shinto provides Japanese people with the foundation for this collective identity by indirectly influencing the Japanese heart and mind. The preservation of the spirit of Japan and the essence of Yamato has also been emphasised and expressed through the concept of *kokutai* since the Edo period. This work attempts to shed interpretive light on Shinto's imprint on Japanese nationalism.

Keywords Shinto · Nationalism · Myth · Substratum · Kokutai ·

1. Introduction

Ethno-symbolic interpretation of nationalism provides the fundamental theoretical explanation for the construction of the idea of nationalism based on a set of beliefs, faith and religion. The primary significance of nationalism is forging a nation's specific and distinct identity based on its objective and subjective factors. The identity thus formed functions like a cohesive force that binds the country's people together and offers them a sense of belongingness. Also, the ideal future envisioned by the people for their nation and their brethren remains a shared vision that is materialised with the help of nationalism.

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A look at history clarifies that religious practices and faith play a pivotal role in building and sustaining the discourse of nationalism. In the case of Japan, Shinto as a set of socio-religious practices has been an anchor for nationalism at large. The faith, a set of beliefs, practices, and/or religious assumptions, distinguishes the adherents from other cultures and civilisations. This distinctness first provides a uniqueness which later assumes a sense of pride due to psychological associations. In some instances, the sense of pride integrates a sense of superiority which creates the idea of an inferior other as a contextual screen. These developments give rise to an aggressive and belligerent notion of nationalism, which motivates nations for their self-preservation even at the expense of the existence of others. However, the nationalist construct of identity generally accentuates distinctness and not division.

The idea to utilise Shinto as a unifying force for the people of Japan was first advocated by Aizawa Seishisai (1781-1863) during the Tokugawa period. This idea also has its origin in the backdrop of Westerners coming to Japan and promoting Western values, ethos and religion. As an insular nation, Japan had no such exposure to a new reality in which a religious indoctrination was followed so vigorously. Aizawa Seishisai observed that Christianity has functioned as a unifying motivational force that galvanised these spirited people to emerge as a significant force to reckon with. From this experience, Aizawa Seishisai got a flash of inspiration from using indigenous religion to fashion unity and forging the integrity of Japan. Here, the theoretical idea of building a narrative of nationalism based on religion which, in turn, can be used to mobilise people to realise national interests, can be seen at work. However, later other leading thinkers such as Sakuma Zozan, Fukuzawa Yukichi and others would develop more liberal ideas of nationalism. It is imperative to discuss the precepts of Shinto and nationalism for advancing the arguments and analysis.

2. Perspectives of Nationalism

Nationalism falls into contested concepts that defy a clear and precise definition. However, Scholars agree that nationalism is a new ideological construct that has played a pivotal role in shaping the world and determining the order that we see today. According to modernist thinkers of nationalism, an integral unit of world politics is the nation-state, which has been produced by nationalism to serve the socio-political purpose for the given human community. Contrary to this view is the idea of nationalism articulated by the scholars of primordialism and ethno-symbolism schools.

Primordialism advocates that the natural state of nationalism is a given entity for humans like speech, sense of fraternity and sociability. It assumes that nationalism has existed since time immemorial, and that is why this is also referred to as the

Primordialist or perennialist view of nation and nationalism. The origin of the idea of nationalism can be traced to human nature and its natural propensity to express one love and concern toward one's brethren. It is also referred to as the layman's view of nationalism and provides the simplest way to grasp it.

The most pertinent view of nationalism that has presented a compelling theoretical critique of the modernist view is ethno-symbolism. Ethno-symbolic interpretation of nationalism maintains that nationalism has its roots in the ancient traditions and ethnicity of communities that became associated with their life patterns. The constituents of nationalism come from the myth, memories, ethos, values, and their varying forms transmitted through time. Anthony D. Smith, the proponent of this view, emphasised the need to analyse the elements of collective cultural identities over an extended period covering several generations. The regular cultural practices connect the community's past, present, and future. These continuing aspects of culture emerged as the characteristic features of the identity of the communities, which, in turn, became the foundation of unity of people. These elements come together to give the idea of nationalism a definite shape which the political dispensation would appropriate for galvanising people for a national cause.

Ethno-symbolism presents a more homogeneous and comprehensive view of nationalism than the views of modernism and primordialism. It supposes that nations' emergence, rise, and decline cannot be adequately comprehended without considering their ethnic aspects. It also stresses that the collective cultural units of the bygone eras and modern nations have only quantitative differences and not qualitative, for the cultural aspects have lasting persistence. The transformation of culture is also not free from its pre-existing elements. In light of the ethno-symbolic interpretation of nationalism, it can be said that today's nation is not a tabula rasa, and it is a phenomenon with its long cultural aspects as the substratum.

There is also a simplified way of understanding the ideas of nation and nationalism, which is derived based on objective and subjective factors.

Objective Factors: Based on objective factors, nations and nationalism are considered the product of varieties of socio-cultural factors that include a collection of people living in the specified geographical region and associated by a blend of racial, cultural, ethnic and traditional matrices. A powerful sense of belongingness evolves amongst people who assume to have the same descent, myth, memory and live by similar values and ethos. Other important aspects that help develop a collective identity for a group of people are speaking the same language and practising one religion. Also, these factors have persistent nature and get transmitted through generations. These factors play a significant role in

forging the idea of nationalism which would be appropriated by the socio-political needs of the people at different stages of time.

Subjective Factors: Objective factors provide a powerful emotive means of fostering oneness among people. However, these factors can also contend with each other for contributing to identity formation. In the case of many objective factors competing for identity formation, there is always a possibility of the rise of sub-nationalisms which might also have fragmentary and destabilising tendencies for the nation and hence nationalism. In the case of diversity of competing for objective factors, the oneness can be derived by the common aspiration of people who share a similar vision for their future. People's aspirations are often the expression of what the political philosopher Rousseau called the 'General Will' of the collectivity. This 'General Will' is often reflected in a document, manifesto or constitution that nullifies sub-nationalism's fragmentary tendencies. Here it is important to mention that the role of nationalism is to unify the people of a country in one thread who can be inspired by the idea of contributing to the nation's interest even at the expense of their stakes. As the realist school of International Politics interprets, nationalism is a great cohesive force that keeps the country together in times of crisis and empowers the nation for the power projection on the global arena.

Shinto as Substratum of Japanese Nationalism: Shinto qualifies as the indigenous religion of Japan and remains an integral part of Japanese culture. It is often interpreted as the way of the gods and has its origin in the creation myth of Japan. Shinto relates the two worlds through Japan's mythological origin and its uniqueness as a nation as a faith system. In the world of Gods, the principal deity is the sun goddess named Amaterasu, and in this world, the most revered figure is the Emperor or Empress who rules as the divine descendent of Amaterasu. The Emperor also serves as the chief priest of Shinto because Amaterasu remains the patron goddess of the imperial family.

Shinto has no complex and abstruse set of metaphysical and philosophical precepts, and it has no book of rules and commandments for people; hence, it is not considered religion as the term is often used and understood. It is a powerful polytheistic cult that evolved through time and touched the lives of Japanese people across generations, including the present one. It is perhaps the greatest strength of Shinto that it continues to determine, to a greater extent, the traits and proclivities of the modern Japanese. It is a religion of hope that provides great courage and strength to live on by trusting nature and its various manifested facets. It may lack the features of great religions, but it indeed entails the primal divinity that promises a life of simplicity and eventual transcendence to the world of *kami*. Arthur Schopenhauer explains in his celebrated masterpiece *Essays and Aphorisms*:

The fundamental distinction between religions does not lie in whether they are monotheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic or atheistic (as Buddhism is), but whether they are optimistic or pessimistic (1970: 229).

During the early years of Japan as a nation, people believed in the manifestation of gods and spirits in all aspects of nature. According to Shinto belief, the natural world is suffused with divinity, and various kinds of gods and spirits dwell in it. These gods and spirits are referred to as *kami*, and they resided in woods, rivers, rivulets, streams, rocks, mountains, seas, clouds and the sky. Even the animals like foxes and snakes are considered *kami*. The ancestors of Japanese people are also revered and worshipped as *kami*. These gods, *kamigami*, were the bulwark against the destructive forces of nature, ailment and other threats. People lived in the shadow of the grace of the gods (*mitama-no-fuyu*). The world for a Shinto believer has a pervasive presence of *kamigami* around him/her. It renders the Japanese psyche subsumed in the milieu of divinity, which has had further implications for Japanese culture. It markedly expresses the importance of Shinto as a mythic-religious entity in immemorial imagination for the Japanese populace. Joseph Campbell, an authority on mythology, observes:

Man, apparently, cannot maintain itself in the universe without belief in some arrangement of the general inheritance of myth. The fullness of his life would even seem to stand in direct ratio to the depth and range not of his rational thought but his local mythology (1976: 4).

It is no exaggeration to say that Shinto, rooted deeply in Japanese mythology, has a tremendous sway on the collective consciousness of people, and it is evident that its influence has transcended the temporal confines. A deep sense of affinity with nature and purity of heart and mind are cardinal elements of Shinto. Even the words were assumed to have their spirit, generally referred to as *kotodama* (*Kotoba no tamashi*), and *norito*, the words of prayer used for the invocation of the *kami*, were/are considered absolutely sacred. Joseph Campbell notes the importance of the mythical aspect of a nation in the following words:

Clearly, mythology is no toy for children. Nor is it a matter of archaic, merely scholarly concern, of no moment to modern men of action. Its symbols (whether in the tangible form of images or the abstract form of ideas) touch and release the most profound centres of motivation, moving literate and illiterate alike, moving mobs, moving civilisations (1976: 12).

The impact of Shinto can be observed in every aspect of Japanese culture. Going to the shrines on auspicious occasions to offer prayers, celebrating festivals, folk traditions, rice cultivation, innumerable gods collectively called *kamigami*, and the divine status of the Emperor are some examples of Shinto practice as the guiding features of Japanese culture. In the modern world, it symbolises

globalisation, the Shinto consciousness functions as the fountainhead of national morality. Shinto may not be visible to a layman's eye amid modernity as an elaborate ritualistic cult. However, that is not necessary; what is essential is to understand and presage the power of religion about conduct and character.

It is delineated from the characteristics mentioned above of Shinto that why it serves as the *Volksseele* of Japan. *Volksseele* is defined by the German philosopher Joann Gottfried von Herder as an 'ethnic soul' which functions as a defining collective identity of the communities. It helps communities preserve their true nature and authenticity amid all the influences that may dilute their culture. Anthony D. Smith (2009) have identified some recurring themes and motifs of nationalism. These are autonomy, unity, identity, authenticity, the homeland, dignity, continuity and destiny. In the Japanese context, all these motifs are coeval with Shinto ideas. It forges cultural nationalism necessary for moral regeneration at critical historical junctures, which, in turn, sustains the national identity. Shinto has played a significant role in creating, cultivating and sustaining the distinct identity from the genesis to the golden days of Japan. Anthony D. Smith adds in the same vein:

Myths of ancestry and origins translate into symbolic terms the process of self-definition; myths and communal election comprise the most influential element in myth-and-memory cultivation; devotion to sacred landscapes is perhaps the most intensive and affecting aspect of territorialisation; and myth memories of ethno history, and especially of ethnic golden ages, present an idealised image of distinctive public cultures (2009: 91).

The impact of Shinto as a determinant of nationalist identity is pervasive. However, some agencies engage dedicatedly in the preservation of Shinto ideals. Some of these agencies, such as the Imperial Institution, the Ise Jingû and Yasukuni Shrine, deserve special mention.

The Imperial Institution: Shinto is an integral part of Japanese life, and people follow Shinto rituals and practices as if it is an eternally existing reality of Japanese society. Shinto relates the mythical and divine imperial institution as the pivot of the nation and its uniqueness. The mythological faith also needed a tangible embodiment for expressing itself amid the changes, and it was made possible by *arahitogami*, the god himself manifesting as kami. The emperor was the embodiment of yamato damashi, the Japanese spirit, and the chief priest of Shinto. It means that the continuation of the imperial system is tantamount to the nation's existence in its true spirit. The emperor emerged as the most significant figure and sacred symbol of unity of people. This argument also brings the critical observation to the light that nationalism in Japan must fashion a cohesive force to coalesce people together, particularly in times of crisis, to ensure the existence

safely and securely. A good look at the history of Japan makes it clear that the rallying point of nationalism has been and will be the Emperor and Imperial institution along with its vibrant symbols, primarily Shinto constructs.

The Ise Shrine (Ise Jingû): The Ise Grand Shrine complex is dedicated to the sun goddess Amaterasu. The Japanese myth attaches great importance to Amaterasu and the three treasures brought to earth by Ninigi, which later became the symbols of Imperial Regalia. It is one of the most important shrines and considered holiest for the sacred mirror (*Yata no Kagami*), one of the three symbols of Imperial Regalia, which is placed in the shrine's inner sanctum.

The scholars who have reflected on nationalism agree unanimously on the importance of ancient symbols that it captures people's imagination and hence act as a testimony of the oneness of people. These symbols play a significant role as an objective factor in forging the idea of nationalism by their ability to relate to everyone who belongs to the religious-cultural environment of the nation.

Yasukuni Shrine: The Imperial Shrine of Yasukuni is perhaps the most important shrine from the point of view of Japanese nationalism. The Meiji Emperor founded it in 1869 to commemorate those nationalists who died in the service of Japan in their efforts to restore the absolute authority in the hands of the Emperor. Many people died in the name of the Emperor while fighting the shogunate forces in the *Boshin War* (1868). They laid their lives for saving the great spirit of *Yamato* by subjugating the *bakufu* and bringing the famous Meiji Restoration in 1868.

The shrine honours the souls of 2,466,532 men, women, children and pet animals. It also includes the 1068 Japanese people who fought for Japan during the Pacific War but were later declared as War Criminals by the Tribunal for the Far East set up by the allied forces for punishing those responsible for causing war and ensuing death and destruction. However, Japanese people maintain that these people were fighting only for Japan and revered as martyrs. One of the conscience-stricken judges of the Tribunal, Radhabinod Pal, also observed who referred to the verdict as *Victor's Justice*.

Yasukuni Shrine has found itself in the centre of controversy due to the visits paid to the shrine by prominent politicians, bureaucrats and statesmen to express their reverence to these spirits. Several Prime Minister, mostly from conservative LDP, have also paid visits to the shrine and offered prayers to the departed souls. This practice is not acceptable to China and Korea because they consider some army men as perpetrators of war crimes in their countries when they were subjected to violence and mistreatment of women, children, and older people. However, many Japanese do not agree to such considerations and pay respect to these figures for the supreme sacrifice they did for Japan.

The celebrated scholar of nationalism Benedict Anderson (2012) has explained that nothing inspires the people of a country as the tomb of an unknown soldier who laid his life in the line of duty for the nation. He becomes the symbol of supreme sacrifice, putting the nation first in times of crisis. In modern times, such a tomb emerges as a great symbol that leaves a lasting imprint on people's minds and reminds them of their duty of protecting the nation in times of grave crisis. Yasukuni Shrine serves a similar purpose for the people of Japan and often becomes the rallying point for the nationalists. However, it has also been utilised as political capital by the conservative leaders to project themselves as the champion of the nationalist cause.

No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely because they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times (1983: 9).

The creation myth of Japan assumes the divine lineage of Japanese people rendering an air of racial and ethnic exclusivity. It has also entrenched the idea of Japan as a superior nation, and hence other nations are subordinated to the land of the rising sun. It is not essential to argue about the validity of these claims and assumptions but to assess their power to influence the mind's psyche, which works on and in this world.

Varieties of Nationalist Experiences: In the historical evolution of Japan, we observe four kinds of nationalism, with Shinto as substratum, that emerged at different junctures and shaped the national trajectory in time. These are as follows:

Religious Nationalism: Shinto has also successfully instilled faith that gods protect Japan and its people. A Buddhist monk in Kamakura, Japan, Nichiren used religion to exhort people's ethnocentric sentiments. This faith strengthened when Japan survived the deadly attack by the Mongol invasions. It happened due primarily to a timely typhoon that saved Japan by destroying the Mongolian fleet in 1274 and 1281. People of Japan called it *Kamikaze*, the divine wind that safeguards Japan from external evil forces. It also entrenched the belief that Japan is a divine country and Japanese people are most superior to humans. However, religious nationalism was indeed advocated by the Mito scholar and nationalist thinker Aizawa Seishisai (1781-1863), who advocated the importance of Shinto as a unifying force for the Japanese populace during the early Tokugawa period. He observed that the unifying force amongst the Westerners is their unflinching faith in Christianity which enforced conformity and oneness for the masses. He derived this conclusion after observing the dedication and diligence of Christian missionaries who were ready to take immense trouble in their stride of

propagating the message of their religion in farther lands. Aizawa imposed his observation on Japan and advocated to unite people with one seamless nationwide identity. His logical choice of the element that could forge such identity was Shinto. He further formulated the concept of *kokutai* in his book *Shinron*, which expressed the national essence of Japan. It assumed that Japan was the only nation with its unique spirit and soul. The ideas of Aizawa Seishisai proved to be the inspiration for the *sonnō jōi* movement during the late Tokugawa era. The work of *kokutai* was further developed, and later the idea of national essence was also revisited and contextualised by future thinkers of Japan.

Cultural Nationalism: Fukuzawa Yukichi and other proponents of the *Bunmeikaika* (Civilisation and Enlightenment) Movement agreed with the notion of the unique spirit of Japan; however, they disregarded the claim that this idea is exclusive to Japan. Fukuzawa Yukichi argued that other nations also have their spirit and essential polity. The ideas of Yukichi and the *Civilisation and Enlightenment Movement* influenced various aspects of Japanese life. However, the blind imitation of Western ways triggered discriminating sentiments towards Western ideals and prototypes. Western values like individualism, utilitarianism, capitalism and materialist practices promoting consumerism were subjected to criticism and viewed as against the spirit of Japanese ethos. Three critical figures who inspired carried forward the movement of Cultural nationalism were Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), Motoda Eifu (1818-1891) and Yoshida Shoin (1830-1859), who were active during the Tokugawa period. They were all for preserving Japanese values, ethos, literature and culture from foreign influence. They also tried to purify Japan by purging it from alien elements. The emphasis on purity and preservation of culture also has a Shinto imprint.

Enlightened Nationalism: The idea of enlightened nationalism originated from the works of Sakuma Zōzan (1811-1864), which prepared the ideological ground for including the best from other cultures without compromising the spirit of Japan and its moral character. Sakuma advocated *wakon yosai*, Eastern morals and Western science and envisioned a rich and powerful nation but still very much rooted in its own culture and civilisation. Sakuma felt that incorporating Western science has become indispensable for Japan to stay relevant as a nation on the international stage. However, he also wanted to keep the spirit of Yamato intact amid all the Western influences. This kind of nationalism that maintains its cultural specificities and still assimilates the higher values even from other nations is called enlightened nationalism. This idea was further developed by Nishimura Shigeaki (1828-1902), Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927), Miyake Setsurei (1860-1945), and Kuga Katsunan (1857-1907) during the Meiji period. It can be seen how nationalism based on Sakuma's thinking is in sync with globalisation and internationalisation. It is perhaps the future archetype of nationalism in the

new world (*shinsekai*) which, in the words of Marshal Macluhan, is fast reducing itself to a “Global Village.”

Nishimura Shigeki (1828-1902), an active member of *Meirokeisha*, also followed the ideas of enlightened nationalism and emphasised the need to instil in people, particularly in the school children, the morality of Japan. This variety of nationalism is in line with the ideas emphasised by the liberal thinkers and presents a good face of nationalism devoid of a jingoistic and violent streak.

Imperial Nationalism: It refers to an aggressive form of nationalism that could be appropriated by the political and military dispensations to build a sphere of influence in the name of the Emperor. This kind of nationalism was displayed by Japan after Meiji Restoration in 1868, especially from 1885 to 1945 when it tried to build a Japanese Empire. After Meiji Restoration, Shinto was declared the State religion, and the Emperor held the central position as an ultimate authority like the Hobbesian Leviathan. The tolerant and secular tendencies ended abruptly, and persecution of Christians and Buddhists ensued in the wake. Augmenting the power and influence of the emperor beyond the known boundaries of Japan emerged as the new ambition which took it to the course of bloody conflict with nations.

The officials of the Meiji government and military leaders followed the Western nations who built empires by using religion and Imperial institutions for colonising and exploiting other nations with utter disregard of the interests of these nations. From an ethical point of view, this kind of nationalism is considered flawed and ideologically untenable, which often leads to death, destruction and loss of faith in the spirit of human fraternity. Japan also went through a similar experience, and finally, its ambition came to a rude awakening when it lost the pacific war at the hands of the Allied Powers. However, in the post-war period, Japan followed a peaceful path of co-existence, cooperation and collective prosperity.

3. Japanese Nationalism in present context

Today Japan is facing daunting challenges on both internal and external fronts. It is struggling to keep the economy afloat and has already lost its coveted status as the most prominent and second-largest economy in Asia and the world. The tension is increasingly felt due to impaired relationships with neighbours emanating from historical discontents and territorial issues like Senkaku and Takeshima island disputes. However, the most critical factor continually troubling Japan is the security dilemma due primarily to the rise of China and its assertiveness. Also, the belligerent attitude assumed by North Korea has been a disconcerting development for Japan.

The present geopolitical conditions coupled with internal strife would unleash the national instinct of self-preservation that might prepare the ground for radical measures as Japan have taken in the past, most notably during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Let it be said that the religious impulse will play a vital role in determining the course of future trajectory as it did during Meiji Japan when the Emperor was apotheosised as the omnipotent, inviolable and sanctimonious figure above all authority. This legendary status was derived from mytho-religious testimonies. Lafcadio Hearn observes:

The events of Meiji reconstruction strangely illustrate the action of such instinct in the face of peril... the readjustment of internal relations to sudden environmental changes. Moreover, in the hour of greatest danger, the national instinct turned back at once to the moral experience upon which it could best rely, —the experience embodied in its ancient cult, the religion of unquestioning obedience. Relying upon Shinto tradition, the people rallied about their ruler, descendant of the ancient gods, and awaited his will with the unconquerable zeal of faith (1955: 376).

There is no reason why history will not repeat. The set of crises that Japan faces today is compelling it to revisit its fundamental ideological edifice on which modern Japan is built. The Article-9 of the Peace Constitution of Japan denies it the right to maintain a regular army and use war as a policy imperative. The status of the Emperor also has been reduced to a mortal human, and he stands relevant only as a symbol of unity of people and integrity of the nation. The Emperor, according to Shinto, is the divine pivot of Japan, and without it, the spirit of the nation will lack the necessary vigour and inflatus. It leaves nationalists with troubling thoughts about Japan as not a normal country. The rallying point for the nationalists today is to regain the normal status of Japan as a nation by revising the constitution and reinstating the Emperor as the mythical divine entity. It is likely to gain momentum as the challenges posed to Japan will precipitate into crisis due to emerging geopolitical scenarios.

4. Conclusion

The seeds of the idea of nationalism began to grow with the sense of oneness and fraternal bond nurtured by shared myth, legend, folklore, songs and their emotive narratives in the primitive era of Japan. The primordial and ethno-symbolic approaches to study nationalism maintain that the rise of a culture distinguished the human communities, and the relativity of cultures provided distinct identities of people preserved and sustained by nationalistic spirit. In the modern world, the idea of nationalism grew stronger, invented nation-states and placed it as a fundamental unit of global politics.

In the Japanese context, the edifice of oneness and the sense of distinct communal identity were nurtured by Shinto. People lived with the same beliefs, practised similar rituals, and shared their fears and hopes collectively. In the past, Japanese people shared the moments of glory and defeat, the exuberance of triumph and despair of calamitous Atomic Bombings. Japan has seen it all from a crestfallen nation in 1945 to the global economic and technological powerhouse. The people of Japan remained united in all these moments, and nationalism played a significant part in it. The emperor remained an inspiration and a rallying point for the people of Japan in trying times. In Japan, the imperial institution emerged as the intermediary between the earthly and heavenly realms. The divinity of the Emperor and Japanese race graced by the constellation of *kamigami* fostered the idea of Yamato spirit (*yamato damashi*), which functioned like a connecting thread running across generations that preserved the homogeneity of Japanese people.

From the foundation as a nation to its development as a significant economic powerhouse in the modern world, the history of Japan has been characterised by varying remarkable stages, each defining a new paradigm. In all these paradigms, nationalism has played a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of Japan's evolution. Further, the influence of Shinto has proved to be a distinguishing feature of Japanese nationalism in all its forms. Today, Shinto nationalism is inspiring efforts to revise the peace constitution for making Japan a normal nation. The argument is put forward that the previous status of the Emperor must be regained to provide a prime pivot to the nation.

The modern approaches to studying nationalism do not emphasise the religious aspects and note the importance of the 'General Will' of people and a shared vision for the emergence of nationalism. In the case of Japan, the advocacy of enlightened nationalism also offers a point of departure from the established idea of nationalism which has the potential to emerge as internationalism. In such a case, the utilitarian aspects from other nations can be assimilated into one's own culture without compromising one's indigenous characteristics. Shinto has a pervasive presence on Japanese nationalism; however, the progressive elements have also been absorbed in modern times.

All the factors that come together to construct the idea of nationalism are present in Japan, and therefore, it can be said that nationalism will continue to play its role as a socio-political imperative. Some sociological studies have indicated that religious fervour is waning in Japan, but that is only a circumferential interpretation of reality. A faith system like Shinto operates at a much deeper level and dramatically influences the collective consciousness. It provides the substance that fashions the collective character of a nation. It is like a perennial river that flows underneath and occasionally resurfaces itself in trying circumstances.

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A Necessary Challenge: Japanese Response to China's Economic Rise and America's Retreat

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Abstract– Dependent on China economically and reliant on the US for national security, Japan has frequently been portrayed as a waning economic power squeezed between two major powers with few policy options, save from cautiously striking for a balance in between. From this perspective, growing competition and even confrontation between China and the US exacerbate Japan's dilemma, increasing the risk of Tokyo's China policy, be it leaning toward engagement or balancing. This paper, however, challenges this popular perception. Building upon the argument that China's growing assertiveness and America's relative decline have awakened Japan from a reactive participant to a proactively, this paper examines how these critical challenges have compelled Japan to adapt, innovate, and experiment with new strategies and foreign economic policies. I argue that the rapidly changing geopolitical environment presents Japan with a unique opportunity to stand out as a leader and significant power.

For Japan, China's rapid rise was an unprecedented new experience since the modern nation's founding in the nineteenth century. For much of the past one and a half centuries, Japan was the only modern and powerful state in East Asia on par with the Western powers that created and dominated the world (Hoshino & Satoh, 2012). Even after its utter defeat in 1945, Japan's miraculous economic recovery with US assistance elevated it to the East Asian flying geese model leader. However, China's emergence since the early 1990s is creating a new regional paradigm that challenges Japan's historical position and confidence. When China entered a period of high-speed economic growth in the early 1990s, Japan's economy stagnated after the asset price bubble burst. Since 2010, China's strong economic performance following the 2008 financial crisis and Chinese leaders' perception of waning US power and influence emboldened Beijing to pursue more assertive foreign policies that further challenged Tokyo's economic, political, and security interests. Gradual changes in the balance of power in Asia has fostered a popular portrayal

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of Japan as a waning power squeezed between China and the US and a pessimistic view of Japan's future as the tension between China and the US escalates.¹

However, this paper argues that China's growing assertiveness and uncertain US commitment to Asia-Pacific have benefited Japan. In response to China's growing assertiveness and fear of America's retreat, Japan is adopting a more proactive economic foreign policy, including reassessments of bilateral trade relations with China, reconfigurations of investment and aid strategies to developing nations, and further engagements with like-minded allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. In doing so, Tokyo is doubling down on its commitment to the liberal rules-based order and positioning itself as a significant participant and leader.

Moreover, this paper argues that as much as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and rapid changes in geopolitics in the Asia-Pacific are challenging to navigate, these challenges also present Japan with unique new opportunities. Growing suspicion from Western countries on China's advanced technologies such as 5G offers Japan a chance to take the leadership role in telecommunication. Reconfigurations in the global value chain as companies move their production plants from China to Southeast countries will also benefit Japan given its close relationship with ASEAN nations and its long-running developmental assistance. Finally, as the relationship between China and Western democracies further strained following the imposition of national security laws on Hong Kong and Beijing's growing military pressure on Taipei, Japan will find opportunities to bridge China and the West. We should thus envision Japan's future as a new leader in the Indo-Pacific, and a linchpin between China and the West rather than a waning power squeezed uncomfortably between China and the US.

This paper will first discuss in details Japan's dilemma, then analyse how China's rise and overstep concurrent with the US retreat from the Indo-Pacific have benefited Japan and awoken it to new economic opportunities, and finally explore how the rapid changes in the regional and international order offer Tokyo a unique window to become an active participant and leader in the post-pandemic world.

Keywords Japan . Japanese foreign policy . China-Japan relations . Alliance politics . Foreign economic policy .

1. Japan's dilemma: Alliance politics and rising China

The notion that Japan faces strategic dilemmas is not a new one. From the neorealist perspective, since the moment Washington incorporated Tokyo into its alliance network in 1951, Japan has been striking a balance between entrapment and abandonment as the former resembles the lack of US support for Japan during a crisis and the latter prescribes a scenario in which the alliance system drags

¹ This popular notion is perhaps best reflected by the phrase “板挟み,” which literally means squeezed between two boards.

Tokyo into an unnecessary conflict to support the US (Envall, 2017; Green, 2002). Constitutional restrictions on Japan's military capability determine Tokyo's reliance on Washington for national security and intensify the fear of abandonment, especially when Japan faces imminent threats from North Korea and China.

When President Trump's victory in the 2016 election shocked US allies with his "America First" policy, transactional view of the US alliance networks, and economic unilateralism and protectionism, no leader tried as hard as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at cultivating a close personal tie with the mercurial US president. Trump regularly spoke out against Japan on his campaign trails, criticising it for unfair trade practices, including currency manipulation, and free-riding on its military alliance with the US (Teraoka & Goto, 2020). Though Trump's rhetoric vis-à-vis Japan has improved since 2016 partially because of his close personal tie with Abe, which the Japanese Prime Minister poured over US\$2.2 trillion investing in, Tokyo still faces its long term fear of abandonment from an unpredictable and unreliable administration in Washington. In 2019, Trump requested Tokyo to quadruple its payments for the US military stationed in Japan, from the recent average of approximately US\$1.7 billion to US\$8 billion (Nussey, 2019). Moreover, while Trump has toned down his criticism on Japan as a currency manipulator and the US-Japan bilateral trade deal signed in 2019 did not touch upon the automobile tariff or granted the US a better-than-TPP level of access to Japan's agricultural market, tariff against Japanese steel and aluminium remained in place, and Washington has yet to remove Tokyo from its list of currency manipulators (Smith & McClean, 2019; US Department of the Treasury Office of International Affairs, 2020). The personal relationship between Abe and Trump has certainly eased some of Tokyo's anxiety over Washington's scepticism on the US-Japan alliance, but even as America's closest ally in Asia, Japan remains insecure.

On top of the security dilemma arising from alliance politics, Japan faces increasing challenges striking a balance in its relationship with a rising China. After a brief honeymoon period in bilateral relations in the 1980s and early 1990s, China's behaviours in the early 1990s raised Japan's alarms. They convinced Tokyo to reconfigure its policy to continue benefiting from commercial ties with China without jeopardising its security and political interests. To that end, Japan pursued bilateral relations with China under the *seikei bunri* (separation of economic and political interests) principle. While the strategy temporarily resolved Japan's dilemma, China's rapid emergence and growing appetite only worsened Japan's predicament. As China seeks to move up the global value chain, direct competition between the two countries increased, and Japan's concern over intellectual property (IP) theft and illegal technological transfers grew. At the

same time, Japan faces increasing challenges from China in its leadership role in global governance. Following Japan's footsteps, China has sought to harness its economic power and build a global image as a responsible great power contributor to global governance. As Beijing poured more capital into its infrastructural investment projects overseas, Tokyo saw its influence in Southeast Asia and Africa challenged by emerging China.

In recent years, rising tension between China and the US over trade and political and security issues have further exacerbated Japan's strategic dilemma, as many scholars and commentators suggest.² Tokyo has to strike a balance in its relationship with Washington and Beijing, respectively and must find a position between China and the US. On the one hand, Japan has no foolproof method of guaranteeing its national security without a robust defence posture with the aid of the US; on the other hand, China's well-being is crucial to a mature economy plagued with an ageing, shrinking population and a shortage of policy solutions. Japan's geographic proximity to and economic interdependence with China means that Tokyo cannot afford to ignore or alienate either Beijing or Washington, so as whispers of decoupling between China and the US grow in credibility, Japan stands at a risky position between two great powers it dared not to lose or offend (Sugiyama & Johnson, 2020).

In light of the rapidly changing international order that brought a sequence of dramatic events in 2020, starting with the COVID-19 pandemic, some scholars have challenged the portrayal of Tokyo as a loser in the tug-of-war between Washington and Beijing. As the global pandemic revealed critical flaws in China's authoritarian governance and questioned America's global leadership, countries such as Japan and South Korea that successfully weathered the crisis gained soft power and global influence (Sasaki, 2020; Traub, 2020). These views, however, fail to fully challenge the perception of Japan as a waning power squeezed between the US and China. The optimism mentioned above about Japan's future reflects a rather opportunistic outlook of Japan and thus does not address the deeper issue at stake. This paper, however, offers a different understanding of Japan by arguing that China's growing appetite for assertive foreign policy has prepared Japan to transform from a reactive power to a proactive state capable of shaping the regional and global order.

2. Engagement with caution: Japan's trade with China

Throughout the past forty years, bilateral trade ties have stood out as one of the most stable elements the China-Japan relations. Although Tokyo reconsidered its

² Some examples of this include Kesavan (2020), Young (2020), Goto (2020), and Rich & Inoue (2020).

China policy despite increasing challenges from Beijing, trade flows between the two countries remain relatively steady. Even before the two countries established formal diplomatic ties in 1979, Japan cultivated commercial ties with secluded China. When obstacles to closer bilateral cooperation cleared in the 1970s, China and Japan enjoyed a honeymoon period of close coordination as Tokyo pursued a constructive engagement strategy with Beijing. Both sides share similar strategic goals of constraining the expansion of the Soviet influence in Northeast Asia (Hornung, 2014). Against this backdrop of aligned interests and warming bilateral ties, Japan “focused on strengthening reform-minded leaders in China, assisting internal stabilisation, and re-establishing China as a key bilateral trading partner” (Hughes, 2009). Between 1972 and 1989, Japan’s exports to China rose from JP¥187.5 billion to JP¥1.2 trillion while imports from China grew from JP¥151.3 billion to JP¥1.5 trillion.³ Warming bilateral ties came to a temporary halt in 1989 following the Tiananmen Incident as Japan joined the rest of the G7 countries, though more reluctantly, in imposing heavy economic sanctions on China (Murata, 2006). However, as the Japanese government did not wish to completely isolate or alienate China and domestic business pressured for a warmer relationship with China, Japan pushed for an end to the international sanction on China and resumed engagement with Beijing (Hornung, 2014). Once Japan lifted the sanction, bilateral commercial ties flourished. By 1995, the total trade volume between the two countries rose to over JP¥5 trillion (Trade Statistics of Japan, n.d.-b).

Though the Tiananmen Incident did not fundamentally change Tokyo’s engagement policy toward China, it soured China’s image amongst the Japanese public, whose favorability toward China plummeted from 68.5% to 51.6% between 1989 and 1990 (Takahara, 2017). Beijing’s subsequent actions—launching the Patriotic Education Campaign that reinforced anti-Japanese sentiments, conducting nuclear tests, and threatening Taiwan with missile exercises—greatly alarmed Tokyo to reconsider its China policy. At the same time, however, bilateral economic ties flourished. Japan supported China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and cooperated with China to establish the Chiang Mai Initiative in 2012. In the early 2000s, Japan viewed China as a factor driving its economic recovery through trade and feared the threat of China’s possible economic downturn (Japan External Trade Organization, 2003; Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, 2004). At the same time, though Tokyo’s hardening stance on political issues has ripple effects on its economic ties with China, such as fluctuation in official development assistance (ODA), the

³ For Japan’s trade data prior to 1979, see Trade Statistics of Japan (n.d.-a). For Japan’s trade data since 1979, see Trade Statistics of Japan (n.d.-b).

upward trajectory of bilateral trade volume continued without much impediment. In 2002, China surpassed the US as Japan's largest source of import and later became its largest trading partner in 2007 (Japan External Trade Organization, 2008).

In the early 2010s, growing concerns over China's increasing assertiveness alarmed Japanese policymakers. China's willingness to use its economic prowess to achieve political ends also convinced Japan to take proactive steps to lessen its economic dependence on China. For example, in bilateral rare earth trade, Japan depended heavily on China until 2009 as the latter held a near-monopoly, producing over 95% of the global supply (Tse, 2011). As a major importer of rare earth minerals, Japanese dependence on China never fell under 85% (Hornung, 2014). Japan's anxiety intensified after China suspended its rare earth exports after the 2010 boat collision incident near the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Japan immediately diversified its rare earth trade in response to China's economic offence, seeking new supply chains from France, Vietnam, and Estonia (Hornung, 2014). In 2011, Japan's Sojitz Corporation, with Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC), invested \$250 million in an Australian company, Lynas Corporation. The deal between Sojitz and Lynas promised a steady supply of rare earth to Japan from Australia, and the latter now supplies Tokyo with nearly one-third of its total imports (Sojitz, 2010). As a result of Japan's diversification efforts, by 2012, only 57.9% of Japan's rare earth come from China, and the number has remained below 60% mostly since then (China Power, 2020). Tokyo also invested more than JP¥161 billion (\$1.5 billion) to encourage industry to find substitutes, and Japanese automakers such as Honda and Toyota have successfully developed hybrid car motors that significantly reduce or eliminate rare earth elements.⁴

Though cooling bilateral relations saw signs of thawing amidst growing pressure on China from the US, Japan is engaging China cautiously. Tokyo knows that a stable relationship with a booming China has direct benefits to Japan's economic recovery, and at the same time, it has learned the lesson to avoid overdependence on China, be it production sites for Japanese companies or reliance on scarce resources such as rare earth.

In October 2018, Prime Minister Abe visited China for the first time since taking office in 2012, hoping to "elevate the bilateral relationship to a new stage" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018b). The meeting concluded with both parties pledging further cooperation, especially in economic activities. Bilateral trade volume increased by 9.2% in 2018 and 7.4% in 2019, breaking the previous

⁴ For examples, see Swift Bray (2019), Bomgardner (2018), and Shiraki and Tajitsu (2016).

decreasing streak (Japan External Trade Organization, 2019). In 2018 China and Japan resumed the China-Japan High-Level Economic Dialogue after an eight-year hiatus, further attesting to thawing bilateral economic collaboration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2018a).

At the same time, however, Japan remains cautious in its renewed engagement with China. Tokyo pressed to decrease rare earth dependence on China, especially after China touted its plan to weaponise its dominance in the rare earth trade against the US. Though Japan has yet to realise the potential of a semi-permanent reserve of rare earth elements discovered in 2018, it has sought to further reduce reliance on China by diversifying its supply chain and increased recycling from waste (Hanafusa, 2020). Tokyo has also partnered with the US and EU in a series of proposals submitted to the WTO's Council on Trade in Goods to protest against China's frequent heavily subsidising state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Brunsdon, 2020). The three parties also further raised alarms over China's pressuring Western companies to transfer technology to access the Chinese market. While Japanese companies have long suffered losses due to intellectual property (IP) theft and forced technology transfer from China, Tokyo has largely downplayed such a risk in the 2000s (Rose, 2010). Despite warming economic ties with China, Japan's increasing displeasure indicates a more cautious attitude in its renewed engagement.

In the past decade, China's growing assertiveness have increased the cost and risks of Japan's engagement policy, compelling Tokyo to carefully balance the wish to benefit from China's vast market and tap into its economic growth with the need to safeguard its interests. As China demonstrates more vital willingness to weaponise its economic prowess—cutting off tourism and retail trade with South Korea after Seoul welcomed the Terminal High Attitude Area Defense (THAAD) system and embargoing Norwegian salmon as a response to Oslo's awarding the Nobel Prize to dissident and activist Liu Xiaobo—Japan is no stranger to China's wrath. However, as much as China's emergence and oversteps have posed challenges to Japan, they have also readied Tokyo to revise its China policies and adopt a proactive approach that best protects its interests while engaging China economically. When China threatened to punish the US with the rare-earth trade in 2019, some commentators argued the ineffectiveness of Beijing's assault by citing its failure to constrain Tokyo a decade earlier (Huang, 2019). This approach, however, understates Japan's efforts at reducing its dependence on China. Even as the EU and South Korea have diversified their imports of certain rare earth compounds, such as cerium, to reduce reliance on China, they remain almost entirely dependent on China for rare earth metals and alloys (China Power, 2020). Thus, only Japan has successfully protected itself from overdependence on China among these major economies. In 2018, China

contributed to more than 90% of rare earth metals and alloys imports from South Korea, the EU, and the US, whereas Japan only sourced 48.5% of its imports from China (China Power, 2020). The US and European countries should thus recognise and learn from Japan's success as Tokyo's policy of cautious engagement offers new wisdom to building stable and constructive relations with China, especially during turbulent times.

3. Quality versus quantity: Competition in global governance

Prior to China's emergence in the early 2010s, Japan was the unquestionable leader in developmental assistance in Asia. With its post-war economic miracle, Japan quickly became a critical contributor to global governance and public goods. Globally, Tokyo worked closely with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), graduating from a borrower state in the late 1960s and gradually solidified its reputation as a creditor and a vital shareholder (The World Bank, n.d.). Regionally, Japan spearheaded the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and proposed the creation of an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) in response to the 1997/98 Asian financial crisis.

Following Japan's footsteps, China pursued similar tactics to boost its global image as a responsible great power. Since the 1990s, China has sought closer ties with Southeast Asian countries, amending previously strenuous relations and signalling its willingness to cooperate within a multilateral framework (Saunders, 2016). Though a latecomer in its relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China took the lead in 2000 when then Chinese Premier, Zhu Rongji, proposed the creation of an ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA), followed by Japan two years later. Since 2000 China's share in ASEAN's total trade increased dramatically, contrasted with the steady decline of Japan's share.⁵ In 2009, China took over Japan as ASEAN's largest trading partner, and ASEAN rose to become China's top trading partner in 2020, surpassing the US in 2019 and the EU in May 2020 (Medina, 2020).

At the same time, Rapid capital accumulation and success in weathering regional and global financial crises further encouraged China to establish itself as a credible and vital source of development finance, challenging Japan's long-held leadership role in the region. China launched its official finance program providing aid and loans to developing in 2000. While the exact number of China's developmental assistance remains vague given Beijing's lack of transparency, data collected by the AidData lab shows a significant increase in China's official

⁵ For data on China's trade with ASEAN, see General Administration of Customs (n.d.). For data on Japan's trade with ASEAN, see Kawai (2013).

finance in the early 2010s (AidData, n.d.). In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping further committed China to provide development assistance by touting his ambitious grand strategy of “One Belt, One Road” (also known as the Belt and Road Initiative, or BRI), financed by the Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank (AIIB). Incorporating Southeast Asian countries under its 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, China has increased its investment and assistance to ASEAN states, most prominently in transport and energy infrastructure. Between 2013 and 2018, China launched more than a dozen infrastructural projects under the BRI framework in Southeast Asia, with the costliest project—the East Coast Rail Link in Malaysia—valued at US\$13.47 billion (Jusoh, 2018). China has also increased its FDI flows to ASEAN from \$3.5 billion in 2010 to US\$11.3 billion in 2017 and shifted its energy into more diverse sectors, including infrastructure and real estate (Jusoh, 2018).

China's increasing influence and activities in Southeast Asia have decreased Western investment. While ASEAN countries could traditionally rely on Western supports—via bilateral financing or multilateral development banks—to finance their development programs, by the mid-2010s, Japan remained the only significant source of finance (Dollar, 2020). When ASEAN is estimated to need approximately US\$3 trillion for infrastructure investment between 2016 and 2030, no Western donor pledged more than \$1 billion per year, and the total contribution made by the six primary Western sources—Australia, Japan, ADB, World Bank, the US, and South Korea—amounted to barely 2% of ASEAN's needs (Asian Development Bank, 2017; Dollar, 2020).

China's robust economic expansionary strategies have challenged Japan's confidence in the belief that ASEAN is “a market where Japan can never lose and be behind” (Yoshimatsu, 2017).⁶ Direct competition between Beijing and Tokyo heated up in 2015 after China outbid Japan for the high-speed rail project in Indonesia. The Sino-Japanese rivalry expanded to Africa as Beijing hopes to gain more significant influence among developing countries outside its immediate surroundings. Recognising that it cannot compete with Beijing merely in terms of the quantity with Tokyo's tepid economic performance, Japan has reformed its ODA program in Southeast Asia and Africa to address past non-string attached assistance packages (Solís, 2020).

⁶ In the past decade, China posed a threat not only to Japan's economic influence by becoming the largest trading partner with most ASEAN states, but also its soft power as Beijing began coordinating propaganda campaigns painting Abe as an ultranationalist and Japan as the provocative and unpredictable military power in the region with revisionist agenda (Oros, 2017).

Compared to assistance packages offered by most Western countries, China's official finance lacks transparency, and more than 75% of it between 2000 and 2014 failed to meet the ODA standard set by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (China Power, 2017). It also helps explain the appeal of China's proposal in the eyes of many developing nations. Without any specifying requirement in promoting better governance, respecting human rights, and reducing government corruption, China's "no-strings-attached" model attracts many leaders of developing countries, especially those whose legitimacy does not rest on the general will of the public. By masking its irresponsible official finance with the clause of "non-interference in domestic politics of other countries," China poses a risk to the efforts made by Western countries, including Japan, to shape the behaviours of illiberal developing countries through economic incentives.

Faced with growing challenges from China, Japan has rearticulated its official finance strategy that prioritises quality over quantity. In 2015, the Abe administration launched the "Partnership for Quality Infrastructure: Investment for Asia's Future" strategy, promising the provision of US\$110 billion, jointly with the ADB, for "high-quality infrastructure" investment in Asia over the next five years. In 2016, Prime Minister Abe announced the "Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure" directed toward the G7 Ise-Shima Summit. The proposal pledged \$200 billion over the next five years to finance infrastructure projects worldwide, indicating an expansion in the targeted area and the scope of infrastructure (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2016). Since 2015, Japan has also emphasised its goal of promoting universal values through its ODA program, reorganising its four issues of priority—poverty reduction, sustainable growth, addressing global issues, and peacebuilding—under three umbrella terms focusing on "quality growth," universal values, and sustainability in its white papers on ODA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2020a).

Japan further demonstrated its support for the confidence in the liberal economic order and quality infrastructure through its scepticism toward BRI's standard of governance. Even as China and Japan negotiated increasing bilateral cooperation in international development and Tokyo signalled its willingness in joining the AIIB, Japan has not walked away from its commitment to quality infrastructure that has evolved out of growing challenges from China and has become a flagship of Japan's ODA program. Even as China poured money and resources into infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia, Japan still has a leading role in terms of ODA in most Southeast Asian countries. Though ASEAN's reluctance to align exclusively with Washington's strategy of balancing against Beijing and a broad perception of China as the country with most economic influence in Southeast Asia as opposed to the US or Japan attest to Beijing's growing economic clout in

the region, appreciation for China's economic growth has yet to translate to trust (Stromseth, 2019).⁷ As Beijing's official finance came under further scrutiny from the international community over the quality and sustainability of its infrastructural assistance, Beijing has sought to cooperate with Tokyo to boost its image and credibility (Yeung, 2018).

Despite mounting challenges, Japan has successfully differentiated itself by promoting and adhering to its vision of quality infrastructure. Although China's economic power often shadows Japan's influence in the region, Tokyo has not lost Southeast Asia to China, for it remains a trusted partner and essential donor to ASEAN states. If anything, competition from China has compelled Japan to distinguish itself and build a brand to its official finance that now plays a vital role in guaranteeing high-quality assistance to developing countries that promotes long-term solutions, quality, and sustainability.

4. Thickening Tokyo's networks: From reactive to proactive foreign policy

For Japan, hedging and balancing against China's rise and overstep was not an easy experience, significantly when the US, its most important ally and partner, is gradually retreating from its commitment to the Asia Pacific. Preoccupation with the Middle East diverted America's attention from the region, and the nationalist call of "America First" further diluted US involvement in East Asia. Moreover, the US alliance system in the Indo-Pacific is characterised more by each country's strong bilateral ties with the US than by an overarching multilateral framework or close coordination among US allies. Throughout much of the post-war period, strong US presence in the Indo-Pacific and the unique status of Japan as short of a specific country in many ways restricted and discouraged proactive foreign policies from Tokyo.

Since the 2000s and more prominent since the 2010s, Japan has sought to expand and deepen cooperation with its neighbours in the Asia Pacific, both politically and economically. In a 2006 speech explaining his vision of an "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity," then Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Asô Tarô (2007), explained the need for Tokyo to "broaden the horizons of Japan's diplomatic activities" and engage with potential partners to promote market economy and democracy. Though Japan soon shied away from the commitment to becoming the beacon of universal values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law declared in Asô's vision that has China and Russia in mind without any overt

⁷ A survey conducted in 2019 shows the majority (51.5%) of respondents from ASEAN countries have either "no confidence" or "little confidence" that China will "do the right thing" to contribute to global peace, security, prosperity, and governance, whereas 65.9% of respondents expressed confidence in Japan (Tang et al, 2019).

indication, the pillars Japan put forth to sustain such a policy remain (Taniguchi, 2010). Subsequent administrations continue to strengthen ties with key potential partners, including India and Australia, and regional players in Southeast Asia and Central Asia.

While the US-Japan alliance remains the most important bilateral relationship for Japan, Tokyo proactively reaches out to key allies and partners to strengthen its strategic position. Rekindling some of the grandiose vision and commitment to universal values put forth by the “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity,” Japan proposed the ambitious blueprint of the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” Strategy, pledging to uphold the rule of law, democratic values, freedom of navigation, and economic connectivity in the vast region linking Indo-Pacific and Africa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2020b). Besides building defence ties with countries like Australia and India, Japan has boosted economic connectivity with like-minded countries. Between 2000 and 2009, Japan concluded eight economic partnership agreements (EPA) with Southeast Asian countries and ASEAN. An EPA followed it signed with India in 2011 and Australia in 2014. Japan also expanded its focus beyond the Indo-Pacific as Asô envisioned by concluding a free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union (EU) in 2018.

Moreover, closer cooperation with Canberra, New Delhi, and Brussels has empowered Tokyo to hedge and balance against China. In 2019, Japan signed a deal with the EU to set development standards worldwide, vowing to serve as “guardians of universal values” and providers of quality infrastructure (Emmott, 2019). The deal formalised Tokyo’s involvement in a new EU-Asia “connectivity plan” set to be backed by €60 billion (US\$65.48 billion). The proposal focuses on providing transport, energy, and digital infrastructure to Africa and the Balkans, critical regions for China’s BRI.

Moreover, Japan is seeking to shape China’s behaviour as a part of its balancing strategy. Recognising the undesirable impacts alienating Beijing can bring and the long-term threats posed by unchecked Chinese coercive economic practices, Japan strikes to induce cooperative behaviours and further economic reforms from China. In 2016, Japan signed and later ratified the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a centrepiece of US President Obama’s strategic pivot to Asia that aims to ensure that “the United States—and not countries like China—is the one writing this century’s rules for the world’s economy” (Somanader, 2015). By setting global regulations on free trade China has yet to meet, the TPP strengthens economic connectivity among rule-abiding countries, reduces China’s bargaining power, and shapes China’s future behaviours if Beijing wishes to continue benefiting from the liberal economic order. When President Trump pushed for protectionist policies under his “America First” slogan and pulled the US out of

the TPP, the agreement loomed with future uncertainties. As the US retreated, Japan took over the baton and spearheaded the effort in reorganising the deal into the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which retained most of the clauses of the PPT save 22 provisions added at US insistence.

Although the vacuum created by the US abandonment of the TPP opened doors for China to promote the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), an alternative to TPP to boost its exports and set labour and environmental standards, the quick rebranding of the CPTPP achieved the same goal President Obama has envisioned, albeit without participation from the US. The ratification of the CPTPP convinced reform-minded leaders in China to further internal economic reforms (Lin & Katada, 2020). More importantly, China's official attitude toward the TPP/CPTPP has changed significantly since formal negotiations started in 2010. Chinese elites have tilted their opinion toward potential membership (Green & Goodman, 2015). Voices favouring participation have become more prominent since the ratification of the CPTPP. In September 2019, the director of the Center for China and Globalization, Wang Huiyao (2019), published an opinion piece suggesting that China should join the CPTPP on *Global Times*, a state-owned media known for its more radical, nationalist opinions, sending a strong signal that official opinion is leaning toward participation. In September 2021, China officially petitioned to join the CPTPP, though China can hardly anticipate a fast accession (Solís, 2021).

For Japan, its proactive economic partnership strategy reflects similar approaches in its trade and ODA policies in light of China's emergence and growing assertiveness. It seeks to build constructive relations with China through engagement and cooperation and at the same time balance against China's coercive practices by reducing its economic dependence and joining like-minded countries. While the formation of the CPTPP bloc eyes on China's unfair, non-transparent, and coercive economic behaviours, it nevertheless seeks not to contain and isolate China completely. The agreement never bars China from joining and participating, though Beijing needs to take a big step in its economic reform to meet the new standard. Future Chinese accession to the CPTPP, under the condition that the standard remains as rigorous as possible, would benefit rather than threaten the pact and its existing members. In Prime Minister Abe's words, China's future participation would significantly impact the Indo-Pacific region (Perlez, 2015). This mutually non-exclusive two-pronged approach highlights Japan's power and influence in the contemporary challenging international environment. Although Japan still fears abandonment from the US, worries economic overdependence on China, and faces the dilemma as a middle power situated, often uncomfortably, between the two great powers, its proactive

responses to China's rise and oversteps have empowered Japan to become a leader in the Indo-Pacific and a guardian of universal values and the liberal order.

5. Post-COVID world: New challenges, new opportunities

Though the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic still hang and future uncertainties loom, the unprecedented global crisis will accelerate the rapid shifts in the global order. As the origin of the pandemic, China is put under the spotlight amidst this unprecedented transformation. Since the initial outbreak, China has been offensive with its propaganda and information campaign to boost its image as the saviour while belittling Western democracies as failures. Beijing also took the rare opportunity of chaos and confusion to march on Hong Kong and put further military pressure on Taiwan. China's assertive policies have met with resistance from many Western democracies, furthering rifts in bilateral relations.

For Japan, the pandemic was not an easy challenge. Within weeks of the initial outbreak in Wuhan, the country has already tasted the economic devastation brought by the imminent global health crisis. Although Japan successfully weathered the initial and second waves, avoiding massive domestic outbreaks experienced by the US and Western European countries, Tokyo finds itself in an economic mire. Expecting an uplifting year of economic growth brought by the Olympics, Japan increased its consumption tax to 10% in September 2019 only to confront postponement of the event and shrinking domestic and international consumption due to the pandemic (BBC, 2019). After real GDP contracted in Q4 2019 after the tax raise, weak domestic consumption and external demands brought by the pandemic struck another heavier blow at the Japanese economy as real GDP shrank 7.82% in Q2 2020, translating to a sharp 27.8% annualised decline (BBC, 2020). Japan's failure to handle the Covid-19 pandemic also struck heavy blows on the administration's legitimacy and confidence in Japan's slow recovery.

Moreover, the rising tension between China and Western countries has intensified Japan's dilemma. Beijing's perception of Western democracies in decline, as indicated by their dilatory response to the pandemic despite prior warnings and sluggish economic recovery, emboldened China to defend its contested political interest assertively and expand its economic influence. When China cautiously restarted its economic engine and resumed the production of medical supplies that have become a global scarcity, Beijing used its advantage to boost its international image and increase its leverage against its competitors, namely the US. However, China's propaganda campaign was soon revealed as a significant blunder. The abhorrently low quality of Chinese products raised alarms and suspicions from Western countries regarding the hidden risk of the current global distribution of

production and investment resources (BBC 2020). China's assault on Hong Kong's autonomy and the rule of law further pitched London, Ottawa, Canberra, and Washington against Beijing and the current liberal economic order that has benefited China immensely. Thus, Japan faces the potential risk of a more aggressive China that seeks to push against Western offences and increasing rifts between China and the West, leaving Japan awkwardly and dangerously in the middle.

However, the pessimistic view of Japan's future is overblown as many advocates for this outlook overstate Japan's dilemma vis-à-vis China's rise and underestimate Japan's assets and capabilities. Shifts in global order catalysed by the pandemic open new opportunities for Japan to act and lead in the post-pandemic world. This new window is no mere serendipity that falls upon Japan during an unexpected global crisis; instead, Tokyo has prepared itself for a moment like this through its decade-long policy reforms, innovations, and experiments in response to potential threats posed by a rising China.

6. Deescalating the war on technology: Flexible and open 5G technology

A key component to China's "national rejuvenation" campaign was Xi Jinping's call for building a great technology power. To replace its national image of "made in China" with "designed in China," Beijing launched the Made in China 2025 plan and encouraged many domestic companies to invest in the research and development of cutting-edge technology. Since declaring the goal of becoming the next technology powerhouse globally, China has achieved tremendous success in telecommunication, especially in fifth-generation, or 5G wireless networks led by ZTE and Huawei. As China spearheaded the global launch of 5G networks, several Western countries, led by the US, have raised concerns over whether Chinese vendors should be allowed to participate in 5G deployments, a matter keen to national security interests. In August 2018, President Trump signed the Defense Authorization Act, effectively banning Huawei and ZTE from the US government and government contractors (Shu, 2018). Washington has also pushed its allies to adopt similar policies against Huawei, which sparked intense debates in many European and Asian countries seeking a middle ground between China and the US (Woo & O'Keeffe, 2018). Japan, New Zealand, and Australia were the first three countries to follow the US lead, effectively banning Huawei before the end of 2018 (BBC, 2018a; Japan Times, 2018; McDuling, 2018). Washington also successfully persuaded several European telecom service providers such as BT to pull Huawei equipment out of its core network even countries like the UK remained undecided (BBC, 2018b).

Amidst rising tension between China and the US on the technology front, Western democracies have toughened their stance on network security regulations and

launched special task forces to investigate and evaluate potential security risks of partnering with Huawei. Without outright banning Huawei's equipment or forcing its member states to follow a specific guideline, the EU advocated for stricter regulations and more recently issued a statement saying that European companies such as Nokia and Ericsson can replace Huawei completely in developing 5G infrastructure (Bellamy, 2020). EU's suggestive warning against Huawei came amidst growing pushback against the Chinese company. In July 2020, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered Huawei equipment to be purged entirely from Britain's 5G network by 2027, a sharp turn from his initial endorsement in late 2019 and a more moderate stance in early 2020 that granted Huawei a limited role in Britain's 5G mobile network (Shipman & Kerbai, 2019; Sandle & Stubbs, 2020; Sandle & Faulconbridge, 2020). Britain's decision was soon followed by France's decision to refrain telecoms operators from renewing their licenses for Huawei 5G equipment once they expire, effectively removing Huawei gears by 2028 without an outright ban (Rosemain & Barzic, 2020).

Increasing international pushback against Huawei offers Japan a window of opportunity to assert its leadership in the next generation of telecommunication. Taking a step further than Huawei and its competitors such as Nokia and Ericsson, Japanese company Rakuten is spearheading a novel approach involving open radio access network (RAN) equipment. In February 2019, Rakuten launched the world's first end-to-end fully virtualised network that allowed for Open RAN, requiring fewer hardware investments that break the conventional lock-in system that specifies strict compatibility between software and hardware (Rakuten, 2019). By promoting Open RAN, countries can benefit from this more flexible approach as it lowers the initial cost of introducing a 5G provider, allows more equal and accountable competition between companies, and prevent monopoly that has sparked geopolitical tension in the first place (Schoff & Kamijima-Tsunoda, 2020). The opportunity is ripe for Japan to develop next-generation telecommunication that is open, flexible, and accessible.

7. Shifting global value chain: A market Japan can never lose

New challenges from the ongoing pandemic also raised the question of supply chain dependence as China's economic shutdown put the global supply of protective gear to almost a halt. Multinational companies outsourcing many of their factories to China also suffered losses as China's factories closed down and workers were sent home. As ironic as it seems, the pandemic has taught many multi-billion-dollar companies one of the most basic facts in investment—diversification. For decades, China's cheap labour cost, friendly business environment, and top-tier infrastructure have attracted foreign businesses to set up factories and built its reputation as the world's factory. However, in recent years,

rising labour costs and political uncertainties are convincing companies to move their production plants elsewhere. Between 1998 and 2018, China's manufacturing labour costs rose from less than US\$0.5 per hour to US\$5.51 per hour, surpassing Mexico in 2009 and is now twice the level as labour cost in Vietnam.⁸ Even with its advantage in cost, quality, human resources, and infrastructure unmatched by any other country, companies are leaving China to reduce costs and risks, and the pandemic has quickened the pace of the manufacturing exodus.

Awakened by China's sudden economic shutdown, US technology giants such as Apple, Microsoft, and Google moved some hardware production and assembly to Vietnam and Thailand. In a more concerted effort, Japan pledged JP¥248.6 billion (US\$2.34 billion) to reform Japan's supply chains, bringing several high value-added production centres back to Japan and diversifying others to several countries, including ASEAN states (Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, 2020). Though China expressed concerns over the exodus of Japanese firms, Japan's US\$2 billion supply chain reform, even if considered a rebalancing strategy by Tokyo, is not a significant move against China (Kawashima, 2020). Japan's policy to relocate production bases arguably have less to do with China precisely than the simple fact that Japan wishes to avoid reliance on a single country. More importantly, not all Japanese companies are readying themselves to withdraw from China and most of those leaving produce pharmaceutical and medical supplies.

However, regardless of foreign companies' intentions to move production out of China, Beijing has to face factories closing down and unemployed workers. At the same time, Southeast Asian countries will see a more prominent role in the global value chain. Aside from the obvious economic benefits brought by the influx of foreign capital and employment opportunities, ASEAN states will likely see an increase in the demand and return of their infrastructure projects, which will significantly reduce the transportation cost. As a significant player and trusted partner in Southeast Asian countries' infrastructure development, Japan's strategic, high-quality official finance will have far-reaching impacts, benefiting the developing countries and foreign companies investing in the region. Japan's long-term investment and close partnership with ASEAN states are paying off as Southeast Asia command more significant influence in the global arena. Even as China pours money and resources to cultivate better ties with Southeast Asian countries, Beijing's success is limited, for the economic dependence has yet to be translated into trust. Although the pandemic has brought China and ASEAN closer as the latter replaced the EU as China's largest trading partner in 2020, China's charm offensive is not a complete

⁸ Data collected from China Statistical Yearbook and IHS Market Technology.

success. In April 2020, China invited ASEAN to a joint video conference on the pandemic, “perhaps to show off its massive support for the economic consortium” (Sasaki, 2020). Though ASEAN agreed to China’s proposal, it also extended to invitation to Japan and South Korea, showing high levels of trust with the two democracies, but not China (Sasaki, 2020).

Despite increasing challenges from China, Southeast Asia remains a market Japan cannot lose. Though ASEAN’s economic dependence lends China powerful influence in the region that sways ASEAN from fully embracing US policy of balancing against China, Beijing has yet to form clout that can replace Japan’s historical presence. More importantly, with new economic opportunities ahead of ASEAN and Japan’s increased investment in the region under its strategic ODA strategy, Tokyo, not Beijing, is poised to be the leader of the Indo-Pacific and a pivotal contributor to the future of ASEAN.

8. Bridging China and the West: Japan as a link

Since escalating tension between the US and China brought bilateral relations to a nadir, discussions on the US-China decoupling have commanded incessant attention. As the 2020 US presidential election draws near, debates on US foreign policy in the next four years will centre on the question of how to deal with China. Interestingly, both Trump and Biden have voiced clear intentions to harsh America’s stance against China, albeit differently. In other words, regardless of who will win the election in November, amelioration of US-China relations seems unlikely shortly. The coronavirus pandemic has also had chilling effects on Sino-European ties as the EU increasingly views China’s propaganda efforts as hostile and aggressive, further accentuating the systemic rivalry—a term introduced by the EU in March 2019 (Corre and Brattberg, 2020). However, at the same time, the probability of a complete decoupling of Beijing and Washington, or more broadly between China and the West, remains scant. Though one may find many similarities between US-China competition and confrontation and the US-USSR relations during the Cold War era, such comparison is not self-evident. Even as rising populism and nationalism challenges the liberal world order, globalisation cannot simply be undone. China, for example, cannot afford to walk away from the liberal economic order. Even as Xi Jinping sought to harness support by appealing to rising nationalist sentiments in China, economic performance and prosperity remain the fundamental source of legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party.

As trade frictions escalate between China and Japan, Beijing has sought warmer ties with Tokyo. Challenges from the pandemic further brought the two countries together as both sides demonstrated unexpected magnanimity when many states behaved in their self-interests (Li and McElveen, 2020). As China’s relations with the West, especially the UK, Canada, and Australia, further worsened following

the passage of the Hong Kong national security law, China has prodded closer ties with Japan as Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi urged pushing forward China-Japan bilateral exchanges and cooperation during a phone conversation with his Japanese counterpart Tohimitsu Motegi (Xinhua, 2020).

Warming Sino-Japanese ties during episodes of worsening ties between China and Western democracies is not an unprecedented phenomenon. After the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, Japan served as the bridge and linchpin between China and the West, advocating for lifting sanctions on China and spearheaded re-engagement efforts with Beijing. For China, Japan's geographic proximity, cultural affinity, and economic capacity make it the perfect candidate to contact and reach out during difficult times with Western countries.

In light of escalating tension regarding the future of Hong Kong, Japan will likely play an even more critical role as the indispensable bridge between China and the West. Emboldened by its perception of China's rapid rise and the West's gradual decline, Beijing adopts a more assertive and adamant attitude toward issues relating to its national sovereignty. Western democracies, at the same time, have also toughened their stance on China. The passage of the Hong Kong national security law raised grave alarm among the commonwealth nations and soured China's ties with the UK, Australia, and Canada. Beijing's breach of the "one country, two systems" principle and the 50-year pledge of market economy and democracy raised the question of Hong Kong's freedom and autonomy. Since the colonial era starting from 1840, Hong Kong has played an indispensable role as a critical channel between China proper and the outside world. Hong Kong stands at the crossroads between China and the West as a free port and later a global financial hub. However, the recent encroachment on Hong Kong's autonomy and independence severely jeopardised optimism for the island's future.

At the same time, China cannot afford complete isolation from the West, primarily when it depends on international trade and investment to maintain its economic growth. China's petition to join the CPTPP sends a clear and powerful signal even as China refuses to tone its political behaviours and rhetoric. Whether Chinese leaders have accounted for the costs of losing Hong Kong as a vital link between China and the West when deciding to push for the national security law, Beijing will search for an alternative, and among all its neighbouring countries, Japan is the best candidate. In 1989 Japan took a path independent from the rest of the G7 countries, advocating for restraints and leniency in sanctioning China (Murata, 2006). Though the China-Japan tie will unlikely return to the pre-1989 honeymoon phase as Tokyo watches Beijing's actions cautiously and favorability toward China among Japanese remains low, Japan is still reluctant to isolate China. The new pattern of warming bilateral ties suggests the potential for both parties to maintain constructive relations in the future (Kennedy & Goodman,

2020). In the new global order marked by increasing great power competition and confrontation, Japan can turn its dilemma as a middle country between China and the US into an asset by redefining its role as a leader in the new global order and a bridge facilitating integration and cooperation between China and the West.

9. A necessary challenge: Japan's foreign economic policies in the era of US-China rivalry

Without any doubt, China and the US play non-negligible roles in formulating Japan's domestic and foreign policies. Japan maintains strong economic, political, and defence ties with the US, and the fear of abandonment in the face of changing geopolitical conditions in the Indo-Pacific pushes Tokyo to seek closer cooperation with Washington. As one of Japan's largest trading partners, China's economic health directly impacts Japan's economic performance, and this dependence shapes Tokyo's fundamental approach vis-à-vis Beijing that opposes complete decoupling or isolation. As US-China relations continue to deteriorate and the possibility of reverse seems distant regardless of who will win the White House in November, Japan's China policy will continue to pose serious challenges to the government in Tokyo.

Since 1979, Japan's strategy vis-à-vis China has shifted from engagement to a strategic hedge, incorporating elements of both engagement and balancing. More specifically, Japan's current strategy predicated upon four pillars: economic pragmatism, binding engagement, dominance-denial and indirect balancing (Vidal & Pelegrín, 2018). Driven by the *seikei bunri* principle, Japan pursued a "business first" approach economically while strengthening its defence posture through internal and external balancing behaviours. At the same time, Japan sought to shape and restrain China by binding it to a variety of regional and international institutions, thus forcing China to engage with less powerful countries multilaterally and preventing it from using the divide and conquer tactics.

Although Japan's hedging strategy vis-à-vis China incorporates nothing new to policymakers in the US and European countries—most Western countries have adopted similar policies toward China during the post-Cold War era—responding to China's rise has shifted Japan from a reactive, status-quo power to a proactive player ready to defend its strategic interests. Despite its constitutional limit on military capability and its stagnant economic performance, Japan has transformed its role from a passive ally of the US to an active power in the Indo-Pacific (Envall, 2017). In addition to a series of policy initiatives to strengthen Japan's national security posture—from internally modernising its military and reinterpreting its constitution to externally buttressing defence ties with the US

and other allies. Since 2010, Japan has reduced its economic overdependence on China, revised its ODA strategy to better suit its national security interest, and invested in multilateral platforms that challenge China's dominance in the region while shaping Beijing's future behaviours.

Japan's strategy is not only significant in the domestic contexts, for it also offers critical wisdom to how the West should respond to China's no-longer-so-peaceful rise. Though the logic of balancing against a great power by forming alliances is hardly new, the approach is much needed in the contemporary world where the beacon of freedom and democracy no longer shines, and the guardians of universal values are no longer fighting in unison. As Washington walks away from its allies, Tokyo discovers a new path of empowerment by engaging with like-minded democracies and reemphasising its pledge to protecting universal values. With visions such as the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" to the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy," Japan has significantly expanded its role in the international community, the scope of its foreign policy, and its commitment to the values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. As China's coercive diplomacy raises red flags regarding its official "peaceful rise" rhetoric and pledge to become a responsible great power, Japan's strategy is preparing Western countries to face mounting challenges from China. More importantly, Japan's balancing behaviour differs from the alliances formed during the Cold War as Tokyo does not seek to contain or isolate Beijing. Japan's vision supports China's participation and contribution but demands deeper reform measures and rule-abiding behaviours to set a level playing field for all countries.

China's rise and America's relative decline have posed serious challenges to Japan, but this dilemma has been a beneficial and even necessary challenge. The emergence of China as a rival compelled Japan to adapt, innovate, and experiment with new strategies and policy options previously imagined by the reactive, status-quo power. The retreat of the US, on the other hand, convinced Japan to build up its comprehensive capabilities and assume a more proactive role domestically, regionally, and internationally. The new opportunities presented by the changing global order are no mere chance work; instead, China's rise has awakened Japan to grasp these new opportunities. Long viewed as a reactive power slow to adapt to changing geopolitical circumstances, Japan is becoming a proactive player, engaging and shaping the changing global environment.

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***'Takaukibori'* Technique in Makuzu Kôzan's Ceramic Art: Transformation of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics of Meiji Era**

Dilruba Sharmin*

Abstract– This paper examines the transformation of pottery art during Meiji Japan by discussing a unique technique called 'Takaukibori' created by Makuzu Kôzan, an official potter of the Japanese Imperial household Agency. The ceramic art of the Meiji era was the turning point of Japanese individualism, and this paper will discuss one of the examples of that creation with other classifications. Makuzu Kôzan was a Kyoto native who started his early career in the Gion area but soon moved to Yokohama. In 1876, he broke into the international scene when his work was featured at the Philadelphia world's fair. Makuzu's move from Kyoto to Yokohama—from the tranquillity of the old capital to a turbulent port city—shaped his approach to ceramics. Makuzu decorated the surface of his artwork with depictions of both natural flora and fauna and therianthropic figures in a way quite different from any previously produced works of Japanese art. He had created the unique and artistic technique in a ceramic decorative style known as 'Takaukibori' or 'Sculptural Relief'. This decorative technique is visible as a three-dimension style, and its intangible beauty has gained popularity worldwide. That being the case, Makuzu's work never imitated Western models, and he has been most appreciated for his willingness to burrow into the surface of his ceramic ware, not just work around it. This essay will discuss how Makuzu Kôzan's experiences across the Meiji transition shaped his art and how his work influenced unique forms of Japanese ceramic art and aesthetics more broadly.

Keywords Ceramic art · Japan · Meiji · Taisho · Makuzu Kôzan · Yokohama port, and Kyoto · 'Takaukibori' Technique · Cultural heritage ·

1. Introduction

Japan's ceramic art originated from the prehistoric Jomon period and continuously upgraded with the influence of neighbouring countries and the

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quality of Japanese potters' individualism. Understanding any Japanese specialised ceramic genre about the Japanese pottery generation and traditional ceramics is no easy task.

With the advent of the classical period, Japan entered a new era of pottery art called the glazed technique, and numerous excellent styles have been invented. In medieval times, Japan saw the multi-technique in pottery production with the development in kiln technology. By the twelfth century, several pottery streams had sprung up in Japan associated with specific areas or soils with significant characteristics. Sometimes it was affiliated with a family name or person. There is main six pottery traditions in Mediaeval Japan; Bizen (present-day Okayama prefecture), Seto (Aichi), Shigaraki (Shiga), Tamba (Hyogo), Echizen (Fukui), Tokoname (Aichi).¹ These six traditions are known as 'Rokkouyo' and are famous in the 12th century. The names of a few other genres are also known as Karatsu (present-day Saga), Hagi (Yamaguchi), Iga (Mie), Mino (Gifu), and Kyo-yaki (Kyoto). Kyo-yaki has been influenced the lifestyle of Kyoto-people from the Edo period to till present.² Besides these, the Gifu region was also presented some other pottery traditions, named 'Shino', 'Oribe', Setoguro', and 'Ki-seto'. Each classical and medieval Japanese ceramic style has its unique qualities and characteristics appearances. The birth of the overglaze technique in Japan was made in the middle Edo period and continuously developed with many new kilns. The end of the isolationist policy or 'Shakoku' (closed country) in 1853³ and the restoration of imperial rule in 1868 marked the official beginning of the modern Japanese era.⁴ By the end of the 1860s, rapid modernisation, the 'civilisation and enlightenment policies' of the Meiji authority, and the samurai class and feudalism abolishing the modern economic system and open exchange with Western nations affected the traditional system of ceramic production.⁵ The 'opening' of Japan, triggered by American Commodore Mathew C. Perry in 1854, initiated the rapid industrialisation that transformed Japan in the subsequent decades. Specifically, Perry's arrival in Japan and the signing of the Kanagawa Treaty in 1854 aided in the reversal of the previous Edo period's (1603-1868) policy of isolationism from foreign trade relations.⁶ Naturally, patronage from the

¹ Faulkner, R. (1995). *Japanese studio crafts: tradition and the avant-garde*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 23.

² Matsuo, A. (2014). Suzuki Osamu, Sodeisha and ceramic identity in modern Japan. *Ceramics Art and Perception*, 3-7.

³ Piquero-Balleascas, M. R. (2017). Book Review: Reluctant Intimacies: Japanese Eldercare in Indonesian Hands. DOI: 10.1111/imre.12367

⁴ Sims, R. (2019). *Japanese Political History Since the Meiji Restoration, 1868-2000*. Springer, 10-13.

⁵ Huffman, J. L. (2010). *Japan and imperialism, 1853-1945*. Association for Asian Studies, Incorporated. 7-9, 12-13.

⁶ Ibid, 7-9

daimyo class ceased, and a new foreign market demanded Japanese ceramic wares. Afterwards, numerous decorative styles and production techniques were introduced in the Meiji era, and the Japanese ceramic industry gradually gained popularity inside and outside of Japan.

This research explores the changing aptitude in Japanese ceramics with the work of Makuzu Kôzan (1842-1916), more specifically, how Japanese ceramic art represents a reinterpretation of tradition and modernity in the Meiji and Taisho era, that will be discussed. Moreover, in this aspect, a unique technique called '*Takaukibori*' will be examined on the view of Kôzan's supremacy. The present research work has been divided into six major sections. The first to third sections would deal with the introductory information, objectives, and literature review for the research. The fourth section will discuss the informational background of Makuzu Kôzan, his family, early career, and his idea development. The fifth and sixth sections will analyse the development that characterises the transformations of the Kôzan's ceramic arts from the early- Meiji period until the turn of the century. The central component of Kôzan's work in contemporary design will be analysed with examples in segment seven. Kôzan's work will discuss the point of individualism, which represents the transitional characteristics of the Meiji period in this part of the paper. A conclusion remarks will present as a final part of the last section. The artwork of Makuzu Kôzan represents the distinctiveness of medieval Japan's ceramics technique as a whole, and this paper will discuss his individualistic creation with the analysis of a featured technique called '*Takaukibori*'.

Makuzu Kôzan's family name was Miyagawa Toranosuke. He was born in a potter's family in 1842 when Japan was ruled by Tokugawa/ Edo authority (1868-1912). Soon after, the country saw the 'Meiji Restoration' or 'Reform of Meiji era', which played a significant role in the modernisation of Japan. The Meiji era was critical in Japanese history for political and social reform. It is the era of great innovation in technology and design, as Japan has started to absorb new knowledge from the West and review its traditional values. It was the time to establish numerous museums, art galleries, private exhibitions, and much prefectural art and craft exposition. All in all, it is the period of Japan's final passage for uplifting its own status.

Kôzan's work provides insight into the development of the ceramic arts in Japan as they transformed from domestic tea wares to export wares and, ultimately, the objects of modern artistic expression and creativity. He had appointed as an artist to the Japanese Imperial household from 30 June 1896 till his death on 24 May 1916. Imperial Household Agency of Japan has officially appointed great artists known as 'Imperial Household Artist' or 'Teishitsu Gigei-in' in Japanese. This prestigious appointment was first started in 1890 when Japan was under Meiji rule and was discontinued to the end of World War II. Great artists are still designated as 'Living

National Treasure' in Japan. Kôzan was one of the outstanding potters of the Meiji Era. His early career was nourished with the long line history of Kyoto ceramics and, at that time, high-fired ceramics and porcelain wares produced in Kyoto. The Kyoto ceramic style originated in the 17th century and was typically painted with overglaze enamel pigments. Kyoto ware is still famous for its colourful decorated ceramics today. Kôzan always wanted to introduce a new design or style, and finally, he successfully established the Japanese ceramic artwork with the same height as Western ceramics or more than that.

2. Objectives

The objective of this study will produce concrete data of Makuzu Kôzan's artwork, significantly how his experiences shaped Japanese art into a new dimension with more aesthetic aspects. The research question is discussed in two specific objectives, which are as follows:

First, what motivation inspired Kôzan to create his nature-based high relief 'Takaukibori' technique? Kôzan's background, family, childhood education, early career, and establishment in a new city 'Yokohama' will be discussed as a background.

Second, is Kôzan's artwork, especially the 'Takaukibori' technique, imitated from western style or an original creation? As Japan was changed in political vision and mission after the Meiji restoration and many aspects of western culture were shaped the Japanese new concept in that era, the influence of western artwork in Kôzan's creation should be discussed in detail. Undoubtedly, his art style is a valuable resource for pre-modern Japan, which has brought Japan to the forefront of aesthetics.

Kôzan's artwork is not only esteemed for Japan, and it is a milestone of ceramic decoration of the pre-modern world where the surrounding natural features were noticeable instead of abstract-only symbols.

3. Literature review

In order to accomplish the objectives of this paper and produce a conclusive perception, data was collected from other past works, including books, Book Reviews, and reports from some renowned Museums. The two very informative sources for this research are two books: (a) '*Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kôzan (1842-1916) and His Workshop*' written by Moyra Clare Pollard, who is Curator of Japanese Art at the Ashmolean Museum and an associate member of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, (b) '*bridging East and West: Japanese Ceramics from the Kôzan Studio: Selections from the Perry Foundation*', written by Emerson-Dell, K. in 1994. She is a prominent art historian and a museum

specialist. To understand Kôzan's ceramic style and decoration technique, both sources are very informative and historical data providers. Clare Pollard and Emerson-Dell highlighted the technical aspects of Kôzan's artwork and its tremendous impact on the Japanese Ceramic Industry. In both writings, Kôzan's career history and achievements were delicately discussed.

In the same way, this research is primarily based on Kôzan's aesthetic art-works discussion and latterly classified those into six categories. It is significant to classify an artist work for further understanding, especially an artist like Makuzu Kôzan, but similarly, it is imperative to know his work individually. Mainly, the 'Takaukibori' technique should be analysed to perceive his creation deeply. This research will provide an opportunity to learn more about Kozan's art style and to facilitate research by categorising his impeccable creations.

4. Background of Kôzan's ceramic work

4.1 Kôzan's family background and early life

The Makuzu line potters perhaps came from a long line of potter's genre who had their kiln at *Makuzogahara* in Kyoto from the late 18th century. Makuzu Kôzan was the fourth son of a Kyoto potter named Miyagawa Chozo (1797-1860) and an eleventh-generation potter in the Miyagawa lineage.⁷ He was born in Makuzogahara, a village of Kyoto, and Kyoto was the ancient capital of Japan and still attracted by travellers for its natural and heavenly beauty. His father was also an expert potter of Kyoto who learned the skills of pottery production from Aoki Mokubei (a celebrated potter-literatus, 1767-1833) and was exceptionally competent at making Ninsei-style tea-ware.⁸ Who was Ninsei, or why did Mokubei follow his style? The ceramic ware of Nonomura Ninsei is known as the turning point of the Kyoto ware in the mid-17th century. He is granted the 'father of Kyo-yaki' or Kyoto pottery and mentors for numerous future ceramic artworks in Japan.

Chozo opened a new kiln in Makuzogahara at Higashiyama in Kyoto after completing his apprentice period from Mokubei. He produced Chinese and Japanese stoneware and porcelain associated with sencha-style tea wares. Yasui-no-Monzeki, a well-known retired priest of the Shingon Buddhist sect, gives this artistic name 'Makuzu' to Chozo and later, the pottery was known as 'Makuzu ware'.⁹ The record of this potter's family is very confused. It is said that the first

⁷ Tamaki, B. W. (2003). Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kôzan (1842–1916) and his Workshop, *Journal of Design History*, Volume 16, Issue 4, Pp. 349–351,

⁸ https://www.suntory.com/sma/exhibition/2016_1/display.html

⁹ <https://research.britishmuseum.org>

original potter of this genre was a Samurai and was born in Kyoto in 1797 and probably named 'Yukansai'. His grandson 'Chokansai' was established a kiln near the compound of Chion-in temple located at Higashiyama-Ku in Kyoto.¹⁰

Chozo's son Miyagawa Toranosuke (latterly Makuzu Kôzan), studied pottery techniques from the early stage of his childhood with the supervision of an expert Japanese artist Taiga IV who worked at a local Japanese painting school. This type of school was starting to establish in the late Edo period, and the type was known as '*Bunjinga*'. Why did Chozo take Taiga IV as a teacher of his son? Taiga IV was the eldest son of Geppô, who came probably from Samurai descent and later became a priest of the Tendai Buddhist sect. From a young age, Geppô was studied with Ike Taiga, a good painter in the Ike no Taiga (1723-1776) potter's genre and famous in the Edo period for painting and calligraphy.¹¹ Geppô's son Taiga IV was appreciated as an educator and mentor. At just nine years old, Kôzan began his artistic endeavours, which later influenced the impeccable decoration of his ceramics.

In their early career, Kôzan had made tea wares and devoted them to painting, poetry and ancient traditional Japanese and Chinese ceramic study. In 1860, Kôzan had to take the family business early because his father and brother had been no longer alive. Tea utensils were his starting point.¹² The popularity of the tea-ceremony or '*Cha-no-yu*' was increased in the early Edo period, and tea-ware production was increased. Before this time, daimyo was paid for exquisite imported Chinese lacquer-ware to enhance the lavishness of tea ceremony activities. As tea culture tastes shifted in the 16th century, the Japanese elite began to enjoy simpler, austere works known as 'Rakuware', associated with poetry.

In the late 1860s, Kôzan got many reasonable teaching offers from renowned ceramic artists; one from Igi Nagato of Igi family, a chief retainer of Bizen domain located in Okayama prefecture to help continue his private practice kiln at Mushiage, which Makuzu Kôzan accepted in 1867. Igi Nagato was not only a ceramic artist; he was the chief mentor of the Okayama Han or domain (estate of a daimyo/ feudal lord) and tea ceremony master. Makuzu Kôzan started to work at Mushiage, located in Setouchi city in Southern Okayama and worked there for two years. At that time, he primarily produced 'matcha-yaki' or green tea-wares in both porcelain and stoneware. He used two kinds of stoneware clay at Mushiage; a soft pale red clay and hard grey-white clay.¹³

¹⁰ Gorham, H. H. (2012). *Japanese & oriental ceramic*. Tuttle Publishing.

¹¹ Beerens, A. (2006). *Friends, acquaintances, pupils and patrons: Japanese intellectual life in the late eighteenth century: A prosopographical approach* (p. 320). Leiden University Press, pp-61.

¹² https://www.suntory.com/sma/exhibition/2016_1/display.html

¹³ Pollard, M. C. (2002). *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kôzan (1842-1916) and His Workshop*. Oxford University Press, USA.

His Mushiage artwork closely resembled his father, Chozo's *Makuzugahara* art-utensils. He is thought to have returned to Kyoto in 1870 and soon after invited by a Satsuma domain elder, Komatsu Tatewaki, to renew the kilns in *Naeshirogawa* near Kagoshima in Kyushu.¹⁴

4.2 Establishment of ceramic workshop and winning prizes

Makuzu Kôzan was shifted to by the invitation of a Tokyo merchant named Umeda Hannosuke, Yokohama was interested in exporting Satsuma ware. At that time, Yokohama was a place that would quickly emerge as the centre of Japanese trade with Europe and America.¹⁵ At the age of twenty-nine, Kôzan established a kiln in Yokohama in 1870 and Umeda's brother-in-law, Suzuki Yasubei, helped a lot in this establishment. He provided economic support for the kiln structure. Kôzan had to deal with some problems; one is suitable soil for pottery, and the other is suitable workers. To solve the worker problem, he brought four apprentices from Kyoto in 1872. However, gradually Kôzan had recruited many local people to expand his workshop. At that time, there was no kiln in Yokohama and no mentionable ceramic tradition. A new generation of ceramic and decoration techniques in Yokohama by Kôzan's mentorship. Unfortunately, their kiln caught fire and caused much damage in 1876. Kôzan later spent his own pocket money to bring everything back to workable and ended the partnership with Suzuki. Kôzan started his new kiln in the Nishiota area of Yokohama and took the name 'Ota'. The ceramic ware produced from "Ota" was known as 'Ota-ware'. At that time, famous Satsuma ware was encountered problems for export as antique.¹⁶ During the Meiji Restoration, the old rules were considerably revised and at the same time, subsidies were being provided for the development of the pottery industry. Kôzan was one of the forefronts to mentor the industrial expansion policy, called 'Shokusan Kogyo' or 'Encouragement of new industries'.¹⁷ The contributors of 'Shokusan Kogyo' mainly were government officials and its adherents called 'Protectionists'. This new concept was the slogan for new industrial policy.¹⁸ In the following years, Kôzan continued to exhibit widely at international and domestic venues, and his work continued to garner prizes.¹⁹ The first international exhibition that Kôzan has participated in was the Vienna International Exposition of 1873, and then he attended the 'Philadelphia

¹⁴ Conant, E. P. (Ed.). (2006). *Challenging past and present: the metamorphosis of nineteenth-century Japanese art*. University of Hawaii Press.

¹⁵ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1316181>

¹⁶ Pollard, M. C. (2002). *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kôzan (1842-1916) and His Workshop*. Oxford University Press, USA. 20, 25, 93.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 20, 25, 93.

¹⁸ <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110001212395/en#cit>

¹⁹ <http://kagedo.com/wordpress/g/makuzu-kozan-i-porcelain-hydrangea-vase/>

Centennial Exposition' in 1876.²⁰ This exhibition was celebrated the 100 years of American cultural and industrial progress and host to 37 nations and countless industrial exhibits occupying over 250 individual pavilions, in which one was by Kôzan.²¹ In 1877, he won the 'Ryûmon Imperial Award' at the 1st National Industrial Exposition, located in Uno in Tokyo city. This national exhibition was promoted by Toshimichi Okubo, the first minister of the Ministry of Home Affairs of Japan. The last and most serious armed uprising against the new Meiji government was called Seinan Civil War or the 'Satsuma Rebellion'. In 1882, Makuzu Kôzan formally made his adopted son Miyagawa Hannosuke (Hanzan, 1859–1940) head of the family business, though both continued to collaborate until the death of the Kôzan in 1916. Hannosuke was known as Makuzu Kôzan II and possessed unique ceramic production. Hannosuke's father was Chohei, an inheritor to the house and Kôzan's first cousin. Chohei died shortly after Kôzan's father (Chozo). Then Makuzu Kôzan was thought to marry Chohei's widow and adopted Hannosuke as their son.²² It seems that he was a celebrity potter, a family man, and cordial hearted person. The beauty of his mind is reflected in his work. Kôzan's artwork won a gold medal at the 'Paris Exposition Universelle' to use an exceptional transmutation glaze in 1889. After four years, a pair of elaborate stoneware vases won an 'Honorary Gold Medal' in Chicago's 'Columbian Exposition (1893).²³ In the Paris Exposition in 1900, Kôzan was again nominated for grand Prix winner, though Japanese ceramics did not achieve fair comments as a whole.²⁴ Makuzu Kôzan became an Imperial artist (*Teishitsu Gigeiin*) in 1896, and in the later years, he was awarded prizes at both home and international exhibitions. The Kyoto potter Makuzo Kôzan, a true nature lover and art creator, had started winning high recognition in the artist world.²⁵ Makuzu's Yokohama business was lost by bombing in the wartime of 1945.

²⁰ Hisako Sakamoto. (2011). Philadelphia World Exposition and Makatsuyaki. In *Japan Design Society Research Presentation Conference Summary Collection Japan Design Society 58th Research Presentation Conference* (pp. 58-58). Japan Design Society.

²¹ https://glennleason.typepad.com/life_work_and_the_pursuit/2009/01/centennial-exhibition-of-1876-excellence-at-its-finest.html

²² Hagen, L. M. (2012). *Exemplifying the Modern Spirit: Japanization and Modernization in the Ceramic Art of Miyagawa Kozan (1842-1916), Shirayamadani Kitaro (1865-1948), and Itaya Hazan (1872-1963)* [Master's thesis, University of Cincinnati]. OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center. http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=ucin1337717171

²³ Peleggi, M. (2002). *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824863388>

²⁴ Jennifer Harris, 2012, *The Formation of the Japanese Art Collection at the Art Gallery of South Australia 1904-1940: Tangible Evidence of Bunmei Kaika*, Volume 1, an unpublished Thesis. University of Adelaide.

²⁵ <https://research.britishmuseum.org/>

On the other hand, Kôzan's Kyoto business was continued by an employee of Chozo, Zen-o Jihei Kosai (1846–1922). He took the name Miyagawa Kosai and continued making the traditional tea utensils. Through many sacrifices, the family survives and continues to make traditional ceramics.

5. Kôzan's aesthetic ceramic work: Early, mid and late development

During the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), the ceramic industry benefited from the greatly increased consumer market, which resulted from the stable social condition of the Tokugawa regime. Feudal lords in many Buddhist temples and a growing number of affluent merchants provided patronage for kilns during the Tokugawa period. Decorated and colourful tea wares became popular within feudal lords and the newly developed wealthy merchant class. This class practised 'tea ceremony', a process of drinking tea.

The late 17th century saw the development of Kyo-yaki-over glazed enamelled earthenware of Kyoto. At this time of the Japanese ceramic era, exclusive ceramic art specialists gained fame; for example, Nonomura Ninsei, Ogata Kenzan, one century later, Okuda Eisen (1753-1811), Aoki Mokubei (1767-1833). The ceramic artwork of these centuries was heavily influenced by Chinese porcelain. Also, porcelain export trade from Arita (a porcelain production place in Saga prefecture) faced competition with Chinese porcelain in the late 17th and European porcelains in the mid-18th century. So, under pressure to survive in the domestic market and handle overseas, many potters were trialling for new items. Many artworks and artists came under threat with the increasing westernisation during the Meiji era (1868–1912). In that time, daimyo or the local lord of the inhabitants, gradually broke away, and many famous artists lost their source of income. Satsuma ware was the leading item for trade to the West. We know that the Meiji period promoted industrialisation, and the slogan was 'enriching the nation and strengthening the army' (*fukoku kyohei*). At that time, the government strongly encouraged manufacturing industry and international commerce so that Japan could protect Western domination and protect its independence and win equality with the leading nations of the West.

In the early Meiji period, most court nobles had left Kyoto because of the relocation of the capital from Kyoto to Tokyo. Also, the anti-Buddhist movement that forced temples and shrines to fall into decline was a dominant factor for their shifting. Potteries began turning to foreign countries to promote Awata ware for new markets. Many artworks by renowned Japanese potters can still be found in foreign private and museum collections.

Following the family tradition, Kôzan started his early career with the conventional tea-ceremony utensils, and tableware is both at the 'Chion' in the

temple at Kyoto and the private provincial kiln in Mushiage in Bizen. In 1852, there was a total of thirteen active potter's families active in the Kiyomizu-Gojozaka area of Kyoto; there was a sudden fall in demand for Kyoto ceramics, and within only twenty years, the number of potter's families had fallen to a mere six.²⁶ Market condition for Ceramic business certainly reflected the thought of Makuzu Kôzan to shift from Kyoto to Yokohama; also seems to have been released partly from the family financial problem that was emerging after the death of his father and brother. In 1871, he left the family business to establish his ceramic kiln in Yokohama's treaty port.

In Yokohama, Kôzan manufactured export quality stoneware, which was stylistically known as Satsuma ware and originated in the late 16th century. The Satsuma ware was initially prepared by Korean potters who came to Japan as war prisoners by the Satsuma daimyo, Yoshihiro, in around 1589.²⁷ All ceramics produced in the Satsuma domain in Kyushu was called Satsuma ware. Makuzo focused on the Satsuma-style stoneware, one of the western collectors' favourite items, characterised by a white clay body with a cream-coloured look, crackled glaze decoration with overglaze enamels, and gold designs (*Nishikide*) of flowers, birds, landscapes and figural scenes.²⁸ The Satsuma produced by Makuzu gained colossal popularity and was manufactured for both export and domestic market. He played a part in the grand 'old Satsuma' design of the early 1870s as many western commentators described him as a counterfeiter of 'old Satsuma'. Art historian John Clark suggested that cross-assimilation and cultural exchanges played a considerable role in reassessing and interpreting Japanese art and discourses.²⁹ In the mid-1870s, Kôzan developed an elaborate style of stoneware characterised by high-relief figures of birds, plants, animals, insects with extraordinary details. Kôzan's hometown Kyoto and its natural environment was influenced his artwork.

Makuzo's inspiration for inventing a new technique was necessary for that period because '*kinrande*' decoration used in Satsuma ware and was a popular ceramic item at overseas trade was an imitated one. '*Kinrande*' means 'gold brocade', and this porcelain style originated in the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD) and was very popular in China during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD). At that time, Western demand for Satsuma ware faded, and Kôzan tried to follow the West's Late-

²⁶ Nakanodo, K. (1984). *Kyoto no yogeishi*. Kyoto: Tankosha. 103.

²⁷ Pollard, M. C. (2002). *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu K- ozan (1842-1916) and His Workshop*. Oxford University Press, USA.

²⁸ Conant, E. (2006). *Challenging Past and Present: The Metamorphosis of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824840594>

²⁹ Clark, J. (1995). *Yôga in Japan: Model or Exception? Modernity in Japanese art 1850s-1940s: an international comparison*. *Art History*, 18(2), 253-285.

Victorian vogue for the ornamentation and the bizarre or unusual decorative inventions.

Makuzu Kôzan began experiments on various types of glazes and underglaze techniques, emulating Chinese Qing porcelain since around the 1880s. He produced diverse glaze decorative wares, including underglaze blue, underglaze red, celadon glaze, *yohen* glaze and crystal glaze. Gradually Makuzu kiln started to produce porcelain rather than other clay works. Kôzan was a creator as well as a researcher in his field as he devoted himself to advent new techniques in ceramics after handing over the management of his kiln to the son-in-law and heir Hannosuke in 1882, who has been introduced afterwards as the name of Miyagawa Kôzan II (1859-1940).

Kôzan's under-glaze decorative wares were also highly prized at the Paris World Exposition in 1889, the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 and many other similar events held domestically and overseas.³⁰ Usually, under-glaze decoration uses pigments rich in oxide and fuse with the glaze when the object is fired in a high-fired kiln. Using this type of oxide, the ceramic surface possesses a different and more beautiful surface after firing. More accurately said, under-glaze is a decoration process in which painted decoration is applied to the object's surface before it is covered with a transparent ceramic glaze and fired in a kiln. Kôzan's ceramic kiln initially produced the brightly enamelled and gilded Satsuma-style stoneware, which was popular in the West at that period. His style includes delicate tea sets and gourd-shaped vases decorated with feathery pine trees and peonies.

Kôzan's new aesthetic style took place in the form of sleek porcelain vessels by the late 1880s, for which he is now best known as a ceramic's artist. His new accomplishments help him get a prestigious post by the then government. In 1896, Kôzan was appointed as the 'Artist of Imperial Household', making him the leading authority on the Japanese ceramic's world. Through his official involvement, Kôzan was still actively participated in the research of various decorative techniques. Makuzu Kôzan passed away on 20 May 1916, leaving behind his unique creations that remain a milestone in Japanese ceramics history.

6. Diversification of Kôzan's artwork

The fantastic artwork of Makuzu Kôzan can be divided into six significant styles based on shapes and unique techniques, representing the transformational change in ceramic decoration in the mid to late Meiji period. His aesthetic artwork was

³⁰ https://www.suntory.com/sma/exhibition/2016_1/display.html

expressed in numerous household objects used as Japanese utensils; Vase in different shapes and sizes; Tea Bowl; Pot in different shapes; Incense container, and Water Jar. Based on the technique and shape of the utensils, Kôzan's artwork could be divided primarily into following divisions:

(A) Traditional tea utensils belong to the glazed technique: In their early career, Kôzan produced stoneware's of thinly potted tea bowls of various shapes, often closely resembling Chozo's Makuzugahara versions. Naturally, the father's work will influence his son. At that time, tea-ceremony was famous as a social ceremony and an aesthetic creation of individual artists. So, he was devoted to creating numerous utensils for tea ceremonies. Kôzan's other creation is *sencha* steeped-tea ceremonial utensils popular in the 'Bakumatsu' or the final years of the Edo period. Many tea bowls were made in traditional sets with fixed shapes and motifs based on themes such as the twelve months of the year or the five main annual festivals. These mainly were covered with pale greenish-yellow ash glaze, painted in iron-brown and over-glaze enamels.

(B) *Kyusu* with foliage design: Another well-known technique of Kôzan's early artwork is a porcelain teapot or *Kyusu* with foliage design in '*sometsuke*' underglaze blue and white style, dated in 1966.³¹ '*Kyusu*' is a Japanese term for green tea drinking utensils. The typical shape for *Kyusu* has a handle on the side though it can have a handle over the top or on the back. Other stoneware items include incense boxes, tea caddies or *chairs*, and water containers, which strongly influence his father's artwork. However, the range of intricate decorative styles used by Kôzan was extensive, and he was locally renowned for his skill with complex glazes. Assistant Mori Koshu (1858-1921) called him '*kusuri no kami-sama*' or God of glazes.³²

An early-stage creation of Kôzan is a '*mizusashi*' or 'water container' used in the tea ceremonies. This stoneware was decorated with the design of a goose against the moon. Now it is exhibited in the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History, Japan. Exploring the reasons for the success of Kozan's style of art, it can be seen that it was not only versatile but also had an awareness for an artistic look and aesthetic design.

(C) Traditional *Satsuma* style vase belongs to *nishikide* or brocade patterned technique: When Makuzu Kôzan shifted from Kyoto to Yokohama, the early focus of his Yokohama workshop was to produce *Satsuma*-style stoneware, which

³¹ Pollard, M. C. (2002). *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kôzan (1842-1916) and His Workshop*. Oxford University Press, USA.

³² Pollard, M. C. (2002). *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kôzan (1842-1916) and His Workshop*. Oxford University Press, USA, 14.

is characterised by its white clay body and cream-coloured, crackled glaze decorated with over-glaze enamels and gold-designed flowers, birds, landscapes, and figural scene. What is Satsuma style? In the late 16th century, Korean potters established many kilns in the Satsuma province in Kagoshima prefecture. The aesthetic wares produced in Satsuma province were known as 'Satsuma ware'. Satsuma-ware was classified into two types; 'Hon Satsuma' and Kyo-Satsuma. The ceramics produced in the Satsuma domain is known as 'Hon Satsuma'. On the other hand, the ceramics produced in Kyoto by the potters sent from Satsuma as part of cultural exchange are called Kyo-Satsuma.³³

Satsuma wares were among the earliest Japanese ceramics to attract overseas consideration once Japan emerged from Shakoku or isolation. During the Bakumatsu period, the ruler of Satsuma, the powerful Shimazu Daimyo, had gained political and economic autonomy to act independently. In 1867 were able to send a display of local artwork under their name to the Exposition Universelle held in Paris that year. Demands from a Western buyer for 'Satsuma ware' were soon forthcoming, and Satsuma workshops responded by increasing their production.³⁴ With the popularity rise, workshops in various parts of Japan began to produce Satsuma.

The style of gorgeous Satsuma ware, recognised worldwide, did not develop until the mid-19th century and soon caught on with collectors in Europe. As a result, lively export trade and tremendous production were started. Satsuma was hybrid porcelain because it fired at a lower temperature, less than 1200 degrees Celsius, but possessed a highly fired glass.

Around the 1870s, when Kôzan started a new workshop and embarked on a creative new technique, a high decoration of gold enamel over-glazing used on Satsuma ware, and called '*nishikide*'. One example of Kôzan's '*nishikide*' style artwork is shown in Figure 3, which is decorated with designs of warriors in over-glazed gold enamels. In this technique, production cost was high because of the use of gold. Ceramics of this genre gradually lost their popularity in the late nineteenth century. However, a class of artisans still retains an interest in Satsuma ceramics, and as a result, this genre continued to exist until the end of the twentieth century. Even today, Satsuma Ceramics is being produced in a limited way.

(D) Porcelain vase of *Takaukibori* technique: The sculptural relief artwork of Kôzan follows a technique known as '*takaukibori*', where he decorated the surface of the ware with real looking three-dimensional high-reliefs of animals.

³³ https://www.asahido.co.jp/en/knowledge/about_kyoyaki_kiyomizuyaki/

³⁴ Conant, E. P. (Ed.). (2006). *Challenging past and present: the metamorphosis of nineteenth-century Japanese art*. University of Hawaii Press.

He decorated ceramic artwork with various motifs - birds such as quails, hawks and pigeons; plants such as cherry blossoms, lotuses and grapes; animals including cats and bears; and even demons and personified frogs.³⁵ His creation, adorned with animals, birds, and other flora and fauna, was meticulously represented to produce the natural feeling.³⁶ Makuzu Kōzan was not only a ceramist; he created an excellent high-relief sculptured technique and decoration of Ceramic art.

One of his unique creations of this technique is a lidded porcelain bowl, which is aloft by a pair of demons and crowned by a hawk gripping a white dragon in its talons. The bowl itself contains surface decoration and possess similarities with Satsuma ware. This sculptured incense burner was dated as c. 1870-90 CE [Figure 4].

Another large Brown-glazed footed vase with crab sculptural relief, which Kōzan created in 1881, is an excellent example of his love for high relief work. The vase has featured a pair of lively crabs entangled near its lip. This vase is unique in its colour contrast and decoration style. Another example of Kōzan's relief sculptured vase is polar bears inside an icy cave [Figure 5].³⁷

Figure 6 shows two excellent examples of the Takaukibori Technique, where high relief sculptural birds and black bears are created with the natural environment and the flavour of Satsuma style gold enamelled surface. Here, the overall expression of figural creation belongs to expert knowledge and aesthetic ideology.

(E) Traditional under-glazed stoneware vase with *Nanban* (southern barbarian) style: In the Japanese ceramic study, '*nanban*' means to the unglazed pottery. This pottery style was introduced into Japan from the southern Asian parts of Indochina, Siam and the Philippines, and the southern parts of China and maybe from the Indian sub-continent.³⁸ The oldest known '*nanban* pottery' in Japan arrived from foreign countries during the latter half of the 16th century. Some scholars suggested that this '*nanban*' style was not from Southern Asia but instead in South China and arrived in Japan indirectly via these various countries. The true origin is uncertain. On the other hand, '*nanban*' art refers to 16th and 17th century's Japanese art influenced by traders and missionaries from Europe and specifically from Portugal. The term '*nanban*' is a Sino-Japanese word (in Chinese *Nanman*) that refers to the peoples of South Asia and Southeast Asia.³⁹

³⁵ https://www.suntory.com/sma/exhibition/2016_1/display.html

³⁶ Hidehiro Yoshida. (2012). Yokohama Makuzu Yaki that supported the opening of the country ~ Visit Miyagawa Kozan Makuzu Museum ~. *Ceramics*, 47 (2), 114-115.

³⁷ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BLW_Vase_in_the_form_of_Two_Polar_Bears_inside_an_Icy_Cave.jpg

³⁸ <http://www.yoyokaku.com/Nakazato.htm>

³⁹ Okamoto, Y. (1972). *The nanban art of Japan* (Vol. 9). New York: Weatherhill/Heibonsha.

During the 'nanban trade period', 1543 CE, to the first Seclusion Edicts of 'isolationism' in 1614, the word took on a new meaning to designate the Portuguese. Portuguese first arrived in 1543 and later other Europeans. This 'nanban' term also refers to paintings Europeans brought to Japan. One example of Kôzan's Nanban style is an under-glazed stoneware vase with handles in the shape of shrimp or prawns, dated in 1916 CE; its height is 32 cm. This simple but elegant vase reminds us of the shape and colour of traditional Japanese earthen vessels, which were common during the Nara period to the Muromachi period. It especially reminds us of the Shigaraki Jar style.

(F) Stoneware vase with *Fuki-e* or the blow painting style: Known as one of the most creative ceramists, around the 1880s, Kôzan started experimenting with new chemical colours from the West in the format of his porcelain glaze. New colours allowed him to create an under-glaze design that appeared bright, smooth and glossy. He even invented his receipt of cobalt blue to achieve a much brighter yet softer shade, as an event on this vase. To create a landscape that is realistic and dimensional more common in the western painting, he was inspired by the native Japanese ink painting technique developed around 1900 by Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958) and Hishidan Shunso (1874-1911) called *Morotai* (Hazy style) and used cobalt blue on the porcelain-like ink on paper. Kôzan developed another new technique called *fuki-e*, demanding and uniquely featured in the works of Kôzan studio. The vases are decorated in a full circle of the continuous landscape, which unconventionally climbed the shoulder to reach the mouth rim, another characteristic of the Kôzan's work. It was signed underneath in the artist's seal.

Kôzan's under-glazed blue, brown, and pink coloured painted style vases owned great fame to the world. For example, an under-glaze white and blue decorated vase may be created to the end of Makuzo's life circa 1910-1916. With a relatively large size, this vase is decorated with underglaze cobalt blue using the *fuki-e* technique (the blow painting) to achieve the striking dimensional misty winter landscape. The pine trees with upright trunks and down-sweeping branches appear receding into the depth of the mist, forming a visually unending forest.

(G) Underglaze polychrome porcelains with multi glazing technique: As nature possessed a critical position, a different aspect of natural scene and flora and fauna took place as painted features of Kôzan's artwork. With the development of the monochromes, Kôzan was also producing decorated underglaze polychrome porcelains, which became the 'trademark' of his studio. These artworks were decorated with natural plants, fish, landscapes.

A porcelain bowl with floral design in underglaze blue and over-glaze enamels, probably created in 1878 preserved in Glasgow Museum, is an excellent example of these features. The lower half of this porcelain ware depicts the natural

environment with Japanese Matsu-no-ki (pine tree) painted yama (hill). As well as working in Satsuma style, Saikumono and porcelain, from 1877, Kôzan experimented with the manufacture of cloisonné enamel. This medium had become highly popular in the West since the Meiji period. We know that ceramic glaze is an impervious coating of a vitreous substance that has been fused to a ceramic surface through firing. The purpose of glaze is to serve the colour to pottery and decorate and waterproof the artwork's condition. Makuzu Kôzan used a multi-decorative method in his artwork, and he used both under-glaze and over-glaze in single porcelain. Underglaze is a popular decorating method. The painted decoration is first applied to the surface, then it is covered with transparent ceramic glaze and fired in a kiln at high temperature. Over-glaze is a method of decorating pottery, where the coloured decoration is applied on top of the fired and glazed surface of the pottery. Then second firing at a relatively low temperature using a muffle kiln occurs.

In the late 1980s, Makuzu Kôzan has started sophisticated glazed porcelain. In one vase, an exquisite technique called 'raised decoration (moriage)' was applied where some lily flowers are shown by using layers of slip built up on the clay body under the glaze. Kôzan achieved the Western critic's admiration for his artworks, which never forgot the Japanese essence.

7. *Takaukibori*-technique: Master potter's originality

Makuzu Kôzan is famous for his unique art forms called '*Takaukibori*' or 'Sculptural relief'. Experts sometimes believe that Kôzan were designed this style to appeal to Western visitors in Japan. In this decorative style, he introduced a three-dimensional decorative aspect and added realistic gestures of animals, birds and insects, which is the high-relief format in the sculptural formation. It looks like the animals are coming out of the ceramics or walking on it. No one else has done such a vibrant, colourful and naturalistic work of art before him. His childhood was bound with beautiful surrounding nature, which affected his creation. Ever since he grew up in the beautiful nature of Kyoto, he has been learned to create earthenware pots and decorate them with natural colours and objects. His father's contribution in this regard was immense who was himself a potter and creator of art. Kôzan's '*takaukibori*' technique received worldwide applause, and the admiration helped his art form become known as the Makuzu-ware. Makuzu Kôzan was not only a true artist. He was a researcher who knew the mysteries of glaze and understood its proper application.

Kôzan's work had multidimensionality that helped him be at ease with discoveries. For example, early in his life, Kôzan made many pots in the Satsuma ceramic style, which gave him the ability to innovate in the '*takaukibori*' style.

Satsuma ware requires high production costs because it uses gold and three-dimensional shapes. On the contrary, these mediums were used in Kôzan's ceramics, have in moderation and used to reduce construction costs. He creates dimensional characters; for example, raptors and pigeons, bears and cats, goose and hawks, crabs. Not only the animals and birds, but he also used the botanical element spontaneously. The botanical elements were cherry blossoms and grapes, camellia with leaves, and flowering tree branches as a three-dimensional motif. Besides these fictional creatures such as *oni* or *yokai* (demon or ghost), anthropomorphic frogs were used frequently as motifs for his ceramic's artwork. Ongoing experiments and a deep understanding of the glazing technique achieved technical sophistication. In the early 20th century, there was a substantial change in the shape and decoration of his artwork, which sometimes reflected Western influences. After a long history of glaze research and perfection in previous works transformed his interest into a flat, soft, colourful, transparent design. Western influence and sometimes Chinese Qing dynasty-oriented design greatly influenced Kôzan's artwork, e.g., dragon motifs from the Qing dynasty were a vibrant element for Kôzan's invention. However, it should be strictly established that Kôzan's artwork was striving for continual development and his every artwork presents aesthetic and abstract appealing in its overall appearance.

8. Conclusion

This paper attempts to identify the development of a world-famous potter's artwork, from its origin in traditional Kyoto tea utensils to its final stage modern over-glazed sculptural and natural represented artwork. His artwork gained popularity in Japan around the late 1900s, and the creator, Makuzu Kôzan, was an expert on some new ceramic techniques. He experimented with new colours and compositions of modern glaze and also design. Kôzan's enthusiasm for modern Japanese ceramic artwork and making a bridge between East and West is praised worthy. He avoided blind imitation of western styles though his work was highly receptive to Western-style. He always believed in the preservation of 'Japanese taste' as being 'the most suitable for the foreign market'. He did not become complacent after the success in Paris and continued to seek new ways of developing his creativity to gain the foreign market more effectively. Makuzu Kôzan implied numerous decorations and glazing techniques in ceramic production and achieved many national and international prizes. This research established that the ceramic artwork of Makuzu Kôzan featured nature as a primary decoration motif and tried to blend the entire contemporary pattern based on own ideology with a native Japanese essence.

概要：

本研究では、宮内庁の公認陶芸家である眞葛香山が創作した「高浮堀」と呼ばれる独自の技法を考察することにより、明治時代の陶芸の変容を検証します。明治時代の陶芸は日本の個人主義のターニングポイントでしたが、本稿ではその一例を紹介します。

眞葛香山は京都出身で、祇園でキャリアをスタートさせましたが、直後に横浜に移住しました。1876年、彼の作品がフィラデルフィア万国博覧会で紹介された際、彼は国際的なシーンに参入しました。京都の静けさから荒れ狂う港町横浜へと、移り住んだ眞葛は、陶芸へのアプローチを形作りました。

眞葛は、これまでに制作された日本美術作品とはまったく異なる方法で、自然の動植物と獣人の姿の両方を描いて作品の表面を装飾しました。彼は「高浮彫」または「彫刻的レリーフ」として知られる磁器装飾様式によって、ユニークで芸術的な技法を作成しました。この装飾技法は立体的なスタイルとして見え、その無類の美しさは世界中で人気を博しています。

以上のように、眞葛の作品は、西洋の型を模倣することなく、磁器の形成だけではない陶磁器の表面を掘り込む熱意が最も高く評価されています。

この研究論文では、明治初頭における眞葛香山の生い立ちが彼の芸術をどのように形作ったか、そして彼の作品が日本の陶芸と美学の独特の形態にどのように広く影響したかについて説明します。

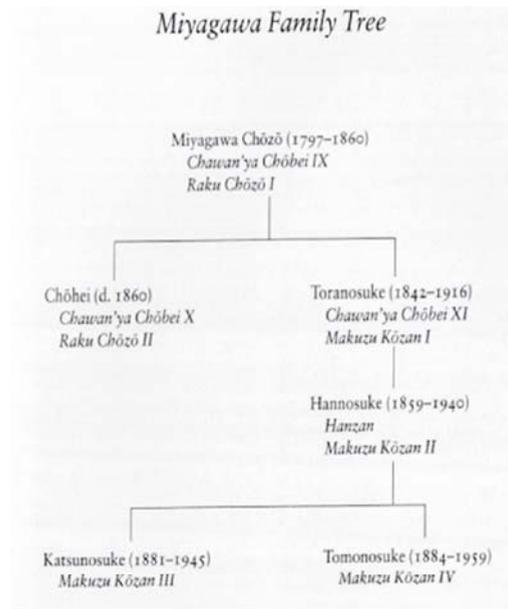


Figure 1: Miyagawa Family tree.

Source: Pollard, M. C. (2002). *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kōzan (1842-1916) and His Workshop*. Oxford University Press, USA, pp-119.



Figure 2: Traditional Tea utensils belong to the glazed Technique



Figure 3: Kōzan's Satsuma style vase belongs to the nishikide technique.

Source: <http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/4/867/872>



Figure 4: Porcelain incense burner of Takaukibori Technique by Makuzu Kōzan.

Source: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/reviews/the-god-of-glazes-a-centennial-retrospective-of-ceramicist-miyagawa-kozan-7500/>

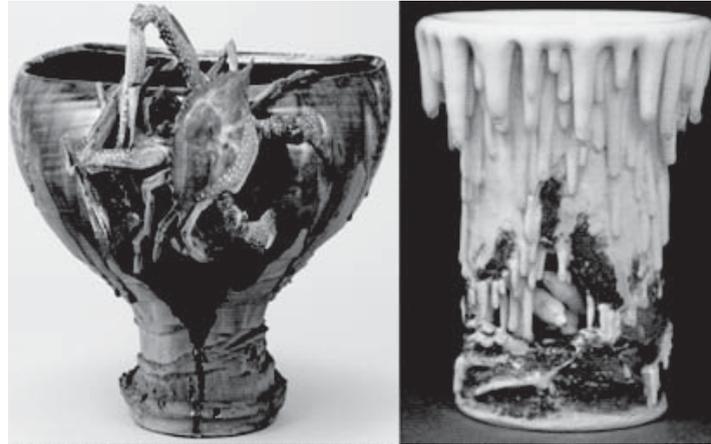


Figure 5: Two porcelain vases of Takaukibori Technique by Makuzu Kōzan.
Source: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/reviews/the-god-of-glazes-a-centennial-retrospective-of-ceramicist-miyagawa-kozan-7500/>



Figure 6: Porcelain vase of Takaukibori Technique by Makuzu Kōzan.

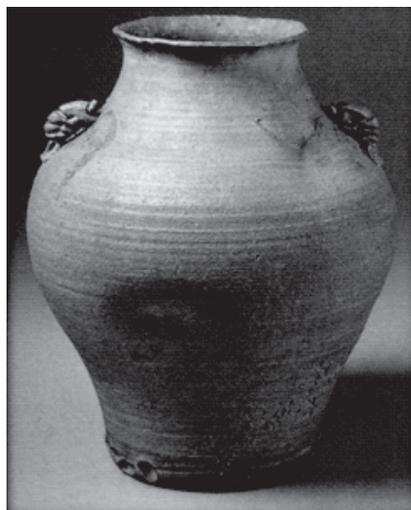


Figure 7: Traditional under-glazed stoneware vase with Nanban style.

Source: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/miyagawa-makuzu-kozan-ii/nanban-style-floral-vase-with-shrimp-shaped>



Figure 8: Kōzan's 'takaukibori' Style.

Source: <https://orientalsouls.com/blog/japanese-art/the-king-of-modern-sculpture-japans-greatest-potter-makuzu-kozan/>

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A Study on the Iconographical similarity between the Gods and Goddesses of Hindus and Buddhists of Japan: A Case Study

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Abstract– The current paper illustrates the visual resemblances between the god and goddess depicted by the Hindus and Buddhists throughout Japan. Although Buddhism travelled through China and Korea to reach Japan and not directly from India, a prominent and lasting influence can still be seen on Japanese life and culture. The *Rigvedic* divinities, either atmospheric or celestial deities, were later restructured in the Brahmanical literature and reemerged as they reached Japan. Hindu gods and goddesses are still worshipped in Shingon Buddhism, and both belief systems are pretty similar. Nearly all Buddhist deities were adopted into the Japanese Buddhist pantheon within Hindu god and goddess counterparts. This paper, bearing above in mind, focuses on the similarities between the deities of two impactful religions of the world.

Keywords Hindu gods and goddesses in Japanese Buddhist pantheons · Folk belief and rituals in Japanese Buddhist Society · Indra, *Taishaku-Ten* · Brahma, *Bon-Ten* · Maheśvara, *Makeishura-Ten* · Ganeśa, *Sho-Ten* · Saraswatī, *Benzei-Ten* · Lakṣmī, *Kichijō-Ten* · Durga, *Juntei-Kannon/ Cundī* ·

1. Introduction

Both Hinduism and Buddhism are originated in India. As a result, both are influenced by tradition, ritual and beliefs. Many Hindu gods and goddesses found an entry in this process, especially into Mahayana and Esoteric Buddhism. These two developed forms of Buddhism were introduced into Japan in the sixth century A.D. During my visit to Japan, I have conducted extensive fieldwork in the monasteries of Japan, especially those of Kyoto and Nara Cities, and found that

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many gods and goddesses are housed in the Japanese pantheon, which has remarkable similarities with popular Hindu gods and goddesses. This article will justify that these similar gods and goddesses are originally adopted from Hindu Tradition, which is worshipped in Japan in an altered form. Moreover, I will explore the understandings of Japanese Buddhists that they hold for these gods and goddesses.

It is noted that the gods Brahmâ, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Vâyu, Sûrya, Candra, Vaiúravaṇa or Kubera, Maheśvara, Īsâna, Mahâkâla, Gaṇeśa, Kârtikeya and goddesses Pṛithivî, Durgâ, Lakṣmi, Sarasvatî and more are worshipped in Japan under quite different names. However, through a case study, I will explore only a few deities from the standpoints of religion, mythology, art and iconography. As they have changed a bit along the way to Japan, I will compare some of the most important gods and goddesses concerning the Indian and Japanese contexts.

2. Indra

The concept of Indra can be found in many Japanese religions, such as Buddhism. His mythology and power are similar to other Indo-European deities, such as Jupiter, Zeus, Perun, and suggest a common origin in Proto-Indo-European mythology. Mainly he is an ancient Vedic deity in Hinduism, who is adopted by religions of India that emerged later. M. Winternitz, "Indra can be designated as the actual national god of the Vedic Indians. Indra is a thoroughly war-like god. His enormous strength and combativeness are described repeatedly, and fondly the Vedic singers dwell on the battles of Indra with the demons, whom he destroys with his thunderbolt." (*A History of Indian Literature*, Vol.1, 1927:82).

Most of the religions of India mentioned him as the King of heaven. Indra¹ was one of the most dominant among gods during R̥gvedic period. Indra is derived from the word 'Inda', which means storm. According to *R̥gveda*, Aditi is Indra's mother and 'Soma' to be his father. The colour of his facial hair is golden. Vajra is considered to be his primary weapon. In *R̥gveda*, He was said to be, "Who made firm the quivering earth, who set at rest the agitated mountains, who spread the atmospheric region wider, who held fast the heaven, He, O men, is Indra." (Shanti Banarjee, 1415: p.84)

Indra is armed with a thunderbolt riding in his chariot with strong will and power, as seen in the painting and sculptures in *R̥gveda*. He is also seen riding a white

¹ Indra's father is Dyaus according to some passages, Tvaṣṭri according to others. Agni is his twin-brother, most often conjoined as a dual divinity. The Maruts are his principal and constant allies, the epithet marutvant being peculiar. Majumdar, R.C. *The History and Culture of the Indian People, The Vedic Age*, Vol.1, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2010, p.373

elephant known as Airavata. His thunderbolt is called vajra, which he uses with the bow and arrow and carries a hook or a conch. He has a third eye which is placed horizontally on his forehead.

In *Rigveda*, he is the deity of the heavens, lightning, thunder, storms, rains, river flows, and war. However, in the later period, his position declined, and he is placed after Brahmâ, Viṣṇu and Śiva. He is no longer worshipped in modern Hinduism but plays an essential mythological role and is considered a guardian of direction. Unlike in Brahmanical Texts, Indra is perceived as inferior in Buddhist mythology. In Buddhism, he is subservient to Buddha and follows his teaching sincerely. He was once a ruler who lacked wisdom and perfection until he met Buddha and converted to Buddhism. In Post-Vedic texts, *Râmâyana*, *Mahâbhârata* and *Purâṇas* state Indra to be an intoxicated, self-indulgent god for which his popularity gradually among other Hindu deities and became less insignificant in comparison.

Indra is mainly known as Taishaku-ten and worshipped as a guardian god in Japan. He is also known in Japan by many other names, such as Shakudaikanin, Makaba, Basaba, Kausika and Sengan. In Japan, he is visually standing on a lotus flower in the sky (koku). Images of Indra with different styles are found in Japanese monasteries. I found an image of Indra (Taishaku-ten) at Toji-ji Temple of Kyoto City during my visit to Japan. The image is 105 cm long and made of wood. He has two arms and a single head and rides a two-tusked white elephant. His right-hand holds a Vajra, and his left-hand holds his waist. His legs are cross-legged when he sits on an elephant with the right leg bent horizontally at the knee, and the foot is resting on the elephant while the left leg is hanging down. A crown-like decoration is also placed on his head to amplify the beauty. A third eye also exists placed vertically on its forehead.

A magnificent image of Taishaku-ten can also be found in the Jingo-ji in Kyoto, where he was drawn on silk in colours. He stood on a round pedestal with beautiful robes around him and Vajra in the right hand. He wears a necklace and a tiara like an ornament on his head to look magnificent. There are three eyes, two half-open and the third vertically on the forehead. A halo is seen behind his head, with its edges impersonating flames of fire emerging from the halo.

There are various other images of Taishaku-ten that can be found in Japan. A noteworthy one includes the image preserved in the Saidai-ji temple at Nara where He is painted in silk, riding on a giant white elephant, and he is seen accompanied by two attendants looking relatively small beside Taishaku-ten.

Another image of Taishaku-ten can be seen in a different *mandala* where he is the central deity with other attendants surrounding him. It was created in the ninth century on wood with colours later preserved in the thermo-ji temple, Nara

Prefecture. In that image, Taishaku-ten seems to be relatively large than the surrounding attendants, where he sits with a rich dress and a crown on his head, and he does not have any mount in there. A three coloured halo can be noticed behind his head, reflecting a divine sense overall to the image. So, Hindu God Indra is very similar to Japanese God Taishaku-ten, where He plays a significant role in Japanese Buddhist Society.

3. Brahmâ

Brahmâ, also known as Svayambhû, is a popular deity of Hinduism. According to the *Śatapatha Brahmana*, “Brahmâ (neuter) is said to have existed alone in the beginning and to have been the creator of the gods and the source of all things. Prajâpati originated from Brahmâ who is self-existent (Prajâpatir-Brahmanah, Brahmâsvayambhû)” (Jitendra Nath Banerjee, 1956:511). The first notion of Brahmâ was developed slowly and was seen earliest in the first verse of *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* “Brahmâ was the first of the gods, who was the creator of the universe and the preserver of the world (Brahmâ devânnam Prathama sambabhûva viśvasya kartâbhûvanasya goptâ).” (Jitendra Nath Banerjee, 1956:511)

Brahmâ is one of the three gods alongside Viṣṇu and Śiva that make the Brahmanical Triad. Mixed myths can be observed regarding Brahma in the Puraṇas. Although he is mainly portrayed as one of the greatest with vast remarks, he is subservient to Viṣṇu and Śiva. The great Saraswatî is the wife of Brahmâ, who is said to be “the embodiment of his power, the instrument of creation and the energy that drives his actions” (David R. Kinsley, 1986:57).

Brahmâ is portrayed as a powerful deity with one or four faces and four arms, holding an alms bowl, prayer beads (akshamalâ), a kamaṇḍalu and a sacred book. He also has a third eye on his forehead, and the four heads are said to be the sources of the four Vedas. He is often shown in a white beard to give him the sage-like or all-knowing experience. His appearance is usually red or pink, with a posture of seating or standing on a lotus throne (Brahmâ kamaṇḍalukaraścaturmukhah paṅkajâsanasthaúca.) His mount is a goose or peacock.

Brahmâ is very devotedly worshipped in India, where Brahmâ Temple is a noteworthy temple to offer one’s prayer to Him. He is also worshipped in places dedicated to Trimurti. Other famous temple includes Chebrolu in Andhra Pradesh, Chaturmukha Brahmâ temple in Bangalore, Karnataka and Goa. Magnificent depictions are also there at Mangalwedha, from the district of Maharashtra and in Sopara near Mumbai. Another temple is Kheteshwar Brahmâmadham Tirtha in Rajasthan, Thripaya Trimurti Temple and Mithrananthapuram Trimurti Temple in Tamil Nadu, Khedbrahma in Gujarat. Over time, the concept of Brahmâ was also

incorporated in Buddhism, and after Indra, he is referred to frequently in early Buddhism (Theravada Buddhism). In Tripitaka, a term called Brahma Vihara is found, which refer to the idea of rebirth in the heaven of Brahmâ through the exercise of meditational process. From *Ituvuttaka*, it is known that Gautama Buddha, in his previous birth, was Brahmâ. Though Bhramâ occupied a revered position in Buddhism, he is subordinate to Buddha. It is said that Buddha preached Dharma at the request of Brahmâ for the benefit of all beings. Gandhara reliefs, “the earliest known Buddhist sculptures, represent Brahmâ and Indra as Buddha’s attendants. Moreover, in one of these sculptures, Brahmâ is seen as fanning the Buddha with a two-armed *camara* or fly-brush. Indra and Brahmâ are also attributed to a similar position.” (Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, 1979: 47)

Brahmâ is called Bon-ten or Bomma-ten in Japan, a celebrated deity in the Japanese pantheon. Japanese iconography represents him with two arms and a standing posture. He is seen to hold diverse objects in his many images. A fly-brush (camera) and a mirror in both hands are everyday things. Brahmâ or Bon-ten is found in renowned monasteries of Japan.

Below I would like to mention some memorable images of Bon-ten seen by me in the monasteries of Japan.

A very well made sculpture of Bon-ten is found in the Akishino-dera monastery of Nara City, where he is dressed wonderfully and sits on a carved lotus, and his expressions are given a bit gloomy in work. Here he is placed as one of the attendants of the Bhaisajyaguru Buddha, called Yakushi Nyorai in Japan.

The Image of Bon-ten goes back to the eighth century where it is kept in safe hands in the Main Hall of the Toshodai-ji temple in Nara. In this monastery, he is accompanied by Indra as an attendant of the Vairocana Buddha, Birushana Butsuin Japan. A unique wooden piece of Bon-ten is found in the Lecture Hall of the To-ji temple of Kyoto, which has four heads and four arms sitting on four geese. His eyes look down in his refined face. The visibility of all the four heads from the front stands out in this beautiful carving. Two heads are placed beside the principal head, slightly slanting towards the left and right sides, while the other head, the fourth one, is placed over the head of the principal one, thereby enabling the full view from the front. The principal head holds a third eye vertical on the foreheads with the other with only two eyes.

Another mind-blowing painting of Bon-ten is found in the Jingo-ji temple in Kyoto. There he has four heads and forearms. The Upper right arm holds the stalk of a full-bloom lotus flower, and the lower one holds a long trident. The upper left hands appear to hold a longish pot and the other a mudra. A third eye is placed vertically on the principal head, and other heads only have two eyes. He is

standing on a pedestal wearing various ornaments, flowering garments and halos. The above description suggests that the Japanese iconographical form of Bon-ten has remarkable similarities with the Indian textual reference of Brahmâ.

4. Maheśvara

Maheśvara is a celebrated Hindu god who is also known as Śiva. He is one of the principal deities of Hinduism and the supreme god in Shaivism. The term 'Meheśvara' consists of Mahâ and Īsvara, meaning 'great' and 'lord' respectively. According to Sanskrit Dictionary, the word Śiva means "auspicious, propitious, gracious, benign, kind, benevolent, friendly" (M.M. William, 1899: 1074-1076). A mighty god is also considered part of the Hindu trinity-Trimurtia long side Brahmâ and Viṣṇu. Brahmâ is considered to be the creator whereas Viṣṇu is known to be the maintainer or preserver and Śiva the destroyer or transformer. Maheśvara is one of many names of Śiva and can be found in *Īvapurâṇa* (1.20). There are other eight names of Śiva which are Hara, Maheśvara, Sulapani, Pinâki, Ūiva, Paūpati, Shambhu and Mahâdeva which are commonly used for the rituals of bringing the clay, kneading, installation, invocation, ceremonial ablution, worship, craving the forbearance and formal farewell. Rudra is an atmospheric deity with great power in the Vedic literature and is also mentioned in the *Rigveda*.² Later in the Vedic period, Epics and Purâṇas, Rudra is one of Śiva's top names. N.K. Bhattasali points out³ many features that make Maheśvara unique, which includes his beautiful crescent moon, the third eye on his forehead, serpent around his neck, the holy river Gaṅgâ flowing from his matted hair, the trident and the drum (damaru) as his weapon, blue throat (Nillakantha), seated upon a tiger skin like Yoga or meditating pose, Nandi (bull) his mount. Thus he is widely known to be a Pan-Hindu deity in the Indian subcontinent.

The statue of Maheśvara was found in Japan as Makeishura-ten, and he is also recognized as Daijizai-ten and Śiva-shin. Makeishura-ten was worshipped as a guardian god by the Esoteric Buddhists. Many images of him can be found all over Japan, with him having two, four, eight and eighteen arms. Makeishura-ten is often depicted as riding on a cow (bull).

² Rigveda states that deity Rudra has two natures, one wild and cruel (Rudra) and another kind and tranquil (Śiva). Kramrisch, Stella. *The Presence of Śiva*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2nd Edition, 1992, p.15

³ Of the twelve Adityas, Visnu gradually came into prominence. The Rudras compounded themselves into a single figure of impetuous qualifications under the name of Śiva. Bhattasali, NaliniKanta. *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Rai S.N. BhadraBahadur, Honorary Secretary, Dacca Museum Committee, Dacca, 1929, p.76

Beautiful pieces of Makeishura-ten can be found all over Japan. Such a place is the outer hall of the *Taizo-kai Mandala* temple, where it is placed in the southwest corner. It can also be seen at the left outer portion of the *Genzu Mandala temple* (Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, 1979:73). On the other side, in the *Sanzu Mandala* temple, he is depicted to have a red body with his right palm holding a mudra folding the middle finger.

There is a description of many kinds of images in the iconography book in Japan. Makeishura-ten has three eyes and eighteen arms, decorated with crown and ornaments to present his divine form. A dragon should also be attached to his body. In many Japanese Buddhist texts, a dragon is called 'Ryu', which correlates with Maheśvara, who often has one round his neck. According to the Japanese convention, the seed-syllable, i.e. Bija mantra of Makeishura-ten, is 'Ma' (Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, ibid: 74). The iconographical description above suggests that Maheśvara is worshipping the Japanese pantheon as Makeishura-ten, a guardian god.

5. Gaṇeśa

Gaṇeśa is a celebrated deity in the Hindu pantheon for his exceptional physiognomy and power. He is said to have two characters, one as a Vighnakarta (creator of obstacles) and the other as a Vighnaharta (remover of obstacles). His rituals are noteworthy, and he is given the epithet *Agrapūjya* for he is worshipped first among all the other gods and goddesses. "Nearly all Hindus practise the worship of Ganapati without reference to any particular sect at the beginning of any religious ceremony and on special occasions" (R.G.Bhandarkar, 1965:150). In *Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa* it states, "position of Gaṇeśa is above all the gods. *ŪivaPurāṇas* says that Gaṇeśa is offered prayer before the pūjā of other highest gods. Various other Brahmanic literature also held his position at the highest quarter. He is also regarded as the remover of all obstacles in Brahmanic literature such as *LingaPurāṇa*, *ŪivaPurāṇas*." (Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, 1963: 99)

Gaṇeśa has eight synonyms as prior to an early Sanskrit lexicon. They are "Vināyaka, Vighnarāja (equivalent to Vighneśa), Dvaimatura (one who has two mothers), Ganadhīpa (equivalent to Gaṇapati and Gaṇeśa), Ekadanta (one who has one tusk), Heramba, Lambodara (one who has a pot belly or, literally, one who has a hanging belly) and Gajānana (gajānana) having the face of an elephant." (Yuvraj Krishan, 1999:6)

Vināyaka, another very particular name of Gaṇeśa, can be seen used widely in both the Purāṇas and in the Buddhist Tantras. The name signifies the unique creation or birth of Gaṇeśa. "We are told that Pārvatī or Umā created him out of the dirt of her body – without the help of her consort Ūiva. That is why he is called

‘Vinâyaka’ (=, i.e. without nayaka, i.e. ‘sire’ or father).”(Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, 1979: 91)

Gaṇeśa is unique in its looks as it has an elephant’s head with a softly curling trunk and around the human body. He got big ears alongside his big belly. He has one or both his tusks broken off, sometimes seen holding it. He has four arms, each carrying its attributes and commonly represented objects, i.e. a shell, discus, mace, water-lily. He has his hair done atop his head and wears pearls and serpents as ornaments with bells indicating him to be a dancer. He is either seen riding a mouse or rat or being around a mouse.

Many myths can be found relating to the origin of Gaṇeśa in India as given in various Purāṇas and other religious texts. Many of them can be found in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*, the *Śiva Purāṇa*, the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the *Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa*, the *Matsya Purāṇa*. However, it would not be possible to bring out all of them in this article but could undoubtedly put forward the noteworthy ones. In the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*, it is stated that “Gaṇeśa was Kṛiṣṇa himself originally in the human form. Śani, the god of the planet, went to him while a child. In consequence, the head of the child separated and went away to Goloka. The elephant Airavata had then a son in the forest. His head was removed and fixed on the child’s body.” (T.A. Gopinatha Rao, 1914:45-46) Mythical accounts regarding the origin of Gaṇeśa are narrated by T.A. Gopinatha Rao.⁴

In Japanese Buddhism, Gaṇeśais known as Sho-ten, also entered Japan through China and was worshipped as the ‘Remover of Obstacles’ in Japan. Gaṇeśa is commonly recognized as Daishokangi-ten, abbreviated as Kangi-ten, Shō-ten, Ganabachi, Binayaka-ten in Japan.

There are two forms of Gaṇeśa or Shō-ten in Japan; the single elephant-headed form is called Binayaka (Sanskrit, Vinâyaka) and the twin with two elephant heads is called Shō-ten or Kangi-ten. One of the standard features found in Japanese representations is a laughing mood or holding a radish in a jolly state. He was often represented standing, with from two to six arms. “The female Vinayaka may wear a small crown, and the male may wear a small cintamani on his head.” (Alice Getty, 1971: 82) The twin form of Binayaka is prevalent in China and Japan and is highly noticeable as its concept cannot be seen in India. Now we discuss various Japanese images of temples.

⁴ Gaṇeśa, who is the same as Viṣṇesvara, is considered to have been born solely to Ūiva, solely to Pārvatī, and to both Ūiva and Pārvatī, and is also held to be Kṛiṣṇa in another form. He is identified with the Parabrahman and with Brahmanaspati or Brihaspati elsewhere. Gopinatha Rao T. A., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 1, Part. 1, The Law Printing House, Madras, 1914, p.46

Binayaka has described an entity to have ahead of an elephant and a body of a human being. He grips a radish in his right hand and a trident in his left hand. He is worn bangles, a necklace, precious brocades all over his body. He sits with his feet folded, legs crossed. His right tusk is broken, and the nose (trunk) turns outwards. His body is reddish yellow. He wore gorgeous garments and a crown decorated with various jewels.

In Japan, “during the worship of Shô-ten, no one can see his image except the priest through whom the pûjâ is performed, and the deity is never exposed to the view of the ordinary devotees.” (DwijendraNathBakshi, *ibid*: 103) Alice Getty added a mysterious aspect of Ganesa in Japan, stating it “to be visualized as having one body with four arms and four legs.” (Alice Getty, *ibid*: 84)

Shô-ten or Gaṇeśa were worshipped in 243 temples in Japan either as a single image or a double-bodied image to gain fortune. The biggest temple of Shô-ten can be found in Osaka, where numerous people offer their prayers in the temple. Hence, it can be seen that Gaṇeśa in India and Japan are very similar, with them both having elephant-head and a body of a human being holding radish, swords in their four arms and their tusks broken off. Therefore, it could be concluded that the Japanese were inspired by the Hindu deities and worshipped in their temples. From what goes above, it can be concluded that God Gaṇeśa has a remarkable iconographical similarity with that of Shô-ten of Japan.

Now I shall describe some important Goddesses. Many goddesses of Hindu have significant similarities with the Japanese goddess, but I will highlight only noteworthy ones.

6. Saraswatî

Saraswatî is widely known as a Hindu Goddess of knowledge, music, wisdom, art and learning. She is a part of the trinity (Tridevi) of Saraswatî, Lakṣmî and Pârvatî. All the three forms have the trinity of Brahmâ, Viṣṇu and Śiva in the creation, maintenance and destruction of the Universe. Saraswatî is diversely known as Mahâsveta, Vâni, Viṇâpâni, Vâgdevi, Bhâratî, Vâgiúvarî. By the time of the Brahmana in the later mythology, “Saraswatî is identified with Vac, ‘speech’ and in post-Vedic mythology she became the goddess of eloquence and wisdom invoked as a muse and regarded as either the wife or daughter of Brahmâ” (Alicia Matsunaga, 1969:256). *Matsya Purana* gives authority for the belief that “one goddess only is intended, though several names call her: Brahmâ next formed from his immaculate substance a female, who is celebrated under the names of Satarupâ, Sâvitri, Saraswatî, Gayatrî and Brahmanî.” (W.J Wilkins, 1900: 110-111)

Saraswatî was initially the name of an ancient river filled up by the sands of Rajputana on the banks in the present. It was where the Vedic Aryans primarily settled after they migrated to India. Saraswatî was a celebrated river embodied as a goddess. Later during the Puranicage, “she was sanctified as the goddess of learning. She is also represented as the goddess of eloquence and wisdom and the wife of Brahmâ or Viṣṇu. The Buddhists borrowed this Hindu goddess, incorporated her bodily into their pantheon in the Tantric age when she was equally popular with the Hindus and the Buddhists, and modified her form in various ways. In Buddhism, she is known, according to *Sâdhanmâlâ*, as Mahâsaraswatî, Vajravînâ, VajraSâradâ and Arya Saraswatî. Saraswatî is the consort of Mañjusri. “The Buddhist Saraswatî may have one face with two arms, or three faces and six arms as her worship is widely prevalent among the Buddhists owing to the belief that like Mañjusri and Prajñapâramitâ, she confers wisdom, learning, intelligence, memory a comparatively large number of Sadhanas is assigned to her in the *Sâdhanmâlâ*.” (Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, 2013:413) However, different kinds of Saraswatî can be seen in Buddhist mythology.

We discuss a few typical images of Hindu Saraswatî in different places and periods where she came in different forms. These forms are seen to have four, eight or ten arms during the dancing poses. Other images include Saraswatî with two arms and sitting erect in the virasana posture. Sculpture during the medieval period shows that “four-armed goddess seated in lalitâkṣepa on a double-pedalled lotus, playing on a Vînâ with her two front hands and holding a rosary and a manuscript in her back right and left hands respectively. A tiny swan (hamsa, the usual vehicle of the goddess in these mediaeval sculptures) is carved in the extreme left corner of the pedestal, which is decorated with lotus coils usually found in these 11th or 12th-century sculptures.” (Jitendra Nath Banerjee, 1956:379) The Goddess is also seen to have various vehicles such as peacock, lion and ram, that She rides in various Indian sculptures and paintings (J.L. Shastri et al. 1954:133). However, a wide variety of Her sculptures are seen throughout the years by the Hindu sculptors of India and are known by different descriptions of the forms of the goddess through the texts.⁵

In Japan, Saraswatî is worshipped in the name of Benzai-ten. She is recognized for the concept of her control of all kinds of flow, viz. the flow of love, music,

⁵ Some other texts describe Saraswatî as usually Visnudharmottar, Amsumadbhedagama, Purvakaranagama, Rupamandanaas four-armed, white coloured, dressed in white garments and decked with many ornaments, holding in her four hands any four of the following objects: manuscript (Pustaka), white lotus (pundarika), rosary, musical instrument (Vina), water-vessel (kamandalu). Banerjee, Jitendra Nath, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, University of Calcutta, 1956, p. 377.

wealth, fortune, beauty, happiness, eloquence, wisdom, victory and also the flow of children. She is known to be a fulfiller of all desires. However, not much is known about how she became the goddess of all kinds of flow. It is said to have very much related to the famous Indian River Saraswatî. Different names in Japan are also known as Saraswatî. She is called there as Benzai-ten, Ben-ten, Benten-Sama, Benzamini, Myôon-ten (goddess with fine voice), Daiben, Dai-Benzaiten (goddess of great intelligence), Daibenteno, Bion-ten (goddess with beautiful voice), Ku-doku, Tennio (goddess of meritorious works), Mio-on Ten-nio (goddess of beautiful voice). (Cf. DwijendraNath Bakshi, 1979:109).

Saraswatî is known to be the consort of Brahmâ. This concept is retained in Japan, for sometimes Benzai-ten or Saraswatî is also regarded there as the wife of Bon-ten or Brahmâ. She is generally imagined as an exquisitely beautiful lady, or in other words, she is the ideal of feminine beauty. She is also the goddess of music, eloquence, fortune, wealth, progeny, the flow of rivers. However, Benzai-ten is seen to have a hostile approach in Japan. In EnoshimaJinja of Kanagawa Prefecture of Japan, I have seen an image of Ben-ten in a war-like disposition. She has a sword in her hand; a serpent and a tortoise appear at her feet, while two Deva Kings stand on either side. In India, where Hinduism is the religion of the majority, there is not much about the fierce side of Saraswatî, unlike in Japan, where quite interesting concepts are seen.

Benzai-ten is mainly worshipped in Japan's five prominent holy places, viz. Chikubushima island in Omi (Shiga Prefecture), Kinkazan in Rikuzen (Myagi Prefecture), Miyajima island in Aki (Hiroshima Prefecture), Amonogawa in Yamato (Nara Prefecture) and Enoshimaisland in Sagami (Kanagawa Prefecture). Miyajima and Enoshima changed into Shinto Shrines in the Meiji Period. "Benzai-ten became one of the Seven Gods of Fortune, and her character was slightly altered by folk belief. Here she was believed to be a very jealous deity, as the white snakes sometimes portrayed around her neck appeared to symbolize" (Alicia Matsunaga, 1969:257) Benzai-ten is respected in every family as an auspicious housegoddess. Her image is placed near the entrance door to bless wealth or fortune under its shelter. Her image is also preserved in almost all the shops in Japan along with the image of 'Daruma'.⁶

Since ancient times Benzai-ten has been considered a very powerful and spreader of happiness in Japan. She is said to have several hands and attributes. She is often depicted with eight hands and sometimes two or others with four or six hands. Benzai-ten holds in her eight hands bow, sword, axe, string, arrow, halberd, long

⁶ 'Daruma' is a word borrowed from the Sanskrit word 'Dharma' meaning law or morality code, and is often used with the word Bodaidaruma, 'Bodhidharma'.

pestle and iron wheel (cakra) eight weapons befitting a goddess of war. Two armed Benzai-ten holds a Biwa (Vînâ) or lute in her left hand and plays it with her right hand.

Now I will discuss some critical images of temples in different periods. Benzai-ten is preserved in the Hokke-do of the Todai-ji temple in Nara. This image shows her in esoteric form with eight arms. She holds a bow, an arrow, a sword, a spear, an axe, a lasso, a vajra and a wheel of the law. It was made of clay during the latter half of the eighth century. The known form of Benzai-ten with two hands began from the middle of the Kamakura period (1185A.D– 1333A.D). Naked images of Her also started to emerge during this period. Her famous images include playing an instrument with her arms in unattired form. She is believed to be the goddess of music. This image was initially placed in the hall of dance and music of the TsurugaokaHachiman-gu, a famous Shinto shrine of Kamakura. Now it is preserved in the Kamakura Museum and displayed with attires.

Eight-armed Benzai-ten can be seen in the EnoshimaJinja. According to the temple authorities, it was constructed during the early Kamakura period. The goddess is seated on a lotus. She holds in her hand's various attributes, such as a sword, arrows, a crescent stick, a rope, a wheel, a pomegranate, a spear-like object. Her body is seen to be of the colour green and reddish tinge. After the Muromachi period (1336A.D-1573A.D), the image of Benzai-te in sitting posture with eight arms seemed to be worshipped by the Shingon sect. There are various representations of the eight-armed Benzai-ten existing from the Muromachi period. He is also seen within the compound of To-ji temple in Kyoto, sitting in a shrine. He is considered one of the three deities called 'San-Ten' with the other deities named Daikoku-ten(Mahâkâla) and Bishamon-ten(Kubera). Benzai-ten is in the middle and standing on a lotus on the altar. Her body is white, and she wears blue garments. Daikoku-ten is on her left, and Bishamon-ten is on her right. Her eight arms hold different implements, including sword, spear, vajra, bow and arrow.

Benten is the most important deity in the Kane-ji temple at Ueno in Tokyo. The image of Ben-ten in the Kane-ji is curved of wood and is given eight arms. It is dated around the seventeenth century. It is given a sitting pose with beautiful decorations surrounding it. She possesses various weapons such as an arrow, sword, axe, rope, bow, and iron links. She is believed to bestow blessings regarding averting disaster, gaining peace, happiness, wealth, prosperity, wisdom and knowledge. The Nison-do or "Hall of Two Saints" is a part of the komyo-ji temple near the sea of Kamakura. An extraordinary image of Benten lies in there, who is worshipped as a Goddess of Music and Fine Arts. The temple was constructed around 1243 A.D.

Benzai-ten became a very admired goddess in Japan, and admiration was so vibrant that many forged Tantric Sutras in her favour. There are believed to be seven gods that are said to control the welfare of human beings, with Benzai-ten being one of them as bevvies by the Japanese. The belief of the seven gods originated from China during the Muromachi period.

So, it can be deduced that goddess Saraswatî has remarkable iconographical and conceptual similarities with the Japanese goddess Benzai-ten.

7. Lakṣmî

Lakṣmî is one of the most popular and widely adored goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. She is worshipped very devotedly all over India. "She is said to be the goddess of wealth, love, prosperity, fortune and the embodiment of beauty. When a man is growing rich, it is said that Lakṣmî has come to dwell with him; whilst those in adversity are spoken of as 'forsaken of Lakṣmî.' In pictures, she is painted like a lady of bright golden colour, seated on a lotus with two arms" (W. J. Wilkins, 1900:132). Various names of Lakṣmî are found in Hindu traditions, such as Padmâ, Kamalâ, Kamalikâ, Padmapriyâ, Padmamukhî, Viṣṇupriyâ, Nandikâ, Haripriyâ, Shreeyâ, Puṇimâ, and so forth. She has four hands, each signifying the goals of human life; Dharma (moral life), artha (pursuit of wealth), Kama (emotional fulfilment) and moksha (pursuit of self-knowledge). She is believed to be a guide towards one's success. According to Hinduism, human beings have eight goals: spiritual enlightenment, food, knowledge, resources, progeny, abundance, patience and success. As a result, there is believed to have eight Lakṣmî which are AadiLakṣmî, DhaanyaLakṣmî, VidyâLakṣmî, DhanaLakṣmî, SantaanaLakṣmî, GajaLakṣmî, DhairyaLakṣmî and VijayaLakṣmî. She is very welcomed as a household goddess but is very popular among other places. The goddess Lakṣmî can be found among Jains and Buddhists too.

Sri-Lakṣmî is often referred to in Buddhist texts. In Buddhism, Alicia Matsunaga says, "the deity gained popularity from the time of the foundation of Mahâyâna and has continued to be widely venerated as the female goddess relating to virtue and merit up to the modern times. The *Daikisshotennyobon* describes her virtues, and from earliest times in Japanese Buddhism, she was regarded as the principal image whenever this sutra was enshrined." (Alicia Matsunaga, 1969:254)

Lakṣmî or very commonly Sri, is the wife of Viṣṇu (Nârâyana), one of the principal deities of Hinduism and under various names appears in this relation in his various incarnations. Although in some myths, she also appears as the wife of Dharma and mother of the Kama, the god of love. "As the lord of the worlds, the gods, Janarddana descends amongst humankind in various shapes; so does his

coadjutor Sri. Thus, when Hari was born a dwarf, the son of Aditi, Lakṣmî appeared from the lotus as the Padma, or Kamala; when he was born as Rama (Parasurama) of the race of Bhrigu, she was Dharani; when he was Raghava (Ramachandra), she was Sita; and when he was Krishna, she was Rukmini.” (W. J. Wilkins, 1900:127-128)

Lakṣmî, in her usual poses, can be seen sitting or standing on a lotus and typically carrying a lotus in one or two hands. The lotus is said to have a symbolic meaning in Hinduism and other Indian tradition.”It symbolizes knowledge, self-realization and liberation in Vedic context, and represent reality, consciousness and karma (work) in the TanṭraSâhasrara context” (A. Parthasarathy, 1983:91-92). The lotus is always perceived as purity regardless of where it grows, channelling through the message that good continuously blooms even in the evil surrounding. There are usually two other animals beside her in the photos; an elephant or an owl. The elephant is known as Gaja-Lakṣmî, and it was shown as a symbol of work, activity and strength, as well as water, rain and fertility for abundant prosperity.

On the other hand, an owl represents the patient striving to observe, see and discover knowledge, mainly when surrounded by darkness. Its perseverance towards greed of knowledge and wealth through the struggles of day-blindness is what stands it out in there. Consequently, Lakṣmî can often be seen with golden attire reflecting prosperity with an owner on her vehicle throughout the Indian subcontinent. David R. Kinsley states:

Lakṣmî’s auspicious nature and her reputation for granting fertility, luck, wealth and well-being seem to attract devotees in every Indian village. All of India’s backcountry is the dominion of Lakṣmî, the goddess of the lotus... She accompanies every mile travelled through central India, every visit to a temple... Her likenesses are omnipresent on the walls and pillars, lintels and niches of sanctuaries, regardless of the deity of their specific dedication. ... Lakṣmî is worshipped throughout the year in a variety festival, and she is the constant object of rates, ‘religious vows’ employing which devotees ask her for a blessing in return for undertaking some act of devotion or piety on her behalf (David R. Kinsley, 1988:32-33).

In Japan, Lakṣmî is known as Kichijô-ten, a very popular goddess of Japanese society. She is believed to bestow money and other material benefits and is called the goddess of wealth. Her other names include Kichijô-ten, Kichishô-ten or Kishhō-ten. She is also referred to as Makashiri or Mahâ-Ūrî. It is said that ‘Kichijô-ten’s image was the first image of a female deity in Japan and was made in the Nara Period (645-794A.D). In fact, ”it was in the Nara period that the images of female divinities, e.g. Kichijô-ten (Lakṣmî), Benzai-ten (Saraswatî) and Kishimojin (Hârîfî) came into use” (Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, 1979:129). The

belief of Kichijō-ten was spread far-right after her elegant image was first made, which immediately overwhelmed the Buddhist monks. In Japan, she is seen with two arms and holds in her right hand a lotus flower, while her left-hand holds a precious stone. She is with longish eyes and a tranquil face. She is decorated with a necklace and bracelet.

Kichijō-ten is among the Buddhist divine entities described in the Taisho collection (descriptions of various images). She is said to face the Buddha on the plain ground before Senju Kannon or the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara. She is presented as a goddess wearing ceremonial robes and a large lotus containing several other flowers on her hands. Moreover, it is seen that the first finger of her right-hand palm points towards her heart.

A famous representation of Kichijō-ten can be seen in the Yakushi-ji temple of Nara Prefecture, which is from the Nara Period. The picture is in five colours on fine hemp cloth. The round face is painted beautifully, with her movements slightly towards the left side. Such an attractive image of Kichijō-ten can also be found in Kofuku-ji Museum in Nara. She is depicted as sitting in a Zushi, i.e. a miniature shrine. She has a white body and wears a crown complementing beautifully with the dress. Another beautiful image of Kichijō-ten can be seen in the Hozan-ji temple in Nara prefecture. She is acknowledged as Kichijō-ten, i.e. Lakṣmī with lotus flower. She stands on a pedestal wearing a crown, necklace and gorgeous garments. A lotus flower stalk is seen on her left hand and the right representing mudra.

Honourable mentions of the sculptures of Kichijō-ten would be the one preserved in a Zushi or miniature shrine in the Hon-do (main hall) of the Joruri-ji temple of Kyoto. The Japanese cypress wood is made of that stands on a lotus pedestal. An excellent piece of Kichijō-ten (mahārī) can be seen in Kyoto by the Koryu-ji, carved out from a single piece of wood during the Early Heian Period (ninth century). She is seen standing in her white body, wearing a red garment.

A remarkable image of Kichijō-ten from the Heian Period (794-1185 A.D.) can be found in the Golden Hall of the Horyu-ji temple. It is constructed with wood and is about 120cm which stands on a three-terraced round pedestal. A necklace and a crown can be seen on the figure. Attention to the small details on the figure, i.e. the fifteen straight spokes coming out of her crown on the left, right and upward directions and her mesmerizing eyes and expressive eyebrows with detailed designs on the dress, makes it look very lively.

Other representations of the deity can be found in several other temples in Japan, including Onjo-ji in Shiga where she is seen in the standing posture, Daigo-ji in Kyoto, Tamon-ji and Tasshin-ji in Hyogo; Taima-dera in Nara; Anyo-ji in

Okayama; Zentsu-ji at Kagawa. Therefore, the iconographical and abstract forms of goddess Lakṣmî and Japanese goddess Kichijô-ten are very similar.

8. Durgâ

DurgâDevî is a principal and a prevalent goddess of Hindus. She is a multifaceted goddess with various names, identities and faces. The word Durgâ means impassable, inaccessible, impregnable. It resembles the word 'Durg', which means fortress, which is usually difficult to access, attain or pass. For example, 'Durg' is the name of an Asura who had become invincible to gods, and Durgâ is the goddess who interposes and defeats him.

The figure of Durgâ, the mother goddess, was well established with her different forms in Brahmanical religion from the very dawn period of Epic and Purânic literature. Her qualities, greatness has been shown at first in Devî-sûkta and Râtri-sûkta of *Ṛigveda*, and then in *Atharva-Veda* and *Taittîriya Aranyaka*. *Durgâstotras* (hymns to Durga) of the *Mahâbhârata* gives us an account of the developed concept of Durgâ. The most important representation of the goddess is described in the *Mârkaṇḍeya-Purâna*. One of her earliest forms according to this Purâna is the Mahiṣasuramardini form which is still prevalent in the Indian subcontinent. Various goddess features can be noticed in the representations around the Indian subcontinent from the early periods. One is from Ellora, where she is described as having eight arms, riding on her lion-mount and on the move to kill the demon Mahiṣasura.

Durgâ is a symbol of all divine forces. She is almighty as the embodiment of power, intellect, faith, nourishment, desirous of success and patience. Although we worship her many forms such as Bhavânî, Pârvatî, Umâ, Gourî, Jagadhâtrî, Kâtayanî, she is considered to be only one. The goddess Durgâ is also Triyambake (the three-eyed goddess). Her left eye signifies desire, represented by the moon, the right eye representing action, denoted by the sun and her upper-middle eye stands for knowledge, indicated by fire. Durgâ is portrayed in the Hindu pantheon riding on a lion or tiger. She is often depicted to have four, eight, ten or eighteen arms, each carrying a weapon, often defeating Mahiṣasura. She holds a conch shell, bow and arrows, thunderbolt, lotus, Sudarshan-Chakra, the sword, the trident, Empty (blessings and forgiveness), Club (surrender and devotion) in her ten hands. Durgâ is a golden-coloured woman with a gentle and beautiful countenance.

The images of Lakṣmî, Saraswatî, Gaṇeúa and Kârtikeya who are Her children who are worshipped with Durga. The Hindu god Śiva is also known to be Devî Durgâ's husband. The image of Durgâ with the whole group with her in the centre is often referred to as chaal-chitra (iconographical representation of the

family members of Durgâ). The goddess on a lion is known as her Vâhan. The favourite tableau is of her stabbing Mahiṣâsura, the demon. It represents the victory of the goddess, Durga, over the demons. The *Devîmâhâtmya* states that Durgâ is the universe.⁷

Durga took ten forms to defeat the two giants, Sumbha and Nisumbha. In *Mârkaṇḍeya Purâṇa* depicts these incarnations in subsequent order: “1) As Durga, she received the message of the giants; 2) As Dasabhujâ (the ten-armed), she slew a part of their army; 3) As Singhavâhinî (seated on a lion), she fought with Raktavijâ; 4) As Mahiṣâsura. (destroyer of a buffalo) she slew Sumbha in the form of a buffalo; 5) As Jagaddhâtri (the mother of the world) she overcomes the army of the giants; 6) As kâli (the black woman), she slew Raktavijâ; 7) As Muktakesi (with flowing hair) she overcame another of the armies of the giants; 8) As Târa (the saviour) she slew Sumbha in his proper shape; 9) As Chinnamustaka (the headless) she killed Nisumbha; 10) As Jagadgurî (the golden-coloured lady renowned through the world) she received the praises and thanks of the gods” (W. J. Wilkins, 1900:301- 302).

Durgâ is Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, widely known as Juntei Kannon or Cundî, considered the mother Buddha of the many Buddhas in Japan. Juntei is mainly worshipped for wisdom, marital harmony, birth conception, longer lifespan and sometimes rain. A famous story can be heard from the founder of Daigoji, Shobo (832-909), whose propitiation led to the birth of two emperors. The prayers for a good marriage and childbirth provide a feminine nature, and so does the name ‘Butsumo’. Although Juntei is female, the sculptures and paintings prove otherwise. In Japan, Juntei is considered one of the six Kannon (Roku Kannon), although many do not approve of her position as she is believed to be greater than that. Alicia Matsunaga states that “Hindu deity Durgâ might have been a prototype for the bodhisattva in the role of motherhood” (Alicia Matsunaga, 1969: 129). Juntei is usually shown with a yellowish-white body with three eyes and eighteen arms. The eighteen arms have their uniqueness such as Root Mudra, Precious Banner, fearless Mudra, Lotus flower, Sword of wisdom, Empowerment vase, Jewelled Headdress, Vajra, Fruit, Eight Spoke Wheel, Axe, Dharma Shell, Vajra Hook, Rosary, Vajra and Dragons, Wisdom Sutra and Wish-Fulfilling Pearl. Her magnificent garments are decorated with flowers. She wears a white garment below the lion. The body’s upper portion is clad in a fragile ‘heavenly garment’.

⁷ Durgâ, in effect, protects herself in her aspect as the earth itself. As immanent in the world, Durgâ is equated with the earth. As transcendent, she is the heavenly queen who descends from time to time to maintain harmony on earth. Kinsley, David R. *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, University of California Press, London, 1988, p.105

An embroidered girdle is tied around her waist. She is bedecked with armlets studded with seven kinds of jewels, bracelets made of white shells and rings on each finger. A third eye is placed on her forehead.

There are two images of Juntei Kannon seen by me that are highlighted. One is a wooden piece that can be appreciated in the Shin Yakushi-ji temple in Nara, made in 970 A.D. Another can be found in the Hozan-ji temple in Nara prefecture dated 1691 A.D. Therefore, the similarities between the goddess Durgâ and Japanese Juntei Kannon are pretty apparent.

9. Conclusion

From the above discussion, we can conclude that many Hindu gods and goddesses can be found in Japanese Buddhist pantheons, but they have been altered into their versions and traditionally worshipped for a long time. However, Japanese Buddhist's beliefs are more inclined to the material benefits and diverse favours in their daily lives than spiritual development, and they deal with worldly and materialistic problems rather than an abstract construct of only spiritual achievement. The most important aspect is that the worshipping of Hindu gods and goddesses occupied a vital position in the folk belief and rituals of the Japanese Buddhist society, which may play a potential role to respect other religions and establishing peace, tolerance and harmony in a multi-cultural society, and may offer a vital lesson where growing fundamentalism cause serious social problems.

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SHIKOKU: Japan's Authentic Buddhist Pilgrimage Circuit

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Abstract– Cultures and heritages are any country's unique properties, attractions, and identities. Cultures and heritages hold great importance for communities around the world. The history of modern tourism is not as old as pilgrimage tourism- the oldest concept or original art of travelling. The ideal pilgrimage is an expression of the human aspiration for perfection, and those myths and legends associated with sacred journeys define the ideal and structured symbols for its enactment. Pilgrimage is a moving meditation. On pilgrimage, you walk; however, it is the process of spiritual purification in your body and mind. The ascetic wanderings of individuals took the form of pilgrimage routes, which were then adopted by the aristocracy and, later, the common masses. In early modern Japan, many sacred places lured pilgrims from near and far by claiming that they were sanctuaries where familiar deities manifested to the human world. Pilgrimage visit to multiple sites has been widely practised for a long time in Hinduism (e.g. four dharma visits in India are supposed to be completed by the final visit of Pashupatinath in Nepal). Likewise, the Buddha mentioned four places that a pious disciple should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence. It is, for instance, a common practice for pilgrims doing multiple-site routes in Japan, and Shikoku is the one. The Shikoku, 88 Sacred Places pilgrimage (henro) is one of Japan's authentic, most prominent, evocative and photogenic pilgrimages with a highly developed pilgrimage culture. Kōbō Daishi (774–835), a miracle-working figure with origins in the Japanese Buddhist tradition comprised of several ancient local pilgrimages and developed this pilgrimage route. The beginnings of the Shikoku pilgrimage date back to the ninth century when the Buddhist priest Kukai, later to be canonised as Kōbō Daishi, made a journey around the Shikoku Island in his search of enlightenment. The pilgrims may fulfil their wishes, gain an inner feeling of

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something missing in their lives, experience Japanese culture, self-improvement and personal satisfaction, broaden their understanding of Buddhism, improve mental and personal health, and more in Shikoku. The government and tourist organisations should promote the Shikoku pilgrimage in Japan and worldwide.

Keywords Buddhism · Heritage · Culture · Enlightenment · Self-improvement ·

1. Background

Geographically, Shikoku is one of Japan's four main islands, and it is located in the southwestern part of the Japanese archipelago at a latitude of 34°N. Shikoku comprises four prefectures, Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime and Kochi. Shikoku has a mild and warm climate with successive seasonal beauty (Ghimire, 2017). The Shikoku pilgrimage is the most famous type of pilgrimage and most frequently referred to as *henro*, a term specific to this pilgrimage or *meguri*, which means 'to go round'. Perhaps the most famous pilgrimage in Japan -around the island of Shikoku - appears in chronicles of the Heian era (latter half of the eleventh century), when it developed as an ascetic practice involving religious sites. A more structured route had developed by the seventeenth century, involving the eighty-eight temples still visited today. It seems that, in the latter part of the Muromachi period (1338-1573), the trip to Shikoku became "a widespread practice involving participants other than religious specialists and ascetics" (Reader 1987: 116).

Cultures and heritages are any country's unique properties, attractions, and identities. Cultures and heritages hold great importance for communities around the world. Heritage is the symbolic embodiment of the past, reconstructed and reinterpreted in contemporary societies' collective memories and traditions rather than perceived as a mere apotheosis of bygone times. Cultures and heritages include their originality, especially tradition and other valuable aspects. Culture displays social traditions, activities, values, beliefs, religion. Japan's religion and culture reflect a long history during which various religious beliefs and practices - some indigenous, some "imported" from other places - have been adopted and adapted to Japanese culture. The ancient indigenous folk religion, later formalised as Shinto, was based on awe toward the sacred powers (*kami*) that brought life to the earth and human community. According to *Nihon Shoki* (the Chronicles of Japan), Korean monks introduced Buddhism to Japan in 552 AD. Sutras were later brought from China, temples and shrines were built, and monastic communities were established (Ghimire, 2020a). Japanese pilgrimage studies have concentrated more on the historical and folkloric dimensions than anthropological

and fieldwork-based studies. There are very few exceptions focused on examining pilgrimage within the boundaries of Japanese culture and religion, rather than on using the topic to make any broader comparative studies or to use such studies of Japanese pilgrimage to help further any wider-ranging theoretical positions, impacts analysis of pilgrimages (Ghimire, 2017). Japanese people are highly influenced by Buddhism's five precepts (pañcaśīla in Sanskrit). They constitute the basic code of ethics to be undertaken by followers of Buddhism. The precepts are commitments to abstain from killing living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication. Japan is Japan because of its unique cultures, traditions and heritages. These Japanese traits should not be at risk. It should be preserved, and the youngsters have to take ownership of it. Cultures and heritages of Japan are the nation's pride and a matter of interest for the people around the globe (Ghimire, 2020b).

Postdoctoral research had uncovered the Buddhist pilgrimage practices with a particular focus on Shikoku in Japan, compared with Lumbini (the birthplace of the Buddha) in Nepal under the Japan Foundation fellowship. This paper is the partial outcome of that research.

2. Research methodology

This research is exploratory and primarily analytical. The research has adopted qualitative and quantitative inquiries based on primary and secondary sources and self-collected data. Primary data were obtained from field visits, questionnaire surveys and formal and informal interviews in Shikoku and the secondary data and information were collected from publications such as journals, books, documents and reports from the library; bulletin, reports, plans published by Government and non-Governmental organisations, different seminar papers; and Internet search.

On-site surveys were conducted with visitors/pilgrims at Shikoku, at the entrance gate to the temple complex, at souvenir shops and hotels, pilgrimage trails and a train in the Shikoku area; some stakeholders such as owner and/or managers of hotels, restaurants, travels, souvenir shops, and experts about Shikoku and pilgrimage tourism. To draw a representative sample of tourists, days and sites were randomly selected.

Using concepts and data from my previous research about Buddhist pilgrimage and Lumbini (the birthplace of the Buddha in Nepal), I utilised my time to study, observe, and interact with various people and concerned organisations in Japan.

By alternating fieldwork at Shikoku and residence at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, I benefited from regular discussions with Paul Swanson, an expert in Japanese religion, culture, and pilgrimage. I also met other experts and researchers in Japan who helped me contextualise and analyse material and guide the research.

3. Pilgrimage: The oldest travel culture

The history of modern tourism is not as old as pilgrimage tourism- the oldest concept or original art of travelling. Pilgrimage is one of the well-known phenomena in religion and culture, and it exists in all the main religions of the world (Collins-Kreiner et al., 2006). The ideal pilgrimage is an expression of the human aspiration for perfection, and those myths and legends associated with sacred journeys define the ideal and structured symbols for its enactment (Kunwar, 2006: 245). Barber (1993: 1) defines pilgrimage as: "A journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding". The origin and evolution of the *tirtha yatra* (pilgrimage) - a tradition of Hindus seems to be as old as their civilisation or perhaps older than that (Kaur, 1985: 27).

Pilgrimage is a fundamental part of many religions; from the Hajj in Islam, the Kumbha Mela and pilgrimage to *char-dhama* (four sacred places) in Hinduism, four sacred sites in Buddhism, pilgrimages to Santiago and Rome in Christianity. They allow the pilgrim to fulfil a commitment to their religion and free up time to reflect on life. The Shikoku pilgrimage fills the same need for the people who subscribe to the Shingon sect of Buddhism in Japan (Ghimire, 2017). Pilgrimage is a moving meditation. On pilgrimage, you walk; however, it is the process of spiritual purification in your body and mind. This spiritual practice is for concentration and awareness. That is what the Buddha had said. Pilgrimage allows you to discover who you are and where you stand. It develops your mind and beliefs. It becomes a memory and a history (Schmidt, 2016 on a personal interview at Koyasan). Pilgrimages serve as a means for ordinary people to enter the religious specialist's world, even if temporarily. It is a recurrent feature of pilgrimages worldwide. It has been seen as a means of acquiring merit that could enable people to overcome bad karma and ensure better rebirths for themselves and their kin. In Japan, for example, it is widely believed that performing the Shikoku pilgrimage will bring the pilgrim exceptional spiritual merit that can either help the pilgrim attain entry into the Buddhist Pure Land at death or be transferred to one's deceased kin to facilitate their journey to the next realm (Reader, 2012).

Pilgrimage visit to multiple sites has been widely practised for a long time in Hinduism (e.g. four dhama visits in India are supposed to be completed by the final visit of Pashupatinath in Nepal). Likewise, the Buddha mentioned four places that a pious disciple should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence. Thus a salient characteristic of multiple-site routes is that they contain a set number of places that have to be visited in the context of the pilgrimage (Ghimire, 2017). It is, for instance, a common practice for pilgrims doing multiple-site routes in Japan to carry a scroll or pilgrim's book that they have stamped at each site and that serves as testimony, as it is filled with stamps, to the pilgrim's progress and when complete, to the completion of the pilgrimage. Thus each site on multiple-site routes is equally essential in completing the route (Reader & Swanson, 1997: 240). The Shikoku Eighty-Eight Sacred Places Pilgrimage is the most famous type of pilgrimage. It is one of Japan's most prominent, evocative and photogenic pilgrimages with a highly developed pilgrimage culture, one of the most prominent elements in Japanese religious structure (Reader, 2005: 9). The Shikoku pilgrimage has become an international pilgrimage destination. People with other religious faiths than Buddhism also make pilgrimages in Shikoku.

4. Buddhist pilgrimage

The Buddha was the first Buddhist pilgrim, and his life story is one of pilgrimage, in which he leaves home to travel in search of the truth. Indeed, critical places were associated with his life and significant turning points in Buddhist history. Pilgrimage has been an especially conducive concept as its focus on the notion of life as a journey toward higher goals and because of its emphasis on transience in the Buddhist tradition. The Buddha himself enshrined pilgrimage as an essential act in the life of a practitioner (Reader, 2012). After the *parinirvana* (physical death) of the Buddha, the relics of His body were collected from the funeral pyre and divided into eight parts. These were distributed to the claimants and *stupas* erected on the relics. The practice of pilgrimage in Buddhism probably started with visits to these places, and the purpose could be to achieve personal advantages such as rebirth in a good location and honour the great master. Thus the custom of pilgrimage has been widespread among Buddhists for many centuries. Buddha had emphasised the importance of pilgrimage (Buddhanet, 2010). The Buddha advises for the pilgrimage without which there is no release from grief unless the end of the world is to be reached. So let a man be a world-knower, wise, world-ender (Kunwar, 2006). The early Buddhist pilgrims endured tremendous hardship, and some of them changed the course of history (Szostak,

2007). In answer to Venerable Ananda's concern that the monks would no longer see the Buddha and pay their respects after His Mahaparinirvana, the Buddha mentioned four places that a pious disciple should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

They are:

- Lumbini: "Here the Tathagata (the Buddha) was born!"
- Buddhagaya: "Here, the Tathagata became fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment!"
- Sarnath: "Here the Tathagata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Law!"
- Kusinagara: "Here, the Tathagata passed away into Nirvana."

In visiting those places, early Buddhist pilgrims not only walked in the Buddha's footsteps, thereby metaphorically treading the same path to enlightenment while being in his presence, but did so alongside fellow pilgrims walking the same path and hence experienced a sense of community (Reader, 2012). The Buddha said, "... And whosoever, Ananda, should die on such a pilgrimage, with his heart established in the faith, he at the breaking up of the body, after death, will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness" (Mahaparinirvana Sutra Chapter V; in San, 2002: 15). There are other influential sites where the Buddha performed his great miracles and where he and the *sangha* held their rain retreats. Pilgrimage to the holy places mentioned by the Buddha is a once-a-lifetime undertaking by Buddhists. In this text, the spiritual value of pilgrimage to these sites, which have a significant connection to the Buddha's life, is stated, even claiming that if one died on such a pilgrimage, one would be reborn in *sugatim saggam lokam*, 'a good destiny, a heavenly world'—in other words, a heavenly rebirth. The wording of the above quote shows that the critical thing is that people believe a site to have a particular significance. A pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place as an act of devotion and faith (*shraddha*). A strong desire stems from one's devotion to undertaking a pilgrimage to heed the Buddha's advice. In the course of visiting the sacred places, pilgrims feel the need to be in the Master's presence, and this fullness of faith conduces to joy and the observance of morality and the foundation of all merit. After the journey is over, one should always try to recollect the joyful moments spent at holy places to keep them vivid in one's memory (San, 2002: 11). Reader (2012) writes that as Buddhism spread across Asia, it also created new places of pilgrimage in every region that Buddhism permeated - from sacred mountain sites in Tibet to places such as the Shwe Dagon Temple in the Burmese capital of Rangoon, which according to famous belief houses relics of the Buddha's hair, and the Temple of Tooth in Kandy, Sri Lanka,

which also houses a reputed relic of the Buddha. In such places, it was believed; pilgrims could thus "meet" the holy figure at the centre of their religion and acquire his spiritual grace.

5. Pilgrimage in Japan

Pilgrimage in Japan developed gradually. The ascetic wanderings of individuals took the form of pilgrimage routes, which were then adopted by the aristocracy and, later, the common masses. Pilgrimage became popular in the Heian period among the aristocracy, who visited places like Ise Shrine, Hasedera and Shitennoji. During the Edo period, pilgrimage became famous for all classes of people (Kodansha, 1983). Shinno Toshikazu has described pilgrimage as "one of the great pillars" of Japanese religion. Pilgrimages are essential in Japanese spiritual development and play specific and crucial roles within the functioning of the various religious organisations with which they are associated. It has been voluntary pilgrimages such as the Ise pilgrimage and multiple-site types such as the Saikoku *junrei*, the Shikoku *henro*, and the various regional "copied" pilgrimages that have tended to attract the most extraordinary levels of mass participation and to have had the most significant influence in the broader development of Japanese pilgrimage culture. These pilgrimages, in particular, are focused on in this volume, and it is to these, and the typological differentiation that may be made between them, that we now turn (Reader & Swanson, 1997: 238). In Japan, pilgrimages can be classified into two general types: (1) multi-site circuits and (2) single-site pilgrimages. Multi-site circuits involve several sacred places linked together numerically, with each location devoted to the same single deity or a group of related deities. It is known as *honzon junrei*. Single-site pilgrimages involve a journey to one particular sacred site.

Several aspects of the pilgrimage are rich in symbolism - particularly its association with death. The clothing worn and items carried by a pilgrim indicate that he or she is 'dead to the world' (Reader, 1993: 107; in MacGregor, 2002: 11). What attracted pilgrims were temples known for their miracle efficacy in Japan. Kannon was the most popular deity venerated at these miracle temples. Furthermore, the most popular pilgrimage temples belonged to three sects in Japan: Tendai, hmgon, and Hosso (Ambros, 1997: 304). Schumacher (2013) writes that pilgrimages were first undertaken in the Nara Period (710-794 AD), but the custom did not become popular until the Heian Era (794-1185 AD). In southern Wakayama Prefecture, Kumano became a prominent centre for adherents and pilgrims of the Shugendo sect during the Heian Period. Other famous pilgrimages were Hasedera (Kyoto), Shitenno-ji (Osaka), and Mt. Koya. In the

Edo Period (1600-1868 AD), the number of people making pilgrimages to both Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines increased rapidly, especially to Ise Shrine, Kotohira Shrine (Kagawa), the 88 temples of Shikoku and Western Japan, to Zenkoji (Nagano), Kiso Ontake (Nagoya), and Mt. Fuji (Shizuoka). One phenomenon of the Edo era was Okage Mairi お蔭参り - the special pilgrimage to the Ise Jingu Shrine. The Okage Mairi tradition continues unabated today, with approximately six million people visiting Ise Jingu yearly. Okawa (2009) spotlights that the three shrines of Kumano in the Kii Peninsula, Nachi, Hongu, and Shingu, were arguably the most important religious institutions in medieval Japan. They dispatched shugenja to the regions throughout Japan, including Shikoku, to (1) spread the worship of the Kumano shrines, (2) transplant Kumano shrines to regions, and (3) cultivate and maintain parishes (kasumi ft.). In these parishes, they monopolised certain prayer rituals and took the role of the *sendatsu*, or pilgrimage guide, who facilitated the journey of earthly pilgrimage to Kumano. They were also instrumental in funnelling income for the Kumano shrines.

Many sacred places lured pilgrims from near and far in early modern Japan, claiming sanctuaries where familiar deities manifested to the human world. These were deemed access points of the merits dispensed by those deities by extension. In many respects, the success of a pilgrimage centre depended on the ability of its managing institutions (i.e., temples and shrines) to stir a public discourse on the potency of its deity in delivering practical merits that resonated with the concerns of the people. To this end, they would weave legends and miracle stories that highlighted the deity's value in dispensing merits to the pilgrims at the pilgrimage space (Okawa, 2009). In Japan, as Pye (2014) writes that pilgrimages have been turned into considerably less arduous ordeals than they were in the past thanks to public transport, comfortable lodgings, good food and an ample supply of vending machines.

6. Shikoku pilgrimage and authenticity

Authenticity is conventionally defined as originality, genuineness or sincerity, and the heritages and cultures must be unique and authentic. Belhassen et al. (2008) illustrated that three interrelated components shape the search for authentic experiences during the visits to the holy sites: the the opolitical ideology underlying the pilgrimage, the places visited, and the activities undertaken by the pilgrims. One way to view the relationship between these three elements is to consider place, belief and action as the physical and social contexts through which individual pilgrims negotiate meaning regarding their touristic activities, and then

to view this sense of meaning as the foundation that gives rise to experiences of existential authenticity (Kunwar & Ghimire, 2012).

Reader (2005) elicits that the *henro* was one of several pilgrimages that emerged in the later Heian period linked to the activities of religious mendicants and wandering proselytisers known as *hijiri*, whose seminal role in popularising folk Buddhist faith in Japan has been widely discussed by Japanese scholars. The *hijiri* promoted the virtues of Buddhist figures of worship and emphasised pilgrimages to essential temples and other holy places as a way of deepening faith, attaining salvation in this or the next life, and gaining merit and worldly benefits (107). Likewise, Shinnen was the seminal figure in the development of the *henro*, making the pilgrimage more widely known through his stones, guidebooks, and miracle tales. It is a striking example of how individuals can help make the pilgrimage and create a series of footsteps for others to follow (121).

The Shikoku pilgrimage is the most famous type of pilgrimage and most frequently referred to as *henro*, a term specific to this pilgrimage or *meguri*, which means 'to go round,' but 'is most widely used in cases where the sites on a pilgrimage route are not united by their dedication to a single figure of worship,' (Reader & Swanson, 1997: 233). The typical Japanese word for pilgrimage is *junrei*; however, the pilgrimage is called *henro* in Shikoku. Spirituality is a safety valve, and the '*henro*' is an opportunity to use it (Jopson, 2016). Statler (1983: 97) notes that the Japanese people are optimistic. In Japan, over the centuries, Buddhism was transformed into an optimistic creed. Kobo Daishi's contribution to this was his insistence that man and women too, for whom earlier Buddhism held out no hope, had within him the seed of Buddha; by hard practice following strict precepts, anyone could find and nurture that seed manifest his innate Buddha-nature –could achieve enlightenment. In pilgrimage typologies developed by Japanese scholars, Shikoku is classified as a *seiseki* pilgrimage- one associated with a holy person's sacred traces or presence. In Shikoku, this figure is Kobo Daishi, a miracle-working figure with origins in the Japanese Buddhist tradition whose presence permeates the pilgrimage and binds it to the island of Shikoku (Reader, 2005: 10).

Okawa (2009) writes that there have been pilgrimage practices of the ascetics and the religious specialists since ancient times—long before an eighty-eight-site pilgrimage that we now call Shikoku *henro* emerged. These traditions were different from Shikoku *henro* in many respects, such as the scale and route of the pilgrimage and the object of worship. They were essential factors in the development of the pilgrimage, shaping the sacred geography of Shikoku. Since

then, symbols and themes have become ingrained in the landscape of Shikoku *henro*. Thus, they provided a rich repertoire of traditions for the evolving pilgrimage culture in Shikoku to draw from, which reached a milestone in the early modern period with the establishment of the eighty-eight-site pilgrimage. Some pilgrims also went to Shikoku in search of a Buddhist Pure Land. The spread of Amida worship in the late Heian period also rendered the image of Shikoku as the gateway to Amida's Western Pure Land, similar to how Shitennoji in Osaka was perceived.

The beginnings of the Shikoku pilgrimage are said to date back to the ninth century when the Buddhist priest Kūkai 空海, later known as Kōbō Daishi (774–835), made a journey around the Shikoku Island in search of enlightenment. Kūkai developed the Shikoku pilgrimage route comprising 88 main Buddhist temples and numerous additional temples and shrines with several ancient local pilgrimages. By the 17th century, the fame of the *henro* had spread and become popular among ordinary Japanese (Ghimire, 2017). Iannarone (2013) writes Kōbō Daishi, founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, is one of the most influential people in Japanese history, and he still holds considerable sway and respect in Japan today. Aside from being a priest, he was also a master calligrapher, poet, scholar and advisor to the emperor. In his early years, he turned away from his aristocratic upbringing and became a wandering ascetic in the mountains and valleys of Shikoku; the 88 temple pilgrimage recreates his journeys around the island. However, there are *henro* pilgrimages in other parts of Japan, namely those transplanted or copied from Shikoku (i.e., the *henro* pilgrimage in Shōdoshima). *Henro* also refers to the pilgrims who are making this pilgrimage. The designated stops in this pilgrimage are commonly called *fudasho* (札所), literally meaning a place to offer pilgrims' calling cards, or *reijō*, (霊場) meaning a sacred place (Okawa, 2009).

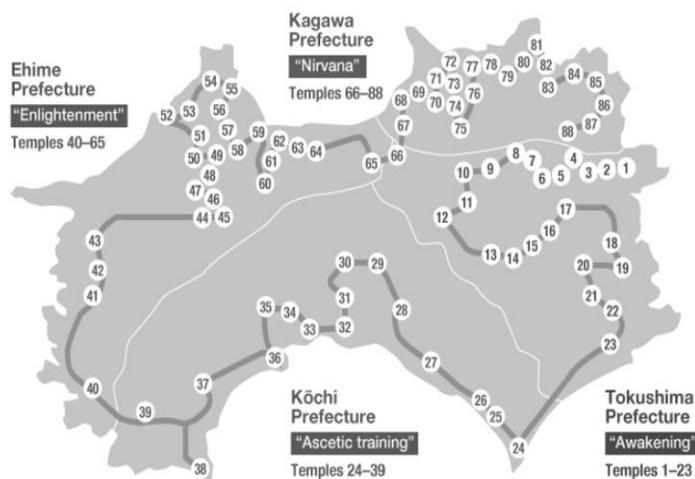
The popularity of the Shikoku pilgrimage between 1800 and 1850~the period can be considered the golden age of the Shikoku pilgrimage. It can also certainly be considered as a characteristic of the evolutionary development. The basic principle of the Shikoku pilgrimage circuit in the Tokugawa period was, like today, to walk around the island of Shikoku to visit eighty-eight sites traditionally associated with Kōbō Daishi (Kouame, 1997). The aim of the pilgrimage can be to remember dead family or friends or to meditate on your life's progress as you walk the route, much of which is through the countryside or along the coast.

Shikoku was both a sacred domain associated with Kōbō Daishi and the realm of death, where pilgrims consciously or subconsciously weaved through the

symbolic boundary between this and the other world through the act of pilgrimage. The liminality of Shikoku was strengthened by its inevitable geographical feature; as an island surrounded by the sea, it evoked the sense of a different realm and, in particular, as Reader (2005) notes, the Buddhist notion of the "other shore" associated with the afterlife.

6.1 Numbering of temples in Shikoku

Figure 1: Shokiku island and location map of 88 temples



Shikoku means "four provinces", and the pilgrim's journey through 88 temples in four provinces is considered a symbolic path to enlightenment. The theme of the Tokushima province (temples 1–23) is *Awakening*; the Kōchi province (temples 24–39) is *Ascetic training*; the Ehime province (temples 40–65) is *Enlightenment*; the Kagawa province (temples 66–88) is *Nirvana*. The numbering of the temple had become the "framing device" of *henro*. Unfortunately, we do not know the rationale behind selecting this number with certainty. However, there is no shortage of explanations (Reader, 2005). One influential theory is that eighty-eight represents the number of evil passions (*bonno*), in Buddhist terms, which must be eradicated before one can attain salvation. This theory was offered in *Kudokuki* as a possible explanation (Shinnen, 1690; in Okawa, 2009). The numbering system of the *fudasho*, beginning with Ryozenji in northeastern Awa, hints that the pilgrimage circuit was likely initially designed by those who entered Shikoku from the Kii Peninsula, because the port of Muya (present-day Naruto), near Ryozenji, was a convenient entry point to Shikoku from the Kii Peninsula, where Koyasan is located. Since ancient days, the main sea route that connected

the Kinai area to Awa was Kada in Kii to Muya, connecting between Yura in Awaji (Ishiodori, 2006; in Okawa, 2009). However, Eiki (1997) has a different opinion. The numbering system had more to do with the organisation of the pilgrimage route than with the actual practice of the pilgrimage.

Nevertheless, it has made a lasting impact on the pilgrimage culture since, even in the present era, it is common for the pilgrims to refer to the *fudasho* simply by their designated number rather than by the actual name of *fudasho* institutions. Ghimire (2017) writes that since pilgrims have to visit all 88 temples to complete the pilgrimage, they are equal; however, some may be more equal than others in the pilgrims' eyes. Temples with dramatic physical settings or powerful historical connections tend to have a more significant effect on pilgrims.

6.2 Ohenropractices at temples

Before departing for the Shikoku pilgrimage, pilgrims were required to obtain a passport known in the Tokugawa period as an *oral tegata* 往来手形 which was issued by local officials or temples. The content of this document was relatively standardised: name and address of the pilgrim, information about his/her family's temple and sectarian affiliation, the definition of the purpose of the trip, and various clauses relating to the treatment of the pilgrim in case of illness or death (Kouame, 1997).

Mostly, the pilgrimage starts from Ryozenji (Temple No.1) at Tokushima and ends from Okuboji (Temple No. 88) at Kagawa. Many of them believe that the Shikoku pilgrimage is completed after the final visit of Koyasan, the headquarter of Shingon Buddhism in Japan. The pilgrims are given the Buddhist Ten Commandments to follow at least during the pilgrimages at temple number one. They are: Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not commit adultery. Do not tell a lie. Do not use flowery language. Do not speak ill of others. Do not be double-tongued. Do not be covetous. Do not be angry. Do not be perverse.

Traditionally, the pilgrims (*Ohenro*) perform the following steps; however, optional actions at each temple in Shikoku.

- At the main gate: The pilgrim's bow once faces the main hall to ward off evil spirits.
- At the washbasin: To purify themselves, pilgrims wash one's hands and mouth.
- Pilgrims rang the bell to mark one's arrival at the bell tower.

- At the main hall: The principal deity can be seen here. First, pilgrims light incense and a candle, ring the bell once and declare to the main deity you have come to worship.
- At the Daishi hall: A figure of Kōbō Daishi can be seen as a hare. Pilgrims worship in the same way as at the main hall.
- At Stamp Office: Pilgrims receive the temple stamp in their stamp book.
- Pilgrims again face the main gate and bow once at the main gate.

The main hall , which is dedicated to one of the Buddhas of the Buddhist pantheon, and a separate hall dedicated to Kōbō Daishi are located at every one of the eighty-eight temples along the route. In front of these halls, pilgrims usually light candles, incense, chant sutras and prayers. The pilgrim drops name-slips, or *fuda*, inscribed with the pilgrim's name and his or her prayers or requests in the special boxes in front of these halls.

6.3 Shikoku Ohenro costumes

Ohenro is free to wear whatever they please on their pilgrimage. However, the pilgrim's traditional costume (unique symbolic clothing) comprises a white shirt with a Japanese script indicating a pilgrim, a conical sedge Chinese hat, a shoulder bag, and a walking stick. By choosing those items, one will be identified and respected as a pilgrim by those you meet along the way. Foreign pilgrims gain a sense of belonging to a privileged group in Shikoku. Once you start walking in the white 'Ohenro' costume, you are no longer treated as a foreigner but only an 'Ohenro-san' like everybody else. It is a unique experience that you cannot experience anywhere else. *Ohenro* crosses boundaries of languages, culture and nationality (Moreton, 2016).

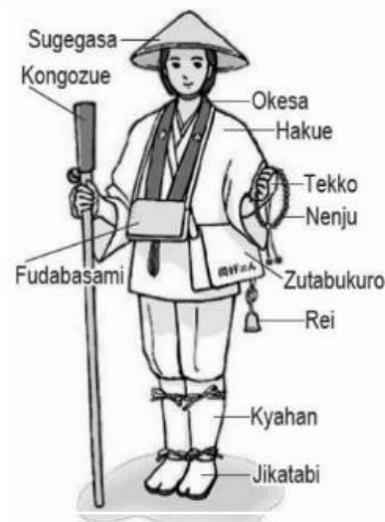


Figure 2: Pilgrim's attire

It is believed that Kukai is embodied in a five-foot-long walking stick called a kongo-tsue. In this form, he travels with every pilgrim as a spiritual guide. The

stick serves as a support for navigating steep paths or slogging up mossy temple steps in the rain, but it can also be used as a grave marker if the pilgrim drops dead en route – a not uncommon or unwelcome outcome of the pilgrim's goal to leave the present life behind. The white garb – the colour of mourning – is a perpetual reminder of transience. A bell, tied to a stick with a silken cord, chimed the rhythmic sound of emptiness with each footstep (Christy, 2016).

6.4 Belief in Shikoku pilgrimages

All of the pilgrims - in a vehicle or on foot - consider themselves travelling alone with Kōbō Daishi as their companion and guide. This spiritual presence is expressed by the words *dōgyō ninin* (two travelling together) written on the pilgrims' hats during pilgrimages. We can see essential differences between those who took buses or private cars from temple to temple and those walking pilgrims. At the temples, bus and car pilgrims diligently go through the rituals and devotional rites. They are attentive to the worship because being at the temple was the whole point of their pilgrimage. Ugolnik (2004) writes that the space between the temples exists only about vehicles for those who travel via bus or car. The vehicle acts as a transporter from one temple to another, whereby the pilgrim only occupies its space. Understandably, the temples become the focus and purpose of their pilgrimage. The temples played a different role within their pilgrimage experience, and the temples gave the walkers a much different meaning. Amidst walkers, three characteristics of the temples are highlighted: as sacred space, as secular space, and as 'negative space', which serves as markings for the space between them. Through these models of the temples as *either* sacred *or* secular, *or both* sacred *and* secular (as in this latter category), it is evident that walking pilgrims' understanding of temples transcend the standard meaning which non-walking or static persons' attribute to them. For many walking pilgrims, the temples maintain their traditional sacred nature. Pilgrims largely ignored the temples; however, they performed the obligatory rituals. Moreton (2001: 81) writes that walking the pilgrimage is much safer today than in the past, but the danger is still present. Ancient gravestones with the simple heading "*henro*" remind the pilgrims of those who went before them. The death of pilgrims while on their journey was common up until the early nineteenth century. Many travels to memorialise relatives who have passed away. The spirits of the recently deceased are said to be unstable in Japan, even dangerous, and the pilgrimage can help to calm them (Jopson, 2016).

The pilgrims chant Heart Sutra twice at every temple throughout the pilgrimage. According to Kukai, the Heart Sutra distills the entire essence of Buddhist teaching

into fourteen lines. The core of the sutra is a meditation on emptiness: "No form, no feeling. No thought, no volition, no consciousness . . . No world of sight. No world of consciousness. No ignorance and no end to ignorance. No old age and death and no end to old age and death. No suffering, no craving, no extinction. No path, no wisdom, no attainment. Indeed, there is nothing to be attained." These words become ritual footfalls on the pilgrim's pathway to "no path," building spiritual muscles when our physical muscles flagged (Christy, 2016).

6.5 Empathy and *Settai* costume

The Buddha said that life is suffering. Empathy for another person's pain is probably the most accessible form of identification, and it is likely a considerable force behind the phenomenon of outsiders helping pilgrims. It also forms the foundation for how walking pilgrims relate to one another. Whether one pilgrim meets another once or travels the entire trip side by side in companionship, the physical and mental hardships of the shared experience provide an accessible medium of communication. Whether or not the pilgrim attributes sacred or recreational value to these experiences, a connection can still have made. Though one may lean more towards thinking of him or herself as a *yamabushi* and the other may be a recreational athlete in understanding these hardships, both have symbolically and experientially endured the challenges contained in the role of a pilgrim.

The pilgrim's material world consists of the possessions on his or her back, things consumed, and gifts and services received. This latter category affects the pilgrim's relationship to the former two throughout the pilgrimage. Through experiencing hardship, these gifts and services begin to take on profound meaning for pilgrims. The Japanese use several words for charitable giving, including *segyo*, *fuse*, *kanjin*, *kisha*, and *hosha* (Moreton 2001: 20). However, the act of giving to the pilgrims of Shikoku is singularly identified by the term *settai*. Shikoku is one of the few remaining places where pilgrims are offered *settai* (alms). By accepting *settai*, pilgrims become a human landscape of reciprocity and karmic potential – a field of merit known as *fukuden*. This custom developed from belief in Kōbō Daishi as a deified figure and continues to be manifested in many forms today.

The giver is thought to receive merit from Kōbō Daishi for his or her acts of kindness. The *Settai* offering is a fundamental aspect of the *Henro* Pilgrim experience. Offerings and services of all kinds are given to the Pilgrim as he makes his way along the island paths. Meals, snacks and cups of tea, items

necessary to the *Henro* such as incense sticks and candles and coins, and places to spend the night are donated by the kind people of Shikoku. It is not something that should be taken lightly by the *henro*. When offered *settai*, you are under an obligation to accept. People offer you *settai* because you are a *henro* and, for whatever particular reason, that means something to them. You, as a *henro*, are a symbol to the giver, and in giving you something, they are giving something to your pilgrimage. They are giving something to the pilgrimage in general. By giving you *settai*, they are, in some way, now participating in your pilgrimage. Moreover, through your pilgrimage, they are participating in the pilgrimage itself. You, the receiver, are only an intermediary in their vicarious participation in your journey and the pilgrimage itself.

Though some attribute the origins of *settai* to the Buddhist tradition of giving alms to monks, Tekada Akira, an author of many Japanese books on the Shikoku Pilgrimage, proposes a different theory. He states the exchange originated from the offerings made to Japanese shrines throughout the pilgrimage route. Through the legends of Kōbō Daishi, this motive has come to be associated with gaining merit. Sachiko Kanai suggests: "People in the old days were not very charitable, but as the Daishi legends grew and wishing to accumulate merit for oneself, one's family and relatives or even one's community, the custom of *settai* grew and became important in the Daishi belief" (Kanai 1980: 25; in Moreton 2001: 27).

Numerous historical materials from the Tokugawa period provide evidence of hospitality of local's authority and people to the pilgrims. Many sick pilgrims were repatriated to their provinces with the assistance of local authorities. The term *mum okuri* ねす送り was often used to designate the escort of a person from village to village. When Shikoku authorities helped a sick pilgrim return home or bury a dead one, it is conceivable that they were following the rules for ordinary travellers that the Tokugawa bakufu had established since the end of the seventeenth century (Kouame, 1997).

6.6 Temple stay and participation in rituals

Temple stay and participation in the rituals and prayers could be essential parts of pilgrimage. Through this, the pilgrims may fulfil their wishes, gain an inner feeling of something missing in their life, experience Japanese culture, self-improvement and personal satisfaction, broader understanding of Buddhism, improve mental and personal health, and more. Figuring out where to stay the night is one of the most challenging parts of planning as a walking pilgrim in Shikoku. Some temples offer ryokan-style lodging to the public within temple

grounds and are similarly priced to minshuku or ryokan, but not all provide meal options. The meals are vegetarian (*shōjin ryōri*), and visitors may sometimes be invited to watch or partake in daily prayers and rituals. Pilgrims may book ahead of time by calling the temple or simply as a temple staff when they receive their stamp, although the latter might be risky at famous temples. Prayers and rituals are scheduled mainly in the morning and evening in the temples, and Pilgrims can attend services and chant with the priests before breakfast. Sitting on the floor with legs folded, pilgrims would have been mesmerised by the triangular saffron figures sitting motionlessly before an altar crowded with candles, flowers, and swirling incense. The basso drone of the Heart Sutra, its staccato syllables chanted like the rosary of an endless chain of causation, creates a hypnotic euphoria.

Iwamotoji temple in Kochi is one of the sacred temples in the Shikoku 88 temple pilgrimage. This particular site has opened its doors to anyone who wants to participate in the *homa-mandala* (fire altar) ritual common within Shingon Buddhism. Pilgrims can spend the night in the temple guest house and awaken early morning hours for the ceremony. A Buddhist priest will perform the ritual where fragrant wood or grains are offered to the burning fire to deliver a prayer to *Vessavaṇa*, one of the four heavenly kings. Often the fire can grow up to 1 meter in height and is meant to purify the mind and body of worldly desires. The ceremony includes copying a Buddhist sutra (prayer) in Japanese or English.

6.7 Pilgrimage season and travel options

The temperature and weather of mid-March to May in spring and October to November in autumn are most suitable for undertaking the pilgrimage in Shikoku. In the normal cycle of yearly weather, there is much rain during the rainy season of June and July. In August and September, the weather is stable, but this is the season when occasional typhoons will make their appearance. Reader (2005: 1) writes a Japanese saying that Shikoku comes alive with the sound of pilgrims' bells in spring. The trail itself is marked by the ubiquitous red arrows and other populating markers. There are many ways to make the Shikoku pilgrimages. Everyone has their circumstances, such as walking, paying capacity, time availability, and interest.

The most outstanding merit is acquired by walking the route, a commitment that can take up to two months, but most modern pilgrims adopt some combination of walking and vehicular transport – buses, trains, taxis, cars, bicycles, helicopters, and even skateboards. Without the time or money to complete the entire circuit, Pilgrims may walk one of several miniature versions of the pilgrimage, made

from stones or soil from each of the eighty-eight sites. Other pilgrims complete the pilgrimage on multiple visits. Regardless of transportation, pilgrimage is a physical and spiritual marathon (Christy, 2016).

6.8 Shikoku and Lumbini connection

Both Lumbini and Shikoku are world-famous Buddhist pilgrimage destinations. Lumbini hallowed by the birth of the Sakyamuni Buddha, one of the most important pilgrimage destinations globally, lies in the southwestern plains of Nepal. Nepal is honoured to have Lumbini (Kunwar & Ghimire, 2012), the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the greatest, the brightest, and the light of peace and indeed the most illustrious son of Nepal (Guruge, 1998: 26). The newly born Prince Siddhartha (who later distinguished as Lord Buddha) took his seven steps and uttered an epoch-making message to the suffering humanity in Lumbini. The famous Indian Maurya Emperor Asoka, guided by his spiritual teacher Upagupta made a pilgrimage visit to this holy site in 249 B.C. Famous Chinese pilgrims Tseng Tsai (4th century), Fa-Hsien (5th century) and Hiuen-Tsang (7th century) visited Lumbini for pilgrimage and study about Buddhism and spirituality. The visits of the Chinese travellers brought more records out about Lumbini. Hiuen Tsang's records are the most informative of all, for he travelled to see Lumbini and other Buddhist sites and maintained a detailed description of his travel.

The Buddha mentioned four places that a pious disciple should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence. One is Lumbini, where the Tathagata (the Buddha) was born. The importance of Lumbini is so great that the Buddha himself advised his followers to make the pilgrimage to Lumbini. Lord Buddha explained the significance of Lumbini in words: "Lumbini should be (visited) seen by a person of devotion, and which would cause awareness and apprehension of the nature of impermanence" because Lumbini is the leading Buddhist pilgrimage site in relationship to the other sacred sites. Many scholars designate Lumbini as *an unmatched spiritual destination of the Buddhist world. The visitors are overwhelmed with the sanctity and serenity of Lumbini. The spiritual feeling of being at the holy birthplace of the Enlightened One nurtures devotion and faith in their mind and fills their heart with purity, compassion and wisdom (Ghimire, 2016).*

Spirituality and peace are the fundamental aspects of Buddhism, and they should exist at Lumbini. The Lumbini region encompasses dozens of Buddhist-spiritual sites and houses beautiful flora and fauna, which can evoke spirituality, serenity and satisfaction in the mind of visitors. Lumbini, the world heritage site with

outstanding universal value, is important to be one of the world's top-class spiritual and pilgrimage destinations. Pilgrims and visitors come to Lumbini and express their religious and spiritual sentiments in various ways, often linked to their diverse cultures. They come to meditate, chant, and beat on drums, offer gold leaves, offer coins, incense or milk. They all come with the expectations of peace and harmony (UNESCO, 2013:11). Today, Buddhists from all over the world and other travellers are interested in Nepal's ancient history and culture (Ghimire, 2017).

Lumbini is one of the most sacred places in the world. Over many centuries people have developed visions of where the Buddha was born. When U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, visited Nepal in 1967, he proposed the development of Lumbini into a major centre of pilgrimage. Kenzo Tange of Japan was assigned to create the Lumbini Master Plan. The U.N. and Government approved the plan of Nepal in 1978. The overall intent of the plan is to reinforce the symbolic entity of the Lumbini Garden in its simplicity and clarity. The plan's detail was based on Buddhist symbolism of geometric shapes and the path to enlightenment. Rai (2010:19) writes that the continuous prayers, meditation, and worship in monasteries help them increase faith and purify their mind. After having a certain level of mental clarity, devotion, and faith, they are now eligible to enter the Sacred Garden, hallowed by the birth of the Buddha, to realise the apprehensive nature of impermanence.

Moreover, one can feel the Buddha's blessing within the tranquillity. Emperor Asoka erected Asoka Pillar in Lumbini that carries the authentic and living history of the birthplace of Sakyamuni Buddha. The Asoka Pillar with epigraphic evidence testifies Lumbini as the birthplace of the Buddha (Ghimire, 2019).

6.9 Motives for pilgrimage in Shikoku

Instead, this inquiry with experts' respondents understands the situation and strategies for pilgrimage tourism development. In the question "why people go on a pilgrimage?" the experts have different opinions. One of the Shikoku experts says pilgrimage is for self-reflection, in memory of someone who has passed away, to experience a "spiritual" journey, to pray for something, as part of a religious ritual or teaching, to get closer to God or some other holy being or saint (E-5). E (6) explains pilgrimage is a pilgrimage, whether it is Buddhist, Christian, Judaic, Islamic, or anything else. Pilgrimage is a time and place set aside for an inner spiritual quest, a time and place to look for answers to spiritual questions the pilgrim may have brought to the trail with them. Most non-Japanese walkers visit

Shikoku for the physical walk-in rural Japan rather than for spiritual reasons. Overall, though, I think people walk pilgrimage in general because of an inner feeling of something missing in their life.

Given that "religion" is not as crucial as "spirituality" for many people, a pilgrimage gives them a place where they can focus on their inner spiritual quest while at the same time enjoying the outdoors. Likewise, other expert respondents opined as people are missing something in their lives and seek spiritual help and self-understanding (E-3). Pilgrims visit to reflect on one's life, memorials for ancestors and get stamped on a book from temples (E-2), and pilgrimages help with a troubled mind/spirit (E-1). In another question, "What do you think about Buddhist pilgrimage?", (E-5) explains, 'It is often in a circle with no beginning and end. It matches the Buddhist teaching of life and reincarnation. Christian pilgrimage routes often seem to be a straight line, which matches the Christian teaching of the afterlife that one will go up to heaven or down to hell. I prefer the Buddhist way of thinking and their form of pilgrimages'. People are seeking more spiritual things these days (E-3). Pilgrimage is the process to reflect on mental stress (E-1).

6.10 Influencing factors to visit Shikoku

Pilgrims/tourists revisit a pilgrimage site if it is interesting for them or are not satisfied with one visit or want to do more rituals. There could be various factors influencing pilgrims/tourist to visit Shikoku. The most influencing factors were religious belief and respect for the Kōbō Daishi , honour and memory of the ancestors, rituals, Buddhism and Japanese culture, books, other publications, friends, yoga teachers, travel agents, websites, advertisements, natural beauty and outdoors-hiking. A pilgrim was influenced with a previous visit (p-21); another pilgrim found a picture of Shikoku pilgrimage on Santiago's way (p-15), met a Japanese pilgrim who told about Shikoku while walking Camino, love walking pilgrimages and spirituality (p-78), the voice of the Buddha, respect to the Buddha and will walk for 12 years (p-30). Some others wanted family happiness and better health, relief from work stress and retirement from work.

6.11 Expectation from Shikoku pilgrimage

'Why do people go and what do they expect from Shikoku pilgrimage?' is one of the critical questions. One of the respondents (E-3) noted that people have different expectations and want to gain something from the Shikoku pilgrimage. Expert respondents opined as Shikoku has a unique culture that is very precious. People go

on pilgrimage to reflect on themselves, clear their mind and spirit (E-4), worldly benefits and memorial for ancestors (E-2) and recall old memories, relief from sickness and death of parents (E-1). There seems to be a "pilgrimage boom", and people want to try a not well-known pilgrimage. Some want to experience a lengthy, religious journey in Japan and interact with the Japanese in a countryside setting (E-5). As per a pilgrim respondent, it changed her as a person, from the generosity of the people, the peacefulness of the surroundings and the profoundly surreal way of life that she could have never imagined. It was an experience of a lifetime that she still thinks about today (p-107). Others expectations were to experience the unique culture of Shikoku, improve mental health, spiritual development, interaction and involvement with locals, experience Japanese culture, enjoy reconnect with nature, self-improvement and personal satisfaction, a sense of achievement, discover things about oneself, deep emotional feelings, a chance to escape everyday life, broader understanding of Buddhism, more insight into cultural, religious beliefs in Japan, spiritual comfort, improve mental and personal health, develop a positive attitude, fulfilment of a wish and more. P (41) was expecting time for reflection upon her life so far. She wanted to be on her own and get rid of the past's bad things. She expected to come to terms with her mother's disease. It had changed her life, way of looking at people, and she became a Buddhist. She learned to bear lousy weather and still stay positive. Some others expected to learn about history, culture and Buddhism, tourism and health, gifts and food sold at local shops, sleep outside and remain healthy.

7. Suggestions to improve Shikoku pilgrimage/tourism

A growing local movement is pushing to have the Shikoku pilgrimage route recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its cultural importance to Japan. As one of the few circular pilgrimages in the world, the end of the 88 temples journey is also beginning, but no matter your intentions for doing all or some of the pilgrimage, one thing is sure: you leave Shikoku a different person. Overall, hundreds of thousands of people are engaged in the pilgrimage annually on foot, by automobiles, bicycles or other means in Shikoku. The government and tourist organisations should promote the Shikoku pilgrimage in Japan and worldwide.

In a question, 'What are the weaknesses to develop pilgrimage tourism?' (E-5) explains there needs a balance between "pilgrimage" and "tourism." If things become too touristy then the religious or spiritual side of the pilgrimage disappears. Some foreigners have mentioned that they do not want to see the Shikoku pilgrimage turn into a Disneyland type of place. E (6) emphasises that temples and the temple association need to make a concerted effort to make the

walk easier for walking non-Japanese pilgrims. Lodging issues, places to sit out of the rain at temples. I believe that there is a general lack of concern for non-Japanese pilgrims. The temples want the numbers to increase. However, no one is trying to make life easier for them. Likewise, it should be the spiritual journey to fulfil pilgrims' desires (E-3), many travel agencies are interested only in profit (E-2). There is no official policy; most development is from individual interest (E-3), young people have insufficient knowledge (E-1). (E-5) further recommends having a "Cultural or Historical Centre" for the Shikoku pilgrimage near Temple 1. The Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau has done a fantastic job improving "pilgrimage tourism" along the Kumano Kodo. Similar work needs to be done about the Shikoku pilgrimage. Many of the respondents recommended various strategies to improve Shikoku pilgrimage/tourism. A few of the recommendations are as follows:

1. English Language materials, multi-lingual signs, English speakers at hotels and temples, Timetables at the bus and train stops and stations;
2. Shikoku must be listed in world heritage sites;
3. Temple staff needs to be friendly/talk freely with the pilgrims;
4. Younger people should be educated to appreciate nature & Kobo Daishi;
5. Lodging should be cheaper, flexible with arrival time, bath time, meals making it more accessible to walking pilgrims with cheaper hotels like Santiago's way...;
6. Many of the lodge owners are older people; who will run those in future? It should be continued;
7. Improve the roads, road to some temples are narrow and difficult to walk, improve the public transportation system to all the temples;
8. More public toilets, fix roads and infrastructures, safe and clean town and roads;
9. Luggage store in Tokushima for foreigners, more access to DATA and PHONE sim for short term;
10. Organised tourism and pilgrimage is different things, do not forget the meaning and purpose of pilgrimage and just go with economics;
11. Advertise Shikoku, provide subsidies for local businesses and products;

12. Better maintenance and preservation of temples will enhance the future of tourism and pilgrimages; and
13. However, few voices are against commercialisation and bringing UNESCO something in Shikoku that could burn Shikoku out with rampant tourism. Do not kill the 'pilgrimage' spirit, culture and tradition. Reduce garbage and improve services to cater for a more significant number of pilgrims/tourists in the days to come.

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New Religious Movements: New Panorama of Japanese Religion

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Abstract– New religions have been especially appealing to people in a rapidly changing society. Conservative and traditional moral values are often articulated in such a changing society. In a changing Japanese society, conservative and traditional moral values are often articulated; modes of hopes, understanding and meaning are provided; meaningful teaching and promises of salvation for people are offered. It should be mentioned that the various Japanese traditional ways of religious practices, such as magical healing, spirit possessions, and the gaining of worldly benefits, are the standard features of almost all of the New Religious Movements in Japan. This article contributes to the discussion on the background of New Religious Movements, the meaning of NMRs, their standard features, and persistent themes from a Japanese perspective. Thus, this paper proceeds by presenting some of the different socio-historical contexts based on which new religious movements emerged. It is an attempt of the current paper that can help us explain and evaluate the socio-historical facts of the rise of New Religious Movements in Japan. In addition, the current paper presents how New Religious Movements demonstrate their magnetic attraction for the ordinary people in Japan and create a new panorama providing the opportunity of being treated in a particular way. Finally, as for implication, this paper gives importance to some crucial issues that focus on further study of religion in Japan from different approaches in future that cannot be avoided the significant problems of democratisation, secularisation, and atheism in Japan.

Keywords New Religious Movements · Persistent Themes · New Panorama · Democratisation · Secularisation · Organisational development · Multiplicity of religions ·

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1. Introduction

The Japanese terms Shinko Shukyo, Newly Risen Religions and Shin Shukyo, New Religions (Straelen, 1963) have widely been used to refer to religious movements since the early nineteenth century (Ellwood, 1985). Although the term "Japanese religion" was first coined by Anesaki Masaharu (as cited in Isomae et al., 2005), in an exclusive sense, in the early twentieth century, it was later introduced for English readers into Japanese society. The birth and growth of Japanese New Religions have been linked to a significant change in Japanese modernisation. Analysing one of the common approaches of the new religious movement, they especially catch attention to people in a rapidly changing society (McGuire, 1997). In such a changing society, conservative and traditional moral values are often articulated; modes of hopes, understanding and meaning are provided; meaningful teaching and promises of salvation for people are offered. It should be mentioned that the various Japanese traditional ways of religious practices, such as magical healing, spirit possessions, and the gaining of worldly benefits, are the standard features of almost all of the New Religious Movements in Japan. Historically, cultural changes of the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate and the first two decades of the Meiji Restoration played a pivotal role in founding enormous new religious movements. The entities are known as "new religions" (Straelen, 1963a). These new movements are reported to have originated and developed centred around the elements of the two previously prevalent religious traditions in modern Japan, such as Shinto and Buddhism (Kitagawa, 1936). The primary grounds of the rapid rise of the new religions are based on the intense need for vigour and traditional forms of the earlier religions.

It is noteworthy that the earlier history of new religions in Japan includes Tenrikyo and Konkokyo (Aria Ken, 1972). A harmonious synthesis of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism occurred between World Wars I and II. The triad development of gedatsu-kai, omoto-kyo, and Hito-no-Michi, the Perfect Liberty Church, may be considered. Further progress of these earlier groups occurred in the post-war period. Later on, other new groups include Tensho Kotai Jingo-kyo and Johrei.

It should be noted that Tensho Kotai Jingo-kyo is popularly also known as Odoru Shu-kyo-the Dancing Religion, while although Johrei had its roots in Christianity, it has been a well-organised self-help movement. Historically, Japan has suffered an enormous tragedy with the extreme catastrophic belief system, AUM Shinrikyo- the most notorious Japanese New Religious Movement founded in 1987 by Matsumoto Chizuo. Their teachings were primarily based on a mixture of

Asian traditions and Christian apocalypticism that is linked to the Prophecies of Nostradamus (Rivadossi, 2021). It is a matter of great regret that after it was accused of launching a nerve gas attack on a Tokyo subway, the group brought disgrace upon new religions and the country. It is important to note that the soka-gakkai-Value Creation Society has been identified as the most successful Japanese New Religious Movements. Moreover, probably for some scholars, Soka Gakkai has remained unique among the Japanese new religions (Watanabe et al., 2008). This paper intends to systematically provide an overview or summary of the whole field and systematically explore the meaning, general characterisation, socio-historical settings, and social functions of Japanese new religions.

2. Meaning of New Religious Movements

The essential thing is that all new faiths are considered New religious movements over the past several centuries. Several shared traits characterise new religious movements. Thus, based on the fundamental character of new religious groups, these religions are called "new" because their response is very innovative to the modern world's conditions, although the newest religious movements are closely associated with the ancient traditions. There is another account of the organisational development of new religions. Thus, they are also called "countercultural" movements. There are two significant criteria on which new religions can still be distinguished from the mainstream religions. First, the members of the mainstream religions consider new religions to be alternatives to the mainline religions. Second, they are regarded as alternatives to the mainline religions (Ellwood, 1985a).

Another necessary point is that these movements are often highly eclectic, pluralistic, and syncretistic (McFarland, 1960, cited in Straelen, 1963b). In addition, another significant nature of these religions is that they freely incorporate doctrines and practices with diverse sources into their belief systems. A new religious movement is usually founded by a charismatic and sometimes highly authoritarian leader who is thought to have extraordinary powers or insights. Most of the new religious movements are highly organised. It is apparent that in light of their often self-proclaimed "alternative" or "outsider" (Ellwood, 1985b) position, these groups often make great demands on the loyalty and commitment of their followers. New religious movements generally emerge to meet particular needs of the members where more traditional religious organisations or modern secularism cannot satisfy many people. According to McGuire (1997a), this situation may happen only because of a diverse, colourful, strange, or exotic assortment of religious groups. He argues that the types of

collectivises characteristic of emerging religious movements are related to their cultural setting.

More crucial is the argument that the emergence of new groups and sects are found to have given importance to personal spirituality so that many people feel a need to link to their values and beliefs in the face of insecurity and uncertainty. The collective, communal approaches of sects and cults, as some authors argue, can offer support and a feeling of belonging. For example, middle-class youths are not marginalised from society in a materialistic sense, but they may feel isolated emotionally and spiritually. Notably, the followers believe that membership in a group can help them overcome their feeling of alienation (Anthony, 2006). In order to understand New Religious Movements, we can categorise them into three broad movements: world-affirming, world-rejecting and world-accommodating movements. Each movement is centred on the relationship of the individual group to the larger social world. They are briefly explained as follows:

1. Movements in the first group are reportedly more similar to self-help or therapy groups than traditional religious groups. They often run without rituals, churches and formal theologies and focus on followers' spiritual well-being.
2. Movements in the second group are highly critical of the occult or spiritual world because they often demand the attention of the members so that they go through significant lifestyle changes that tend to be inclusive.
3. The third type of movement are most like traditional religions. They are usually inclined to prioritise inner religious life over more worldly concerns (Anthony, 2006a).

3. Historical background of New Religious Movements of Japan

Historically, the first religious group was categorised as a new religious movement in Japan in 1802 with Nyoraikyo. Kino Isson, a peasant woman (1756-1826) of Nagoya, founded the Nyoraikyo movement (Reid, 1980). The dynamic potential of Kino's religious message was the promises of redemption and mitigation at a time of social instability when the Japanese feudal system collapsed, and the newly emerging market economy challenged the livelihoods of many people (Aria Ken, 1972a). As for Ian Reader (2009), a new category of religious affiliation has appeared in Japan that is not directly related to the traditional customs, practices, and beliefs of Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, and

household gods from the first half of the nineteenth century onward. He argues that the emergence of several new religious movements (shin shaky) offers alternative belief systems and belonging modes. Some other religious movements appeared in Japan to render the populace support and hope of salvation. The chronological list of new religions includes Kurozumikyō, konkōkyō and Tenrikō, all of which represent basic concepts and incorporate the elements of the Shinto tradition. Other new religious movements emerged along similar lines throughout the nineteenth century (Baffelli, 2016). These include Oomoto and Honmon Butsuryūshū, a Nichiren Buddhist movement.

It is interesting to find in writing on the history of the emergence of Japanese new religions that new religions have been found to have continued to rise and develop throughout the modern period. It is important to note that the rise and development of new religions have been tremendously stricken in different periods. Opinions are left on whether this "crisis" would be considered wrong as the primary cause of new religions' growth. However, there is no mistaking the sense of pessimism, for various features of these movements have caught the attention of the members of different social backgrounds (McFarland, 1960a). It is very much the process from the Japanese social context that social unrest has been a supportive cause in reinforcing the charisma of new religions in situations of uncertainty during modern Japanese history (Morton, 1994). Thus, for example, the agitation and social unrest of nineteenth-century Japan were helpful to the emergence of the new religious movements. The image of those new religious movements reaffirmed 1.) old values, centered on familial and societal duty, and promised 2.) the hope of personal happiness and world transformation, in which equalities and justices are said to be ensured (McFarland, 1960b).

Having thus established the application of new religions in Japan, the 1920s and 1930s saw another pace of new religious movements and their growth with rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. As a result, many people migrated to the cities for their survival. They especially left the economically depressed rural areas to the cities to join the rapidly growing urban masses. The same periods saw a further flow of new movement that was reconciled to handle the affairs of the poverty-stricken urban people and offer them hope for fundamental changes in spiritual and secular life in a world of uncertainty in the Tokyo region. The new religions of these periods drew inspiration, especially from the Nichiren Buddhist tradition. These include Reiyūkai, Risshō Kōseikai and Sōka Gakkai. At the same time, all of these indeed developed into mass movements. Furthermore, other movements that developed in this period include Sekai Kyūseikyō and Seichō no Ie all of which appeared in syncretic Shinto orientations. In addition to these

movements, several new religions developed out of the esoteric Buddhist tradition, such as Gedatsukai (Bunce, 1973 & Baffelli, 2016a). It also had a close association with the Shingon Daigo Buddhist sect. The truth is that the latter part of the 1940s saw the next step in the development of new religions in Japan. (Yusa, 2002). At this point, Nakano Tsuyoshi (2012) describes this period as the development of new religious movements that led to the establishment of the Union of New Religious Organizations. We can examine the significance of emerging religious movements in contemporary Japanese society in this context. The last three decades prior to World War Two have witnessed the emergence of several new religious movements and the rebirth and transformation of some old ones.

A related reaction under the constitution of 1947 takes the status of new religions. A crucial historical change was brought under the control of the occupation government. As a result, state control of religion was eliminated, and freedom of worship and association were guaranteed. Thus, as long as they operated as per the law, religious organisations were no longer extended to state intervention and control and could freely have porosities (Smart, 1989). Nevertheless, such new freedoms have created some favourable conditions for the birth and growth of new movements in Japanese society. This parallel creates other conditions in Japanese society that include an enormous growth in the urban population and stimulates proliferation among the new religions such as Tensho Kotai Jingucho and Soka Gakkai. Soka Gakkai, for example, was growing exponentially during the 1950s and early 1960s. Particular attention should be given that the period (mentioned above) roughly from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s saw a rise in the numbers of movements and their adherents that was widely regarded as the "rush hour of the gods" (McFarland, 1967). As a result, it is identified that with the rise of the new religious movements in the Japanese panorama, a large number of followers of those new religions were equally increased. At the same time, the reality was that the established traditions, including Buddhism, lost many adherents to the new religions (Shimazono, 1979).

Furthermore, for several years, another growth of new religion happened in the late 1970s and through the 1980s, when Japanese academics and journalists across the country began to speak of a new flow of new religions that they referred to as "Shin Shukyo", meaning "new religions" (Straelen, 1963c). New religious movements in this period include Shinnyoen, Mahikari, Agonshu, Byakko Shinkokai and Kofuku no Kagaku and the now infamous Aum Shinrikyo (Reader, 1988).

Historically, the later twentieth century movements are seen as solid settings in which many new religions were influenced. It should be mentioned that they were said to have mainly focused on the end of the Western calendar millennium as a critical time. In addition, these movements gave some suggestions: (1) As this materialistic world was leading to failure at the end of the century, changes in spiritual life were necessary to save the world from catastrophe; (2) For this feeling of a coming disaster and the need for spiritual transformation, it was significant in stimulating interest in this wave of new religions; and (3) Thereby, they helped reinforce their messages of world salvation and renewal (Leitner, 1999). Having established the vital place which new religions occupied in Japanese society in this period helped people handle such unease by concurrently showing a prompt recognition of modernism and involvement with and strong support of themes of tradition and a reaffirmation of Japanese identity and cultural values.

However, at the turn of the twentieth century, the new religions underwent a crucial situation, which has paused their rise and development. Aum Shinrikyo, for example, first in the history of Japan in the late twentieth century (in 1995), was guilty of an attempt to commit a serious crime. They were accused of carrying out a nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway. They carried out violent attacks that swept over internal turbulence and external conflicts. It is a matter of great regret that it was reportedly the only new religious group in Japan involved with such catastrophic violence (Metraux, 1995). However, the effect of this violent perspective is very marked in the history of new religions in Japan. A public backlash against this violent attack has finally affected religious groups across Japan, especially the new religions and their members. As a result of this attack, all organised religions, i.e., new and old in Japan, lost considerable support. Finally, a small number of new religions that have been unfortunately involved with scandals and court cases have also smashed the reputation of new religions in social life.

4. General characterization of New Religious Movements in Japan

Bunce (1973a) has characterised New Religious Movements into five groups: monotheistic, henotheistic, Shinto-Polytheistic, messianic, and those of definite Chinese influence. However, for him, except for the monotheistic group, the deities of the other four groups are varied:

1. As a whole, they have a robust Shinto flavour, although Buddhist and Christian influences are not entirely lacking.

2. A very few of them reveal the influence of Confucianism and Chinese dualism. As most founders were still alive, the sects did not use scriptures. Some, however, used the writings of their founders for ethical instruction. The messianic sects have no documents whatsoever since their founders claim their followers' using oracles.
3. Each group has an independent ecclesiastical organisation and religious propaganda.
4. Most of them employ religious teachers and maintain meeting places. Some of the smaller sects conduct their meetings in the homes of their founders.
5. Most new religious groups conduct services at appointed times and perform the prayer, exhortation, and ritualistic adoration.
6. Faith healing is a dominant interest in several of the groups.
7. Many of them also publish literature for the ethical and religious guidance of the people. However, no sect is adequately revealed through its publications.

It is, therefore, tough to determine the exact nature of their doctrines, but apparently, their chief concerns are the promotion of morality and the establishment of peace and prosperity in the world (Kitagawa, 1936a). Bunce's typology of new groups gives a general characterisation for the current purposes, which also match more or less the following features made by H. Byron Earhart.

According to Earhart (1982), one of the distinctive characteristics of New Religions is that a living person usually serves as either organiser or founder. In most cases, the energy for organising a religion came from the charismatic quality of the founder. New Religions offered their members some objects of faith that appealed to them to worship. They usually promise the solution to all problems through faith and worship. New Religions practised faith healing and promised solutions to personal crises such as financial and material difficulties. Finally, he argued that no religion is entirely new at any time or place; instead, for him, new religions are all-new variations from the old traditions. As for evidence, he has shown that Japan's New Religions indeed demonstrate continuity with earlier Japanese traditions. Finally, he concludes that "Although each new religion constitutes a distinctivetradition, deserving individual attention, some general

features characterise all of the new religions in contrast to the older, established religions" (1969: 237).

5. New religions and social functions in Japan

The emergence of new religious movements can be assigned to the tremendous social transformation, even social crisis, linked to modernisation. We can, with care, mention that a relatively large number of new religious movements have emerged in the last two centuries in Japan (Anesaki, 1930). At this point, it should be mentioned that many of the new religions emerging were found in Nara and Kyoto regions. In addition, to illustrate the multiplicity of religion in Japan, Offner has noted an Oomotokyo's view that was perhaps most pronounced by Nao Deguchi, the founder of this movement: "Japan is the way of the gods, but foreign countries are the lands of the wild beasts, ruled by devils, where only the strong survive" (Offner, 1963: 255).

A helpful clue is identified to the formation of Japan through new religions. The post-war new religions helped strengthen social bonds compared to the first-wave new religious groups. The postwar groups acted as a religiously and socially link between rural and urban Japanese society. They provided an entirely new way to perform the necessary memorial rites for the ancestors and became the locus of community for many people in the dispassionate urban setting. A compelling means of strengthening social bond, groups from these first two waves of new religions often shared a common worldview and ethic; offered an essentially optimistic view of the world and humanity; and emphasised values that comprise a shared ethic of everyday life – the attempts how to live honestly and sincerely, in harmony with one's family, neighbours, and co-workers. However, the third-wave groups ultimately failed to continue their teachings on the world view and values and found a break with the traditional views. (Kitagawa, 1936b).

A considerable range of the functions of Japanese new religions result from (1) how they handle the members in dealing with their problems on the social and individual levels; (2) they live their lives meaningfully and find mundane and spiritual development; and (3) they maintain the social mechanism of consolidation and the improvement of society and the behavioural practices, goals and habits. While not altogether rejecting the proposition that one of the abilities of new religions is identified that ordinary people can promptly understand their messages. They have done, so teachings are easily understood and are not presented in the complex philosophical and terminological orders (Kitagawa, 1936c). Still, we may add that the essential new shapes of Japanese religion make

the World renew on this level of ideas. On the whole, new religious movements have excessively and often without question expressed criticisms of the current material existence of society. In these movements, a distinction is found where they are socially conservative, different from the conventional faiths and self-transformative as a necessary step to world renewal (Bunce, 1973b).

6. Conclusion

It is noteworthy that religion is an essential element of society. As society is changeable, religion also changes or develops itself in response to society (McGuire, 1997b). Religious culture varies for different social, political, cultural, philosophical, and geographical backgrounds. Even in a single state or area, the multiplicity of religions appears for many reasons. Moreover, there is no exception with Japan, which has experienced a very long history of religions and culture from time immemorial. New Religious Movements in Japan arose as the latest reformation of Japanese thoughts and culture. Though the New Religions are mainly derived from traditional religions, they created a new shape to Japanese religion in modernity. Besides, the word, as we have understood, "new" of "new religions" also indicates something newness itself. Current surveys indicate that though seventy to eighty per cent of the Japanese people do not regard themselves as believers of any religion, this does not mean that religion has become unnecessary lost its importance in contemporary Japan (Aria Ken, 1972b). In modern mass society, increasing numbers of people feel frustrated by the lack of human fellowship. Isolated amid thousands, they suffer untold anxieties and are threatened by a loss of identity. In this situation, the traditional religions have been of no help. However, this is precisely the situation in which the new religions demonstrate their magnetic attraction for the ordinary people, New Religious Movements in Japan create a new panorama providing the opportunity of being treated in a particular way. In addition to this reality, this is also true that religious affiliation with any traditional religions in Japanese society is considered an alien notion (Religion in Japan, n.d.). Thus, to this end, we need to mention Joseph J. Spae's view regarding some crucial issues that focus on studying religion in Japan from different approaches in the future. As Spae considers:

Finally, we cannot avoid the significant problems of Japan's democratisation, secularisation, and atheism. Partial answers to these problems may be obtained from studying religious values. Granted that such a study has to be made, its interpretation would remain a very hazardous undertaking as long as the basic

concept of God and man saw from the socio-historical, socio-psychological and theological points of view have not been thoroughly examined (Spae, 1971:21).

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Paradoxes in Zen Buddhism and Zen Koan: Its Relevance and Spiritual Significance

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Abstract– Zen Buddhism has developed into a unique form of religion in Japan and has influenced its culture, people and society to a large extent. Rinzai Zen emphasises solving a Koan and practising Zazen under the guidance of a master for inner awakening, which helps to know the ultimate truth of life. Koan also helps solve the mysteries of life, which is full of paradoxes and unwanted happenings. This paper aims to analyse some of the Zen koans and stories, and an attempt is made to find out the hidden spiritual meanings, which may be helpful for people in modern times.

According to Suzuki, "when a disciple solves the given Koan, half of Zen is understood by him". A Zen master helps the disciple by giving him first-hand experience of life by creating various unavoidable situations and using symbols, gestures or sometimes remaining silent. This paper highlights the importance of Zen meditation in our life, and a regular practice solves the paradoxes, conflict and suffering, which exist due to ignorance and exists not after knowing the ultimate truth, guiding us towards a stress-free successful life.

Keywords Koan · Zazen · Paradox · Intuitive knowledge · Spiritual meaning ·

1. Introduction

Zen Buddhism reached Japan in the Sixth century before travelling to China and India. The origin of *Zen* in India has the following story. Suzuki (1994, p. 167) explains that *Gautama Buddha* was preaching to his disciples. While explaining, he did not give a verbal discourse but lifted a bouquet before his disciples. Buddha did not utter a single word out of his mouth. Nobody understood the

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symbolic gesture of Buddha. However, *Mahakashyapa*, one of the disciples listening to the discourse, quietly smiled at the master as if he had fully comprehended the symbolic gesture of gifting flowers. At this, Buddha said, 'I hand over to you the most precious treasure, spiritual and transcendental, at this moment, O venerable *Mahakashyapa*.¹ It is said that this was the origin of *Zen*.

The paradox lies in the origin of Zen Buddhism because it originated in such a way that only Gautama Buddha and his disciple Mahakashyapa knew the meaning of the exchange of flowers between them. Others could not comprehend the message, and the hidden spiritual message was transferred symbolically.

After Mahakashyapa, it was *Bodhi-dharma* who went to China with a special message of Buddha. When Bodhidharma, a monk from the southern part of India, went to China, he remained silent for many years and finally conveyed that truth is beyond scriptures. However, he emphasised that Buddha-hood can be attained by experiencing truth while looking into nature. His message is summarised in the following given lines. Suzuki (1994, p. 176) explains that

*“A special transmission outside the scriptures;
No dependence upon words and letters;
Direct pointing at the soul of man;
Seeing into one's nature and the attainment of Buddha-hood.”²*

There are three sects of *Zen* Buddhism in Japan: Rinzai-sect, Soto-sect and Obaku-sect. In Rinzai-sect, mainly '*Zazen*³' and '*Koan*⁴' are practised. On the other hand, the Soto-sect relies solely on *Zazen*.

According to Suzuki, there are three kinds of knowledge. The first is gained from reading or listening to some sources. The bulk of our knowledge is of this kind wherein self-experience is not involved. The second kind of knowledge is gained from scientific observation and experiment, analysis and speculation. Here, personal experience is involved to some extent, and it has a strong foundation than the first knowledge. An intuitive mode of understanding attains the third kind of knowledge, which depends on personal experience.⁵

¹ Suzuki. D.T. *Essays in Zen Buddhism, First Series*. p. 167.

² Ibid. p. 176.

³ *Zazen* is a type of meditation during which a person sits cross-legged in the lotus posture to meditate quietly.

⁴ While *Koan* is a question / riddle used in order to test whether the disciple has reached the state of *Kensho* (i.e. to look into one's original nature) or not?

⁵ Suzuki. D. T. *Zen and Japanese culture*. p. 22.

A koan is a riddle that is nearly impossible to solve. The formation of a Koan is done to make it challenging to solve. There are symbols and gestures which produces the same result as a Koan. It can be wind passing through the trees, or it can be the chirping sound of a bird. It can happen in a single moment, but it requires a great understanding.

It is well known that all mystics are fond of paradoxes to express their views. For example, God is real, yet its presence is like an infinite emptiness. He is at once all being and no-being. The divinity is outside in all forms of objects and also within us. This paradoxicality is found in nature itself. A great silence arises in us once we understand this paradoxicality, i.e. day and night, summer and winter, good and evil exist together. Zen says we are both – Good and bad together. Therefore, we must accept both. Acceptance helps in transformation. In this same acceptance, we are neither good nor bad.

Zen Koan and stories are designed so that it helps to develop intuitive knowledge in a disciple, which finally helps in the awakening of the mind leading to Satori. Zen aims to attain Satori. *Zen* masters teach their disciples through their experiences. *Koans* are challenging to understand logically. The whole purpose of the *Koan* is to help disciples to reach the state of no mind. *Koan* always contains contradictions to common knowledge.

There is a famous Haiku of Basho, which says:

The old pond
A frog jumps in
Plop

It is said that Basho was sitting by the side of an old pond, and with the sound of the frog jumping into the old pond, he became enlightened. The sound of "plop" was enough to make him awake. The modern mind finds it difficult to comprehend how one can become enlightened by listening only a few lines? While the master is speaking, the disciple is not only listening through his ears. However, the disciple is listening with his total being; every single unit is involved. The disciple listens with ears and is also listening with his eyes, looking at the master; he also feels the master. The moment one forgets himself and only pure and silent consciousness remains, one has reached the home. Enlightenment is such a thing, hidden within us, and it is an inner awakening. Reading, writing and studying Zen is different from experiencing Zen.

2. Literature review

The book titled "*Zen Dust. The history of the Koan and Koan Study in Rinzai (Lin-chi) Zen*"⁶ talked about the origin of *Koan*, its history and its usage in Rinzai tradition. Further, the author talks about the *Zen* master of Koonji, who discusses the system of *Koan* study in Rinzai *Zen*. Hakuin Ekaku popularised this *Koan* system to awaken reality among students leading to *Satori*⁷.

Suzuki says, "The development of *Koan* system is very special for *Zen* Buddhism, and is a unique contribution that *Zen* has made to the humankind. When the importance of the *Koan* is understood, we may say that more than half of *Zen* is understood." There are said to be at least 1700 *Koans*. However, according to Suzuki, "for all practical purposes, less than ten, or even less than five, or just one may be sufficient to open one's mind to realise the ultimate truth of *Zen*."⁸

Christmas Humphries rightly points out that the moment one knows the truth, all dualities disappear. The concept of 'I' or 'You' is because of our ignorance, and there is no distinction between 'I' and 'You'. The barrier is our ego.

Why do I not see it for myself?

Because of your egoist notion

"Do you see it?"

"So long as you have dualist views, saying 'I do not' and 'you do', and so on, your eyes are bedimmed by this relativity view."

"When there is neither 'I' nor 'you', can one see it?"

"When there is neither 'I' nor 'you', who wants to see?"⁹

Paradox will assume new meaning and be the intuition's language when the intellectual currency has failed. As Blyth points out, the use of paradox "does not spring from a desire to mystify the hearers or oneself, and it arises from the inability of language to say two things at once." Moreover, again, "paradoxes are the bright banners of the reality of the mind."¹⁰

⁶ Kitagawa. Joseph M. "*The Journal of Asian Studies*", Vol. 27, No. 1, (Nov., 1967), p. 150-151, accessed May 18, 2016.

⁷ 'Satori' means enlightenment. (Buddhist term) – Source: Online Japanese dictionary (Jsho).

⁸ Christmas Humphries. *Zen Buddhism*. p. 132

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 62

¹⁰ *Zen in English Literature*. p. 180, 193

3. Methodology

The paper interprets Zen Koan and stories to show elements of paradox and mysticism. Five examples of Zen koans and stories are selected and discussed for these purposes. The underlying spiritual meaning and relevance in the modern world are thoroughly discussed.

4. Discussion

Zen Koans have been discussed to show their relevance in modern times and their spiritual significance.

The first example is discussed below:

Does a Dog have the "mind of Buddha" or not?"

One of the famous *ZenKoans* states, "One day a priest asked master Joshuu: "Does a Dog have the "mind of Buddha" or not?"¹¹

Joshuu answered: "mu"¹².

Koan is a unique method to Zen. One of the most significant contributions of Zen to the world is Koan. Different masters have used many different methods. For example, Vipassana is a method Gautama Buddha has contributed to the world. Similarly, whirling meditation is a method developed by Sufi mystics.

Sufi uses the word 'Hoo', which is just a sound with no meaning attached to it. In the same way, the Japanese Zen master uses the word "mu", which means nothing, and it is just a sound. So, what will happen if we start meditating on 'mu'? Nothing will happen because 'mu' means nothing. It is the secret of using this word. It takes us into the nothingness, which is the sole purpose behind the usage of such words. Therefore, it disappears when the mind gets fed up with the whole exercise of nonsense. Moreover, that is the moment of entering into reality.

The master did not directly explain the abovementioned story but said 'mu'. It does not mean that the master is not aware of the answer. By not giving any explanation, the master tries to provoke the disciple to search for the answer on his own. Certain things cannot be taught but can be learned through one's own experiences.

The second example is: One hand clapping.

¹¹ Mills, Elizabeth. 英語対訳で読む禅入門。 p. 109

¹² 'Mu' 『無』 means nothing, naught, nil and zero.

A disciple has to meditate upon the sound of one hand clapping. Two hands will be needed to produce sound. Sound cannot be produced unless two things collide with each other. There cannot be any sound with one hand; it looks logically impossible. Now, that has to be meditated upon.

Disciples are asked to meditate on the koan "sound of one hand clapping". Now, one hand cannot clap. Logically it is not possible. It does not matter how long we try to solve it; we will not find the solution. It is not that we will solve if we think longer.

Moreover, the truth lies in the more we think, the more it will become difficult to solve. The Koan has been formulated so that our minds cannot think about the answer. However, we must think about the Koan to search for the answer, and it is a paradox.

Moreover, one day something unusual happened with the disciple. The disciple did not give any answer. Every day he had been replying to something and was being hit by the master— so it was rational to his mind. He had been thinking that whatever he was saying was wrong. That is why the master hit him. Today, he has not said anything; still, master hits him. It was irrational. Zen is beyond the comprehension of our logical mind.

The disciple knows it is impossible, but the master knows it is possible. The disciple meditates on the sound of one hand tirelessly. Moreover, he knows it is impossible, but the master says, "Go on meditating". However, one day the mind comes to its ultimate peak. Suddenly all is silence. The question has disappeared, the questioner has disappeared, the mind is no more there, no thought is there, and all is silence. The Koan is solved.

The Third example is:

Tozan asked, "How long have you been living on this mountain?"
Ryuzan said, "The passing of seasons and years cannot reach it."¹³

Tozan is asking a simple question. However, the master is always ready for the disciple and is not going to waste a single moment, which can be helpful for the disciple in the attainment of truth. The conversation between Tozan and Ryuzan seems challenging to comprehend. The master uses the opportunity to make the disciple understand that there is a place within ourselves, where no one can reach except the self. Usually, people who aim for spiritual growth find a place in the

¹³ Osho. Zen- the diamond thunderbolt. p. 254

mountains, where silence is easy to meditate. The master says, "Find a place where nothing can reach". It is a Koan.

The conversation seems to be going in a different direction. The answer does not match with the question asked. It is one of the methods to provoke a disciple to make things understand. The question asked belonged to worldly affairs. However, the master is taking this opportunity to signal the larger truths of life. Time is not a measurement for inner consciousness. Time is for outside measurement. In our deepest being, there is no time. We have always been here, and we will always remain here. We have never moved in our deepest core of being. Everything else moves around us except consciousness. It is beyond time, so the passing of years and seasons do not reach.

The Fourth Example is:

Asked Tozan, "What is the guest within the host?"
Ryuzan said, "White clouds cover the blue mountain."
Tozan then asked, "What is the host within the host?"
Ryuzan said, "He never goes out of the door."
Tozan then asked, "How far apart are the host and guest?"
Ryuzan said, "Waves on a river."¹⁴

The host and the guest are so close together that they cannot be separated. It seems to be separated, just like waves in the ocean. Waves and the ocean are not two separate things. It is one thing having two forms. The water quality in the waves and the ocean remains the same. Quality-wise, both are the same. This division is created by the mind, which separates things. The moment we use our "no-mind" state to seek the answer, things become clear. We must meditate over it. This contemplation helps us find the authentic "Buddha" available as a guest to be searched for. When we search it, we know that there are not two things, but only one. Finally, all the contradictions and paradoxes get solved.

The fifth example is:

A great Zen master, Sosan, was asked to explain the ultimate teaching of the Buddha.
He answered, "You won't understand it until you have it."¹⁵

¹⁴ Osho. *Zen - the diamond thunderbolt*. p. 262-63

¹⁵ Osho. *The path of Love: on the songs of the Indian mystic Kabir*. p. 182

It is a great statement. However, the paradox lies in the fact that what is the point in understanding it? When we have it, there is no need to understand it. When we do not have it, we cannot understand it, and the need exists to understand it. It is a paradox; we can understand it only when we have it. There is no way to understand it before this; only the experience will explain it.

5. Result and findings

The Zen master says, "Truth can be expressed without speaking and keeping silent."¹⁶ Now, this is impossible; this is contradictory. "Words can express truth", then it naturally means "Truth can be expressed by silence." However, the master says, "Words cannot express truth, and truth cannot be expressed by silence." Moreover, the master says, "Truth can be expressed by words too, and it can be expressed by silence too." Now it is confusing. Now it is illogical; it is absurd.

How can this be true that that truth can be expressed without speaking and without keeping silent? One can do only one; either one can speak it or keep silent. What the disciple is asking and the master is saying is not related at all, but in a non-mind way, and one has to meditate over it.

Master says, "When the spring came, how the birds sang among the blossoms." They were expressing truth, but they were silent when the spring was not there, and when the spring came, they sang, they celebrated. So, the first thing is "when the spring is there." He means when we have the spring in our heart when the proper maturity has happened when our fruit is ripe, that is what Satori is, the spring of inner heart. Birds do not go to school to learn how to sing. The spring has come. When the spring comes, the spring starts singing in them.

It can be said both in words and in silence. Whenever it is said, there is word and silence together. However, the word is not a mere word; the Zen master says it cannot be said through words. Moreover, the silence is not dead silence; that is why the master says it cannot be said through silence, either. The word speaks through silence, the silence speaks through the word; and when silence and word meet, there is a song. Then there is a celebration.

6. Conclusion

The whole existence is in great harmony. The birds are singing, and the trees are silent. However, there is no confusion. Everything seems to be intertwined and

¹⁶ Osho. *The first principle talks on Zen*. p. 164

interlinked. Birds cannot exist without trees, and the trees cannot exist without the birds, either. The birds sing for the trees, and the trees are silent for the birds, and they are connected. It is the first thing we must never forget that all divisions are false because existence is one.

Whenever we come across a contradiction, we must observe. There is bound to be something of great significance. We shall never avoid contradictions because life exists through the tension of contradiction. So, whenever we come across a contradiction, we are very close to the source of life. We must never forget it. Existence comprehends all contradictions. It is in such harmony that even contradictions do not contradict. The night and the day, the summer and the winter, and the life and death are contradictory. However, they co-exist. Somehow everything fits together. The absurdities bring more fun into life.

Zen says that there is no God, and there is nothing to search for. Friedrich Nietzsche also says, "there is no God, God is dead, and man is free". God is not separate from us, and it is our potentiality; therefore, it is part and parcel of our being.

The whole message of all these paradoxical statements is to "relax". There is no need to search, and there is no need to ask. How is it possible? However, it happens for sure. By just "relaxing", we reach our central being where deep silence prevails, and all contradictions disappear on their own. It is the defining moment of finding the truth, i.e. Satori.

Zen conveys meaning in an irrelevant manner. It is just like, if a person is sleeping and saying something nonsense, that person wakes up. It is how Zen functions. Zen has developed such methods, which are very helpful to wake up someone who has fallen asleep for a long time. Zen helps to provide awareness. Zen possesses elements of mystery and wonder.

The whole emphasis of Zen koan is to bring our consciousness to the present moment. It is done using various methods. Sometimes master gives a koan to solve, and sometimes the unpredictable behaviour of the master helps a disciple to reach the present moment. In the present moment, there is no thought, and there is no past or future. It is the moment when a disciple can take a courageous jump and reach the state of "no-mind".

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Origins of the Universe in Shintoism: An Ancient Religion of Japan

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Abstract– Almost all religions have ideas and beliefs about the origin of the universe. Some religious traditions, such as Hinduism (*Sanatana Dharma*) and Buddhism, see the universe as eternal, without beginning or end. The first books of the Bible contain an account of the creation of the universe, which some Christian faiths hold to be allegorical, and others regard as an expression of literal fact. Other religious traditions have other views, but each attempts to explain this ultimate question of where we came from and how it occurred. In this context, the Shinto people believe that the universe was created for them by their gods. The creation myth of Shintoism contains some general traits of the religion itself and is also influenced by some aspects of ancient Japanese culture. The mythical story also played an influential role in designing the religion's fundamental beliefs. In the Shinto creation myth, we will find various components; as power politics, division of labour, dimensions of relation, the importance of purification. Therefore, having some knowledge of Shintoism's basic features will help understand the influence of the myth of the origin of the universe. Shintoism or Shinto is the indigenous religious belief and practice of Japan. It is a polytheistic and animistic faith and involves the worship of *kami* or spirits. Shinto has no founder or sacred canon. It has no official scripture compared to the Bible in Christianity or the Quran in Islam. However, it has few highly venerated groups of texts, which are very ancient and preserve a record of the myths on the origin of ancient Japan's universe and religious life. The *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters), the *Nihon Shoki* (Continuing Chronicles of Japan), the *Rokkkushi* (Six national Histories) and the *Jinno Shotoki* (a study of Shinto and Japanese politics and history) may be considered the sacred books of Shinto. According to the Agency for Cultural Affairs statistics, in 1982, there were 79,700 shrines (places of worship), and the number of Shinto believers stands at 74,660,000. In this paper, an attempt has been made

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to describe the Shinto's general description and mainly focus on its mythology or stories of origins of the universe and the sources are mainly based on relevant secondary books and articles.

Keywords Shintoism · Hinduism · Buddhism · Japan's ancient religion ·

1. Shintoism: An Introduction

This religion, native of Japan, is called *Kami-no-Michi*. It is best known by its Chinese name, Shinto or Shen-Tao. The word Shinto (way of Gods) was adopted from the Chinese words: "Shin"; meaning gods or spirits (originally from the Chinese word "Shen") and "to", meaning a philosophical path or study (originally from the Chinese word "tao"). It originated in prehistoric times and has long played an essential role in Japanese society. The word Shinto means "the way of kami", Kami means 'mystical', 'superior' or 'divine'. It came into use to distinguish indigenous Japanese beliefs from Buddhism, introduced into Japan in the 6th century (Hinnels, 1992: 12). Shinto is no longer Japan's official state religion. However, it is considered the native religion in Japan. Unlike most other religions, Shinto has no real founder, written scriptures, no body of religious laws, dogmas and only a very loosely-organised priesthood.

2. Forms of Shinto

Shinto exists in four primary forms or traditions, which are as follows:

- A. **Shrine Shinto (Jinja Shinto):** Shrine Shinto is the largest Shinto group. It consists principally worship of the *Kami* at the local shrine. It was the original form of religion, and its roots date back into pre-history. Until World War II, it was closely aligned with State Shinto, and the Emperor of Japan was worshipped as a living God. Almost all Shrines in Japan are members of *Jinjo Honech*, the association of Shinto Shrines. It was played an essential role in the unification and solidarity of the nation and rural society. It currently includes about 80,000 shrines as members (www.religioustolerance.org/shinto).The association urges followers of Shinto to follow the following:
 - i) To be grateful for the blessing of *Kami* and the benefits of the ancestors and to be diligent in the observance of the Shinto rites, applying oneself to them with sincerity, brightness and purity of heart.

- ii) To be helpful to others and in the world at large through deeds of service without through rewards and to seek the advancement of the world as one whose life mediates the will of *Kami*.
- iii) To bind oneself with others in harmonious acknowledgement of the will of the emperor, praying that the country may flourish and that other peoples too may live in peace and prosperity" (www.jinja.or.jp).

B. Sect Shinto (Shuha Shinto): Sect Shinto is also known as Shuha Shinto. It consists of 13 sects that were individuals founded. Each sect has its own beliefs and doctrines. Most emphasise the worship of their central deity; some follow a near monotheistic religion. Generally, these groups do not have shrines but instead use churches as their centres of religious activity.

C. Folk Shinto (Minzoku Shinto): Japanese folk belief derives from three sources. The first is the survival of ancient traditions such as divination, magic, shamanic, rituals, folk medicines. Second are those elements forming the base structure of Shinto; cosmos of abstinence and purification and the cult of house and field deities. Third are those fragments of foreign religions such as Taoism, Buddhism, and medieval Catholicism or combined elements. Folk Shinto mainly refers to the second of these three. It is not a separate Shinto group and has no formal central organisation and creed. It is seen in local rural practices and rituals, small images by the side of the road, agricultural rituals practised by individual families. A rural community will often select a layperson annually responsible for worshipping the local deity.

D. Imperial Shinto (Koshitsu Shinto): This Shinto involves rituals performed by the emperor, whom the Japanese Constitution defines as the "symbols of the state and the unity of the people". The most important ritual is Niinamesai (harvest festival/National Ceremony), which offers the deities the first fruits of each year's grain harvest. Male and female clergy (Shoten and Nai-Shotan) assist the emperor in performing these rites.

The above four forms of Shinto are closely linked. Shinto is a tolerant religion that accepts the validity of other religions, and it is common for a believer to pay respects to other religions, practices and objects of worship.

3. Evolution of Shintoism

Shinto has been a significant part of Japanese life and culture throughout the country's history, and it has shared its spiritual, cultural and political roles with Buddhism and Confucianism. Few books of lore and history provide stories and background to many Shinto beliefs; such as the *Kajiki* (Record and Ancient Matters); the foundation to written Shinto history, the *Shoku Nihongi* (Continuing Chronicles of Japan), the *Rikkokushi* (six National Histories) and the *Jinno Shotoki* (study of Shinto and Japanese political and history) written in the 14th century.

Ancient Shinto was polytheistic. In ancient Japan, the word *kami* was used adjectively to mean something mysterious, supernatural and sacred. They also believed in *kami* of ideas such as growth, creation and judgment. Though each clan made the tutelary *kami* the core of its unity, such *kami* were not necessarily the ancestral deities of the clan. Sometimes *kami* of nature and *kami* of ideas were regarded as their tutelary *kami*. In Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) classic definition, *kami* means- "anything whatsoever that is outside the ordinary, that possesses superior power or that is awe-inspiring." The simple objects of the folk cult, the deities of the imperial house, and those revered by the great clans are all considered *kami*.

According to Tsunetsugu and Naochi, the ancient *kami* may be divided into three categories:

- (i) natural deities (deities dwelling in natural objects or natural phenomena or deities that control these objects or phenomena),
- (ii) anthropomorphic deities (heroes, great personages and deified ancestors), and
- (iii) conceptual deities (deities who serve an ideal or symbolise an abstract power) (Eliade, 1984: 281).

It is thought that ancient Japanese believed that the souls of their deceased near relatives would become spirits after a period of purification and would merge with the ancestors to return to their dwellings in life once a year or so in specific seasons bestowing happiness and protection. However, the most crucial *kami* was the *ujigami* or clan deity, believed to protect the life and social functions of the most basic social unit of the period, the *uji*, or clan. In all cases, the *ujigami* was not an ancestral deity but rather a deity intimately related to the clan's mode of

subsistence or its geographical or political situation. Nevertheless, a tendency to conceive of the *ujigami* as an ancestor grew more vigorous later.

Two different views of the world were present in ancient Shinto. One was the three-dimensional view in which the plain of High Heaven (Takama no Hara, the world of the gods), Middle Land (Nakatsukuni, the present world) and the Hades (Yomi no Kuni, the world after death). All of these were arranged in vertical order. This vertical structure is the same type seen in Mongolian and North Asian shamanistic culture. It was this vertical cosmology that played the dominant role in Japanese myths. The other view was two-dimensional, one in which this world and the perceptual country (Tokyo, a romantic place for beyond the sea) existed in horizontal order. This type of cosmology belongs to the Southeast Asian type. The three-dimensional world views become the representative view observed in Japanese myths, and the two-dimensional view of the world was dominant among the populace.

Under the influence of continental culture, ancient Shinto began to develop in many ways. One such development is the consciousness that came about through Chinese culture or philosophy. At that time, Confucianism was a vital part of any philosophy. It was introduced to Japan around the 5th century (Eliade, 1984: 283). In the 7th century, it had spread among the people together with Chinese Taoism and Yin-yang (harmony of two elemental forces of nature) philosophy (Encyclopaedia of Britannica, v.27, 1997: 279). All of these stimulated the development of Shinto ethical teachings. Shinto developed as a national cult with the gradual centralisation of political power. Myths of various clans were combined and recognised into Pan-Japanese mythology with Imperial Household as its centre. The kami of the Imperial Household and the tutelary kami of powerful clans became the kami of the whole nation and people, and offerings were made by the state every year. Such practices were systematised supposedly around the start of the Taika-era reforms in 645. By the beginning of the 10th century, about 3,000 shrines throughout Japan received state offerings. As the central government's power declined, however, the system ceased to be effective, and after the 13th century, only a limited number of important shrines continued to receive the Imperial offerings. After the Meiji restoration in 1868, the old system was revived.

4. Beliefs and doctrines in Shintoism

4.1 Concept of the sacred

Shinto's core is the belief in the profound and mysterious power (*Musubi*) and in the truthful way or will (*Mokoto*) of Kami. The essence of Kami¹² cannot be fully explained in words. However, devoted followers can understand Kami through faith and usually recognise various kami in polytheistic form. The word 'kami' has several meanings. It can be referring to spirits of nature-mountains, rivers, trees, rocks, and ocean- all conceived to be alive and sacred. It may also refer to the deity dwelling in these natural objects or supernatural power. The Kami spirit may be incarnate in specific individuals- brave, unusual or gifted and these individuals may be deified as living Kami. The Kami may deliver its oracles through shamanic mediums, considered the 'children of the spirit' or Miko.

The great scholar Motoori Norinaga (1750-1801) summarised the meanings of kami in these words:

Speaking in general, it may be said that kami signifies, in the first place, the heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the kami spirits of the shrines where they are worshipped. It is hardly necessary to say that it includes human beings, including such objects as birds, trees, plants, seas, mountains, and so forth. In ancient usage, anything outside the ordinary, which possessed superior power, or awe-inspiring was called Kami. Eminence here does not refer merely to the superior of nobility, goodness or meritorious deeds. If extraordinary and dreadful, Evils and mysterious things are called Kami. It is needless to say that among human beings who are called kami, the successive generations of sacred emperors are all included (Yusa, 2002: 20).

Parishioners of a shrine believe in their tutelary kami as the source of human life and existence. Each kami has a divine personality and responds to sincere prayers. The Kami also reveals and *makoto* to people and guides them to live following it. In traditional Japanese thought, truth manifests itself in emperor existence and transforms infinite varieties in time and space. *Makoto* is not an abstract ideology, and it can be recognised in the encounter between man and Kami.

4.2 The nature of humanity

In Shinto, it is commonly said that "man is kami's child". First, this means that man has received his life from kami and that the life of human beings is sacred. Second, kami's blessing makes our daily life and work possible. An individual

must revere the fundamental human rights of everyone (regardless of race and citizenship) as well as his own. This respect for human rights is the theoretical foundation of the Shinto peace movement. The concept of original sin is not found in Shinto.

On the contrary, man is considered to have a primarily divine nature. However, this sacred nature is seldom revealed in man. Purification is considered symbolically to remove the dust and impurities covering one's inner mind.

4.3 Purification and attitudes towards life

Shinto advocates *makoto no kokoro* (the heart of truth) or *magokoro* (the true heart) as the best attitude toward life. These are generally translated as 'sincerely', 'purity of heart' or 'upper lessons'. These attitudes reveal kami's truthfulness and humanity. In common-sense terms, they refer to the attitude of doing one's best in work and human relations, but the most fundamental source of these attitudes is the awareness of the divine. In other words, the source lies in prayer. Shinto ethics does not ignore loyalty, filial piety, love, faithfulness and other individual moral values. However, it is held that all these virtues are different names for actions springing from *magokoro*. In ancient Shinto, *magokoro* was also described as a bright and pure mind, or 'bright, pure, upright and sincere mind'. Succinctly, it referred to a condition of having a purity of mind. As is held now and as was held in the past, achieving this condition by purifying the heart and mind is an absolute prerequisite for coming with kami and receiving kami's blessing.

4.4 Rites and rituals

There are no weekly religious services in Shinto. Some people occasionally visit shrines and churches to calm and strengthen themselves through prayer. Others may go to the shrines on the 1st and 15th of each month and on the occasions of rites or festivals, which take place several times a year, but devotees or believers visit the shrine daily.

4.5 Festival, prayer and worship

Shinto Shrine: Shinto shrines are the place of worship and dwelling of the *Kami* (Refers to the Gods of Shintoism. There are many *Kami*, and can be anything from a human being to a magnificent mountain). A public shrine is a building or place that functions as a conduit for *Kami*. A fewer number of shrines are also

natural places called *Mori*. The most common *mori* are sacred groves of trees, mountains, or waterfalls. All shrines are open to public art sometimes or throughout the year. People visit shrines to respect the *Kami* or pray for good fortune. Shrines are also visited during special events such as New Year, *setsuu*, *shichigosan* and other festivals. Newborn babies are traditionally brought to a shrine a few days after birth, and many couples hold their wedding ceremonies there.

Shinto shrine festivals (Littleton, 2002: 302) include annual and occasional festivals, divided into grand, middle-sized and minor festivals. Among the grand festivals are spring festivals (*Haru-Matsuri*; prayer for a good harvest and the success of various industries), fall festivals (Shinto thanksgiving), annual festivals (*Rei-sai*) and divine processions (*Shinko-sai*). Among the occasional festivals are the ceremony of shrine dedication and shrine removal.

The general plans of grand festivals are as follows:

Purification: Typically, the purification rites are held at a corner of the shrine precincts right before participants enter the shrine. At other times, the rites are performed inside the shrine before a ceremony.

Adoration: Bowing to the altar is a practice that the chief priest and the congregation participate in.

Open the inner sanctuary door: The chief priest carries out this.

Presentations of food offering: Food offerings are then presented and usually consist of sake wine, rice cakes, fish, seaweed, vegetables, salt, water, and rice. It is important to note that animal meat is not offered because it is forbidden to shed blood within sacred surroundings. It was customary for Shintoists to offer cooked food to *Kami*, but the present-day see uncooked food mainly used.

Prayer: The chief priest gives prayers (*norito*) on ancient Shinto prayers. These prayers were compiled in the early 10th century. Today, the old beliefs are still embraced, where spoken words carry a strong spiritual influence.

Sacred music and dance: Sacred music and dance play an essential role during Shinto rituals.

General Offering: Worshipers offer the symbolic gift of a small branch of the *Sakaki* sacred tree before the *kami*'s altar and pray.

Taking offering away: After the public offering has passed, the offerings are then taken away.

Shutting the door of the inner sanctuary: The door to the inner sanctuary is closed shut.

Adoration: This is a greeting to the kami at the end of the ceremony.

Feast: Also known as natural, a short sermon or speech is delivered before the feast, which has become a widespread practice amongst Shintoists since World War II.

5. Myths or stories of the origins of universe in Shintoism

The Japanese mythology relevant to the study of Shinto is recorded in classical sources from the Nara and early Heian periods. It is often called *Kiki* mythology (*Kiki shinwa*) and refers to the chapters on the age of the *kami* in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Alternatively, it is also described as "classical mythology" to include myths from other classical sources, such as the *Fudoki* and the *Kogo shūi*. Moreover, much importance was attached to the mythological tradition recorded in the Sendai kuji hongu in the medieval period. Except for the ancient *norito* (prayers) recorded in Book- 8 of the *Engishiki* (927), the myths recorded in these classical works were not read out as part of ritual performances. This *norito* were recited during rituals and referred implicitly to the *Kiki* mythology. The *Kiki* myths retain clear traces of religious concepts from the agricultural society that existed during the process of political integration in the Yayoi period (when, for example, the Yamatai state arose) and the birth of the Japanese state as a coalition of clans under the "Great Kings" of the Kofun period. In these periods, society moved away from the relatively egalitarian, loosely-structured society of the Palaeolithic and Jomon periods, when the economy had been based on hunting and gathering. In all sectors of society, we can note signs of the concentration of power, social stratification, and specialised division of labour. It was against this background that religious specialists emerged, and with this development, deities gained individual characteristics, and these deities were integrated into a pantheon. The *Kiki* myths were developed in the course of this process. In their final form, they reflect traditional religious ideas and conceptions of deities and the political intention of the Yamato court to mobilise the authority of the deities for the legitimisation of court rule in the sixth and seventh centuries. It explains why *Kiki* mythology gives much attention to the relationships between deities and their achievements and why the myths are placed within a clear overall structure both temporally and spatially. Such structuring of myth is characteristic of highly developed culture and society.

Kiki mythology contains a great variety of heterogeneous elements, some motifs that had spread from other regions and others reflections of historical events and popular practices, allowing for multiple interpretations of any particular point. Moreover, there were differing objectives in the compilation of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, and as a result, the works display numerous differences. It needs to focus on these two sources' characteristics rather than their differences. It needs to address the connections between myths and ritual practice and an overview of some religious ideas and conceptions of deities that formed the background to *Kiki* mythology.

The creation of the Islands of Japan: In the beginning, when the universe was created from the pre-existing chaos, several kami ('gods' in this context) appeared spontaneously. Their relationships gave rise to a brother and sister, Izanagi and Izanami. Izanagi means 'he who invites' and Izanami means 'she who invites'. Izanagi and Izanami thrust a jewelled spear into the ocean, and the first land formed where the spear touched the water. It was the central island of Japan. Izanagi and Izanami married and discovered sexual intercourse. Their first child, Hiruko, was born deformed and later abandoned by his parents; legend says the deformity was caused because Izanami had spoken first in the sexual ritual. The couple had sexual intercourse on several other occasions, and their other offspring included the other islands of Japan and some of the kami.

The house of the dead: Izanami was severely burned during the birth of the kami of fire and died. It is the first death in the world. Izanagi was furious with sorrow and beheaded the child he blamed for his wife's death. Other kami were born from the blood of the execution. Izanagi was grief-stricken and searched for her to the underworld - Yomi, the land of the dead. When he found her, Izanami had eaten the dead fruit and might be doomed to stay in Yomi forever. Izanami made Izanagi promise not to look at her but to give her time to consult with the underworld rulers to see if they would let her return to the land of the living. After a while, Izanagi broke his promise and looked for her. When he found her, he saw that her body had rotted and was full of maggots. Izanagi was horrified and tried to return to the land of the living, but his wife/sister, angry and ashamed at being seen in a state of decay, pursued him so that she could force him to live with her in the underworld forever. Izanagi escaped and blocked the entrance to Yomi with a boulder so that Izanami could not follow him, forming a permanent barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead. Izanami was furious and said that every day from that moment on, she would kill 1000 people every day. Izanagi said that he would create 1500 newborn babies each day.

The power of purification: After escaping from Yomi, Izanagi was contaminated by his contact with death and was plagued with misfortune. He bathed himself thoroughly in the ocean to wash away the pollution of death. It was the first example of the *harae* purification ritual. Many new kami, including Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess) and her brother Susanoo (the kami of the wind and storms), was created during the purification ritual.

Amaterasu and Susansoo: Izanagi gave Amaterasu authority to rule the land. Susanoo was disappointed and angry. His tantrums led him to misbehave, and he was banished from heaven. Things do not end in disaster for Susanoo, who remains an essential and powerful kami. Although he has fearful powers of destruction, he is worshipped at many shrines for having the power to prevent disaster. Amaterasu was upset by the behaviour of Susanoo, and in a sulk, hid in a cave. The absence of the sun brought darkness to the world. The other kami gathered outside the cave and asked Amaterasu to come out. She, still sulking, refused. The kami had a party during which a female kami did a sexy dance outside the cave, which made them all laugh. Amaterasu came out of the cave to see what the jollity was about. The other kami grabbed her and persuaded her to take her proper place in the cosmos.

The imperial family: Interestingly, it also acknowledges the power of the female, something that is at odds with earlier parts of the myth and which does not seem to have played many parts in setting gender roles in Japanese life. Amaterasu had children and grandchildren, and in consultation with other senior kami, she decided that Japan should be ruled forever by an Imperial family.

The above mythical stories have a clear political consequence. They established the powerful Yamamoto clan as descended from the gods and ruled Japan. The rival Izumo clan is descended from Susanoo, and so it can be seen as part of the divine plan that they should have a subordinate role. The legend that the Japanese are loosely descended from the Sun Goddess is shown by the symbol of the sun on the Japanese flag.

6. Origins of the universe and influence in the Japanese society

Izanagi continued his given task after Izanami died giving birth. He commenced the first cleaning ritual washing his left eye and creating the sun goddess Amaterasu. When he washed his right eye, the moon goddess *Tsuki-Yumi* came forth. He created Susanowo, the god of the seas and the storms from his nose. He then created the first people and animals, thus concluding the creation of Earth.

The initial influence that Shintoism brought to the culture of Japan was the idea of worship—worshipping all creation as parts of a more significant being made an essential impact for Japan as it began the idea of believing or worshipping in more than one God in that particular society. The belief in Shintoism came progressively, as the religion formed itself through readings, storytelling and myths. Society adopted its characteristics, features, and qualities to it.

The early days of the religion saw Japan engage considerably as a complete environment, and it was uniting everyone together over the same convictions and appreciations that they shared. It is still currently a very independent religion, which allowed the people of Japan to find their inner spirituality and communicate their worldview. Shintoism has influenced and shaped very distinct traits and has challenged the beliefs of many other religious cultures throughout the world. More specifically, the Japan we know and all the identifications we associate with Japan have been closely impacted by Shinto's beliefs, wisdom, practices, and knowledge.

The idea of overall acceptance within Shintoism is essential to the culture of Japan. It gives the country's body a more national binding and close relationship than most nations. Most religions classify societies into specific groups, stereotypes and classes. Accepting other religions and their beliefs allows the people to fit together understandingly and positively, without religion or contrasting beliefs. This self-selective and open practice of religions are very different from most Christianity and Judaism principles. It is a contributor to why Japan is known for its peaceful atmosphere.

The culture of Japan has been dramatically affected by the fundamental beliefs and way of life of Shinto. Additionally, the belief in Kami and its nature drives people to connect with their surroundings significantly. The love and respect for Kami and their appreciation for all nature and creation compels the Japanese society's value of cleanliness, helpfulness, and complete care over the environment.

Shinto imprints the idea of optimism throughout their teachings. This embracing of positive thinking gives the place and the people a pleasant setting and allows them to be more at peace within their souls and as people within the world. The most important influence that Shintoism has had on society is peace. Through the love of the environment, care for all things within the world and the genuine acceptance and cheerful outlook of life. The Japanese people and the followers of Shintoism create a peaceful projection in and throughout their own and others' societies.

7. Conclusion

The above creation story forms the core of the Shinto faith. It explains earth's existence and components and defines many of its beliefs. This story explains the creation of their gods, an essential aspect of religion. It also serves as a foundation for their belief that their emperors were divine. This idea is the basis for many of the Japanese people's actions. The Japanese emperor's authority went unquestioned, and Kamikaze flights were considered the highest tribute one could pay to the emperor-god. The gods would reward the pilot and his family by doing such an act. In these instances, and many more, the Shinto creation story permeates the lives of its Japanese followers.

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Teaching Passive Voice of Japanese to Sri Lankan Learners

Preethi Dinusha Pinnaduwa*

Abstract– This article aims at analysing the difficulties in teaching Japanese passive voice to Sri Lankan learners in secondary schools and private institutes in two districts of Sri Lanka. It also shows the difficulties in teaching the Passive Voice of Japanese and better methods to reduce the difficulties. Based on this, a questionnaire was provided, and an interview was held among 20 Japanese language teachers as convenience sampling to collect data and find out their difficulties in teaching the Passive Voice and find suitable methods to reduce their difficulties. Once the data was collected, it was analysed using a cross-sectional analysis. The results show that some factors can strongly affect passive voice teachings, such as cultural differences, lack of practice, the complexity of Japanese passive voice, and L1 interference in L2 acquisition. Then the researcher concludes that to gain better results in teaching Japanese Passive voice, teachers need to give the learners a good knowledge of Japan's language and culture. For that, unique methods and strategies are vital, and it will help the teachers to give the learners a good knowledge of the Japanese culture and develop their linguistics and communicative competence.

Keywords Passive Voice of Japanese · Sri Lankan learners · Difficulties · Teaching · Culture of Japan ·

1. Introduction

Passive voice is the grammatical construction in which the noun working as the subject of a sentence, clause, or verb is affected by the action of a verb or being acted upon by the verb. The noun performing as the grammatical subject is generally the recipient of the action denoted by the verb instead of the agent and

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perhaps used to avoid assigning responsibility to the doer (Choomthong, 2011, Crystal, 2008).

The passive voice is commonly used in the Japanese language. It is used more frequently because it is a regular feature in formal, both in spoken and written texts, while in Sinhala, passive is used only in the written language. The Passive Voice of Japanese is included in the Sri Lankan school syllabus of foreign languages in the secondary schools (G.C.E., General Certificate of Education) Advanced level). Furthermore, the general syllabus of the courses is conducted in private institutes. Passive grammar is found in conversations, translations, and other sentences. Passive voice is one of the main competencies to be achieved by the students who learn Japanese as a foreign language. Since Japanese and Sinhala languages do not belong to the same language family, it is evident that they differ in varied grammatical aspects, including passive voice. However, the grammatical structures of both languages are similar. Both have the SOV (subject, object and verb) structure. Therefore, sometimes the teachers expect the learners to make correct sentences. However, many Japanese language teachers know from their experience that teaching the meanings, uses, and functions of the passive voice represent one of the teaching field's thorniest problems.

In this study, it is concerned to consider the teachers of secondary schools (G.C.E. Advanced level) and private institutes having significant difficulties teaching Passive Voice of Japanese to non-native learners.

The study aims to find the reasons for the difficulties the teachers face when teaching passive voice to non-native learners. Furthermore, find better methods so that the teacher would make the learner understand and make them fluent in the Passive Voice of Japanese and that way, the learners can make accurate passive sentences.

For this purpose, the data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. Interviews and questionnaires were provided among 20 Japanese language teachers as convenience sampling to collect data to discover their difficulties in teaching the Passive Voice of the Japanese language and find better methods to teach Japanese passive grammar to the learners. In the field survey, 20 participants were selected for the interviews: the teachers of secondary schools and private institutes. Teachers expressed different views of Japanese language teaching difficulties. Most of the teachers responded that student's attitudes and negative transfers in the voice grammar of Japanese, the complexity of Japanese passive Voice, L1 (First Language) interference on L2 (Second Language)

acquisition and the knowledge of the culture of Japan could strongly affect the result of learning the passive grammar of the Japanese language.

Moreover, the lack of facilities in the teaching and learning system is also a problem. Furthermore, authentic materials are essential to give the learners a good knowledge of Japanese culture. After analysing the collected data, the researcher came to a conclusion and recommendations.

2. Literature review

A considerable number of researches have been done on the passive voice and the difficulties concerning teaching passive voice of the Japanese language.

The passive voice is a construction of syntax in which the subject of a sentence denotes the recipient of the action instead of the actor, a group of verbs associated with what thing or person is acting, and what thing or person is being acted upon (Arianna, 2011).

There is an active voice in a language, and the passive voice is also used to express ideas. According to Shibatani (1985, 1988, 1998), The passive Voice is one among the foremost well-attested voice alternations within the world's languages, and its complex properties have fascinated several linguists and have advanced and challenged grammatical theories.

Several solutions and strategies are discussed to help Japanese language teachers reduce the difficulties and get the learners to excel in the voice grammar of the Japanese language.

One of the challenges that Japanese teachers face in the teacher's role is the cultural differences that often cause learners to feel disturbed. They are, however, unable to grasp numerous expressions and sentences on account of cultural variations (Abdullah, 2015).

Nida (1964) acknowledged that, as words have meanings only in the entire cultural setting, the larger cultural context is of utmost importance in understanding the meaning of any message.

Another difficulty that teachers face in teaching the voice grammar of Japanese is that all learners are Sinhalese (Sri Lankas speaking the Sinhala language), and their native language always interferes when learning the Japanese language. In other words, L1 interferes with L2 acquisition.

Taylor (1975) acknowledged that when learners learn a new language, they over-generalise second language rules, reduce syntactic redundancies, and omit those rules they have not learned before.

Carroll (1964) argues that sometimes interferences and infrequent responses from one language system will interfere with the speech in the other language and circumstances of learning a second language are like those of a native language.

Beardsmore (1982) suggests that a second language learner has many problems in speech, grammar and vocabulary of the target language due to the interference of habits of the first language. The formal components of L1 are utilised within the context of L2, leading to errors in L2 because the structures of the two languages, L1 and L2, are different.

Both Sinhala (the native language of Sri Lanka) and Japanese languages have the same grammatical structure: SOV (subject, object, and verb). As for this similarity, the teachers feel it is easy to teach Japanese and straightforward for the learners to learn the language's grammar.

The contrastive analysis hypothesis has two assumptions: the first one is that the degree of difference between the two languages shows the degree of difficulty. Moreover, the second is the degree of similarity shows the degree of simplicity (Hayati, 1998).

It is clear that if the two languages have more differences, it will be harder for learners, and if the two languages have more similarities, it will be simpler for the learners. There are many similarities between Sinhala and Japanese languages, and learners find it easy to learn the basic grammar of Japanese. Although there are similarities between the two languages, most teachers have difficulties teaching passive voice due to the complexity of the passive Voice of Japanese.

Another challenge that the Japanese teachers face in teaching the Japanese language is the learners' attitude. This attitude can be positive or negative. Some learners may not have much interest in learning the language, which is a negative attitude, while some are very interested in learning which shows a positive attitude. Gardner (1980) defines attitudes because of the entire of a man's instincts and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified topic.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) have concluded that the learners' skills to learn a second language are influenced by the mental competence or language skills and

the learners' attitudes and perceptions towards the target language. They also advocated that the attitude concept probably enhances language learning, influencing the nature of students' behaviours and beliefs towards the other language, its culture, and community, and this will identify their tendency to accumulate that language.

Many scholars have researched learning second or foreign languages; some have agreed that learning a language environment influences. It depends on teachers' plans of managing classrooms, thereby creating open discussions to instil confidence inside the students to speak language freely, and thus, improve their skills (Mustafa et al., 2014).

The role of the teacher is vital in learning a new language. Considering the use of authentic materials in teaching the Japanese language and getting a good knowledge of the culture of the language Widdowson (1990) maintained, "It has been traditionally supposed that to obtain and acquire the language easily, language presented to learners should be simplified. Recently there are recommendations that the language should be taught authenticity" (Widdowson1990).

Gao (2006) states that foreign languages teachers should raise the learner's communication capability by strengthening the learners' cultural awareness and being conscious of cultural studies within the foreign language classroom. According to Wang (2008), "teaching a new language is like teaching a new culture. It can be explained that foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers".

Motivating the learners is also very important in teaching the Japanese language. As the Passive Voice of Japanese is hard for learners to understand, authentic materials are essential to motivate the students. According to Nuttall (1996), authentic texts are proof that the language is utilised for real-life purposes by real people, and authentic texts are often motivating. The learner needs to know how the Japanese people use the language in real life.

Japanese language teachers complain that although the teacher uses the best methods, it is hard for some learners to acquire the language and makes many errors in constructing sentences, including Passive Voice.

Each learner holds his/her unique ability and capacity, differentiating them from each other. This belongs to each learner's specific skills in handling their smartness to improve the language learning process. Some researchers link

intelligence with second or foreign language learning and contend that intelligent learners can learn a second or foreign language more successfully (Brown, 2007).

Brown (2000) commented that communication is likely to occur in the classroom when: (1) a significant amount of pair work and group work is conducted; (2) authentic language input in real-life context is provided; (3) students are encouraged to supply language for genuine, meaningful communication; and (4) classroom tasks are conducted to get the learners ready for actual language use outside the classroom.

3. Method

The methodology used in this study was designed to shorten the difficulties the teachers face when teaching the Passive Voice of Japanese to foreign language learners. Moreover, this study was conducted to recognise the type of difficulties when teaching Japanese Passive voice to the secondary school (G.C.E. Advanced level) learners and adults who study the Japanese language as a foreign language in private institutes in Sri Lanka. This research used the descriptive quantitative method. Gay (2000) said that descriptive research involves collecting data to answer questions concerning the present status of the study, which is an appropriate choice when the research aims to recognise the characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories. This method was used to discover the types of difficulties teachers face when teaching the passive Voice of Japanese to the learners of native speakers. Two research tools were used to reach this objective: questionnaires and interviews.

Participants: The participants of this research were 20 teachers. Ten teachers from the secondary schools (G.C.E. Advanced level) and ten from private institutes were selected. All participants were randomly chosen from different schools and institutes from the Colombo and Gampaha districts of Sri Lanka. Five government schools, one private school and three private institutes were selected as the research sites. All the teachers have experience teaching the Japanese language for 5 to 20 years.

Furthermore, most teachers have been trained in Japan or studied in Japanese schools or universities in Japan and have a good knowledge of Japanese culture. Different schools and private institutes were chosen to represent both genders of Japanese language teachers. However, only female teachers were found as the participants. Male teachers are scarce as Japanese language teachers. These teachers are teaching the students of secondary schools who have selected the

Japanese language as one of the main three subjects for the secondary school examination (G.C.E. Advanced level examination) to fulfil their graduating requirements. Teachers of private institutes teach non-native learners who learn the Japanese language as a foreign language for many purposes, such as fulfilling university requirements, working in Japan, or going for higher studies in Japan.

Instruments and procedure: The primary method of inquiry utilised in this study was a questionnaire. It contains two sections: A and B. In Section A, items were used to collect the teachers' backgrounds. In Section, B items were used to identify the difficulties teachers face when teaching Japanese passive voice to non-native learners.

The other method was interviewing the teachers of schools and private institutes. It was used to obtain data to supplement and cross-validate the teachers. The teachers were interviewed to identify factors that influence students' errors in learning the passive voice of the Japanese language. Moreover, the interview was held to determine how teachers help the learners of secondary schools and private institutes understand the Passive Voice of the Japanese language. Before conducting the interviews, the themes were briefed on the aims and procedures of the interview sessions. The interviewees were informed that their answers would be completely confidential.

4. Difficulties in teaching passive voice of Japanese to Sri Lankan students

Teaching is a multidimensional process, and teachers should pay enough attention to all the students in the class. Teachers should know what students learn, how and why instruction influences such learning, and how the lessons might depend on this information to be more influential when teaching them in the next lesson (Berk, Hiebert, Jansen, & Morris, 2007). Moreover, similarly learning a second or a foreign language is a long and complex process because learners are required to cover all the aspects of a new language, such as the structure and culture of the new language (Brown, 2007). This study shows the difficulties teachers face when teaching the passive Voice of Japanese to the Sri Lankan learners, such as cultural differences, unfavourable transfer, L1 interference on L2 acquisition, attitude.

4.1 Cultural differences

One of the language teachers' challenges in teaching the Japanese passive voice is the cultural differences. As for the students, the culture of the language is critical

in learning a particular language. Each country has a unique culture, and it is bound with the language in multiple and complex ways.

Nida (2001) acknowledged that differences between cultures affect more serious issues than differences in language structure.

This study shows that the cultural differences of Japan and Sri Lanka cause many errors in using the passive voice. Due to these differences, the language teachers find it challenging to reduce the learners' errors when using passive voice.

One of the differences in the passive voice usage in the two countries is that the Japanese tend to use more passive voice than the Sinhala language. Japanese use passive Voice in both written and spoken languages, while the Sinhalese use passive voice sentences in academic writing but are not usually used in the spoken language. For instance,

Jap (Japanese language) Sin (Sinhala language)

- (a) (Jap) *watashi wa sensei ni homeraremashita*. – I was praised by the teacher
- (b) (Sin) *guruthumiya wisin mata prasansa karana ladi* – I was praised by the teacher

The sentence (a) can be used both in written and spoken languages, and the Japanese people use the passive voice in their day-to-day life. However, the Sri Lankans do not use the passive voice in the spoken language, and the Passive Voice is used only in the written language. The sentence sounds unnatural if the passive voice is used in the spoken language of Sinhala; they are better understood in the active voice. The sentence (b) differs when it comes to the spoken language.

- (a) (Jap) *watashi wa sensei ni homeraremashita* – I was praised by the teacher
- (b) (Sin – Spoken language) *guruthumiya mata prasansa kala*. (Active Voice)- Teacher praised me

The active voice of the above Sinhala sentence is used in the spoken language, and it is very natural and understood when the sentence is in the active voice.

Another difference in the passive voice usage in the two countries is that the Japanese usually use the passive voice to express someone's feelings, such as when someone is troubled, sad, happy. Moreover, passive shows that something

terrible has happened because of particular misfortune. The example below explains the different usage of passive in the two languages.

(a) (Jap) *watashi wa ame ni nurare mashita (passive) - I got wet by the rain.*

(b) (Sin) *mama wassata themuna (active)- I got wet by the rain*

Sentence (a) shows that I got wet by the rain and I am unhappy or troubled about the situation. However, by reading Sinhala sentence (b), the feeling of trouble is not included or felt. It gives the same meaning as the active sentence of Japanese. The situation will not be understood if the passive voice is used in the Sinhala sentence. These situations are better explained using the passive Voice in Japanese instead of the active voice.

Another difference in the passive voice usage in the two countries is that the Japanese passive voice is used to show the politeness of a sentence, and it expresses a politeness level above the normal *masu, desu* forms.

(a) Normal form: *ashita shigoto ni ikimasuka (Jap) - Are you going to work tomorrow?*

(b) Polite form: *ashita shigoto ni ikaremasuka. (Jap)*

(c) *heta wadata yanawada? (Sin)*

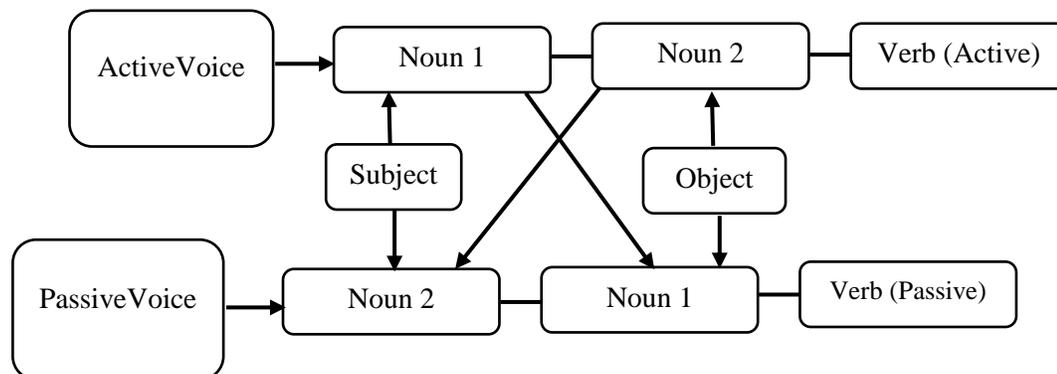
The sentence (a), (b,) and (c) give the same meaning. The sentence (a) is politer than the usual Japanese sentence (b), and the listener feels respected. However, in Sinhala (c), there is no unique way to respect those in higher positions. The usual form is used in the Sinhala language, even for people in higher positions. Although there are some unique respectable words in the Sinhala language, they are used only when speaking to the Buddhist priests in Sri Lanka.

4.2 Negative transfer

All languages have their structures. As language structure significantly impacts learning, most learners adapt their native language structure when learning a second language. In negative transfer, the learner uses the structure of the first language when constructing sentences of the second or the target language. If learners use the wrong structure, it will cause a negative transfer and ambiguity in the language. The grammatical structure of both Japanese and Sinhala languages is similar, and both have the SOV (Subject, Object, Verb) structure. However, the structure slightly differs in the passive voice of the two languages. In the Japanese language, the two nouns (subject and the object) change when an active voiced

sentence is changed into a passive voice sentence. Figure 1 below explains how the active sentence of Japanese changes into a passive sentence.

Figure 1: Syntactical difference of active and passive of Japanese



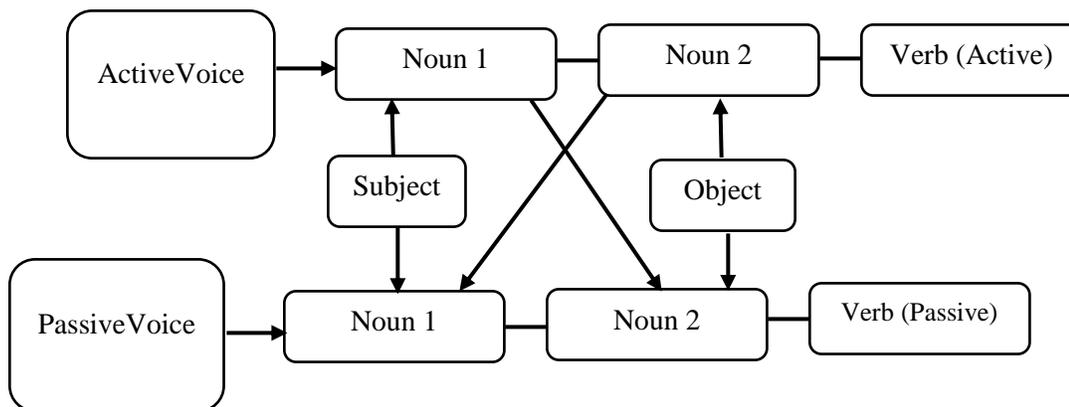
The examples below explain how the subject and the object act in Japanese's active and passive sentences.

- (a) Active: *sensei wa watashi o shikarimashita*- The teacher scolded me
- (b) Passive: *watashi wa sensei ni shikararemashita* – I was scolded by the teacher

In the above sentence, noun 1, *sensei* in the active voice sentence has changed places in the passive voice, and noun 1 *sensei* has become the object. Noun 2, *watashi* in the active voice sentence has changed places in the passive voice, and noun 2, *watashi* has become the subject of the Passive sentence.

As shown in figure 2 below, in the Sinhala language, two nouns (subject and the object) do not change places when an active voiced sentence is changed into a passive voice sentence. However, noun 1 of the active sentence (subject) changes to object, and noun 2 (object) of the active sentence becomes the subject in the passive voice sentence.

Figure 2: Syntactical difference of active and passive of Sinhala



The Sinhala active and passive voices are explained in the sentences below. It examples how the subject and the object change places and acts in the active and passive sentences.

- (a) Active: *janadhipathiamathiwurun kadawai-* The president summons ministers
- (b) Passive: *janadhipathi wisin amathiwaru kadawanu labati-* Ministers are summoned by the president

In the active sentence (a), the noun 1 (*janadhipathi*) has not changed places in the passive voice. Moreover, noun 2 (*amathiwurun*) has not changed the passive voice. However, the subject of the active voice has changed into the object, and the object (*amathiwaru*) of the active voice has changed into the subject in the passive voice sentence. However, most learners do not care about this issue, or they mistakenly do not make the changes when transferring the active voice sentence into the passive voice sentence of Japanese, and ultimately learners tend to make mistakes in the passive sentences. Therefore, the result becomes a negative transfer.

4.3 Complexity of grammar

Grammar complexity in a language will make it difficult for the learners to use and produce correct grammatical tenses and sentences. If the learner constructs ungrammatical sentences, then the delivering message will be wrong. In the passive Voice of Japanese, learners tend to make errors in the sentences they make because of grammar. The Japanese passive has three particles used in the passive voice, '*ni*', '*kara*', and '*ni yotte*'. In the Sinhala, only one preposition suffix

is used in the passive voice' *wisin'*. To make the Japanese passive sentence semantically correct, the appropriate usages of these particles are essential. Among the particles used in the Japanese passive voice, the particle '*ni*' is used when a sentence is changed from active to passive.

- (a) Active: *sensei wa watashi o yobimashita* – The teacher called me
- (b) Passive: *Watashi wa sensei ni yobaremashita*- I was called by the teacher

Sentence (a), the active sentence, has used the particle '*o*' after the object of the sentence, and the particle '*ni*' is used in the passive voice.

Not only the particle '*ni*' but When verbs do not indicate physical contact, the particle '*ni*' can be replaced with the particle '*kara*'. The example below shows when to use the particle '*kara*' in a passive voice.

- (a) Passive: *sensei ni homeraremashita*. - I was praised by the teacher

Particle '*ni*' has been used after the doer. However, the particle '*kara*' can also be replaced in this sentence instead of the particle '*ni*'.

- (a) *sensei ni/kara homeraremashita* - I was praised by the teacher

In the above sentence, the particle '*ni*' or '*kara*' is possible. However, in some sentences, the particle '*kara*' is essential to be used instead of '*ni*', or the sentence will be semantically incorrect, and the listener will not understand the meaning of the sentence correctly.

- (a) *sukejuru ga Yamada san kara bucho ni setsumei sare mashita*
The schedule was explained by Mr Yamada to the manager.

In the above sentence, there is a particle '*ni*' to get the meaning of 'to' (to the manager). If the speaker uses '*ni*' instead of '*kara*', the sentence will be incorrect.

- (a) *sukejuru ga Yamada san ni bucho ni setsumei sare mashita*.

As there are two '*ni*' particles in the same sentence, the listener will be confused and not get the sentence's correct meaning.

In the passive Voice of Japanese, the particle '*ni*' indicates a target. Where there is no target, the doer needs to be expressed, and in cases like that, the particle '*ni yotte*' is used.

- (a) *Kono shosetsu wa mori ogai ni yotte kakaremashita*

This novel was written by Mori Ogai

There are particular sentences that, if the speaker uses particle '*ni*' instead of '*ni yotte*', the sentence will be semantically incorrect, and the listener will get a wrong idea,

(a) *Kono shosetsu wa mori ogai ni kakaremashita.*

The particle '*ni*' also gives the meaning of 'to', and the listener will not understand whether the particle '*ni*' is used to give the meaning of 'to/ for' or if it is used to indicate the passive. The listener may get the wrong idea and understand, "*This novel was written for Mori Ogai*". The Japanese use the particle '*ni yotte*' in the passive sentences to avoid these mistakes.

In the Sinhala language, only one preposition, '*wisin*', is used instead of all the particles mentioned above. The preposition suffix '*wisin*' is used to the doer when the passive voice of the sentence is constructed.

Another complexity of grammar in the Japanese language is that the Passive Voice in Japanese is often conjunct with the causative form, and it is simply the combination of causative and passive and named as causative-passive form. It is often used when someone is made to do something, unhappy or troubled about it.

(a) *Nomitakunakatta noni murini nomaserareta*

Despite not wanting to drink, I was made to drink.

Conjunct the passive voice with the causative form is rare in the Sinhala language, and even in rare cases, it can be used only in the written form and not in the spoken language.

In the complexity of the grammar in Japanese, the passive Voice of Japanese can be classified into two varieties: direct and indirect passive sentences. The direct passive sentences in both active and passive sentences denote the same single event.

(a) Active: *Yamada ga Tanaka o nagutta* - Yamada hit Tanaka

(b) Passive: *Tanaka ga Yamada ni nagurareta* - Tanaka was hit by Yamada

This type of Passive sentence is called direct passives. The first example, the active sentence, is written from Yamada's point of view, while the passive sentence is written from Tanaka's point of view. The structures are similar, but the particle "*ni*" function has changed from the particle "*o*" of the active sentence.

Indirect expressions are often preferred in Japanese culture. Therefore, the Japanese people prefer using indirect passive in their conversation. Most of the indirect passive sentences have a regrettable meaning.

(a) *Watashi wa chichi ni shinareta*

I was (affected) by my father's death

In the above sentence, the actions of the father's death indirectly affect the person. Therefore, this pattern is called "indirect passive sentences."

4.4 L1 interference in L2 acquisition

It is known that the first or the native language impacts second language acquisition, and L1 can interfere with the acquisition of L2. Most researchers believed that the role of L1 within the L2 depends on some similarities and differences between the two languages. One of the essential and interesting aspects of human development is language acquisition (Ali & Elham, 2015).

Karim and Nassaji (2013) investigated the first language transfer in second language writing, and they found that when the learners write in the second language learners, their first language affects their writing.

Learners tend to use their first language structures when producing sentences of the target language. When the structures of the languages differ, many errors arise in the new language. It shows the interference of the first language on the second language (Decherts & Dllis, as cited in Bhela, 1999).

In this study, the L1 uses passive voice sentences in academic writing and is not usually used in the spoken language. However, the L2 (Japanese) uses the passive voice in written and spoken languages. Therefore, the learners tend to make errors passive Voice of L2. Most learners use the active Voice of Japanese, where the passive is suitable for the particular situation. For example,

(a) (Sin) *guruthuma mata prashansa kala.*

In Japanese passive sentences are used with the sentences in which the feelings are included. Therefore, the correct sentence should be

(a) (Jap) *watahi wa sensei ni homeremashita.* - I was praised by the teacher

However, as passive is not used in the spoken Sinhala language, the learners use the active voice: *sensei wa watashi o homemashita* - the teacher praised me. And the sentence is syntactically incorrect due to the situation.

The mistakes that arise in learning a second language due to interference can be categorised as follows: 1. Developmental errors: the errors that are not related to the learner's first language. 2. Ambiguous errors: the mistakes that concern interference and developmental errors. 3. Unique errors: Neither those errors

cannot be categorised either in interference or developmental errors. Old manners of the first or the native language result in interference, and it must be removed before learning the new habits of a second language (Dualy et al.,1982).

According to the language teachers, the learners tend to transfer their first language's forms, meaning, and culture to the target language when learning a new language. Moreover, those forms, meanings and cultures interfere when speaking the new language. The habits of the native language interfere when learning the second language habits, and then the learners tend to make errors (Beebe & Seliger, as cited in Nemati & Taghizadeh, 2006). Similarly, as mentioned in the literature review, Beardsmore (1982) suggests that because of the interference of habits from the first language, the learners have difficulties in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax of the second language.

Considering the Passive grammar of the learner's native language, the Sinhala language, the particle "*wisin*" is used when a sentence is converted from the active voice into the passive voice. In the second language, which is the Japanese language, three particles are used in the passive voice, "*ni*", "*kara*", and "*ni yotte*". To form the Japanese passive sentence semantically correct, the appropriate usages of these particles are essential. Learners have difficulties choosing the fine particle to form the passive sentences in Japanese. As for this difference within the two languages, L2 (second language) learners make many mistakes in constructing passive sentences.

Another difference between L1 and L2 is that the passive voice is utilised only with the transitive verbs within the Sinhala language because the subject of the sentence is vital within the passive voice. But within the Japanese passive voice, there is no such rule,

- (a) Transitive: *gowihu waga katayuthu karathi* – farmers cultivate
- (b) Intransitive: *mal pipei* – the flowers bloom

From the above two sentences, the passive voice is used only within the sentence "(a)," a transitive verb used at the end of the sentence. The transitive sentence "(a)" *gowihu waga katayuthu karathi* can be changed into passive voice as "*gowin wisin waga katayuthu karanu labai*". The sentence "(b)" the intransitive sentence "*mal pipei*" cannot be used with the Passive Voice. Due to these differences between the two languages, learners may tend to form errors within the L2 grammar.

4.5 Attitude

Attitude can strongly affect the result of learning a new language. As it influences learners' success or failure in learning a language, it is stated that attitude towards language learning plays a crucial role (Zainol & Alzwari, 2012). If students have a positive attitude towards learning a language, they will enjoy the lesson more and, as a result, they can catch up more knowledge and skills of the language. On the other hand, when the students' attitude towards language learning is negative, they will be reluctant and pay less attention during the teaching-learning activity.

Teachers find several students holding negative attitudes to language learning in teaching Japanese. For those students, learning Japanese grammar is uneasy, and they do not tend to pay full attention in the class while the lesson is going on. Those learners with negative attitudes have more difficulties in understanding the voice grammar. Attitude is wholly related to feelings, and these feelings cause a negative attitude, and learners fail to learn the language properly. If the learners do not feel interested, it is hard for them to acquire the grammar form and make errors.

When learning a new language, as negative feelings bring in a distorted image, learners need to avoid being influenced by such negative feelings. Instead of adverse reactions, learners are encouraged to establish a hospitable relationship (Bingol, 2014).

5. Analysis of data

The data was collected from the Japanese language teachers and analysed by percentages (%) to conduct this study. The analysed data is shown below in the form of a table. Table 1 presents the Common challenges that Japanese language teachers face in teaching the passive grammar of Japanese, and Table 2 presents the methods to reduce the difficulties in teaching passive voice.

The first item in Table 1 shows 55% of the participant strongly agreed; also, 40% agreed, while 5% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed (Cultural difference is one of the difficulties in learning the passive voice of the Japanese language). Regarding the next item in the table, 20% of the participants strongly agreed; meanwhile, 70% agreed, while only 10% disagreed (Many Japanese language learners face difficulties in the passive voice due to and impact of the first language). The other item (negative attitudes of the learners have more difficulties understanding the voice grammar), 25% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 65% agreed, while only 10% disagreed. Regarding the fourth item, which states (Adopting their native language structure in

learning the passive Voice of Japanese is another difficulty), 20% of respondents strongly agreed. Also, 45% agreed, while 25% disagreed and 10% strongly agreed on this item. The next item is (The complexity of passive grammar in the Japanese language makes the learners feel it challenging to use and produce correct passive sentences), 10% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 70% agreed, while 15% disagreed. (Use of three different particles in Japanese makes the learner confused in the usage of passive voice) 10% of the respondents strongly agreed, 55% agreed, and 25% disagreed. The next item, (Construction of potential form polite form and the passive form of Japanese has the same rules and the learners find it difficult to understand) 20% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 65% agreed, while 15% disagreed.

Table 1: Common challenges that Japanese language teachers face

Variables	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cultural difference is one of the difficulties in learning the passive voice of the Japanese language	11	55	8	40	1	5	0	0
Many Japanese language learners face difficulties in the passive voice as a result of and impact of the first language	4	20	14	70	2	10	0	0
Negative attitudes of the learners have more difficulties in understanding the voice grammar	5	25	13	65	2	10	0	0
Adopting their native language structure in learning the passive voice of Japanese is another difficulty	4	20	9	45	5	25	2	10
The complexity of passive grammar in the Japanese language makes the learners feel difficult to use and produce correct passive sentences	3	15	14	70	3	15	0	0
The use of three different particles in Japanese makes the learner confused in the usage of passive voice	2	10	11	55	5	25	2	10
Construction of potential form polite form and the passive form of Japanese has the same rules and the learners find it difficult to understand	4	20	13	65	3	15	0	0
Usage of causative passive voice is confusing for the learners and hard to make them understand	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
Varieties of passive such as direct and indirect passive is hard to explain and learners make errors	2	10	13	65	4	20	1	5
Different from Sinhala, Japanese passive voice is used to express someone's feeling and, that is a hard for the learners to understand	2	10	9	45	8	40	1	5

n=20

Regarding the following item, which states (Teaching methods and strategies have a significant impact on learning outcomes), 70% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 30% agreed, while 0% disagreed. The next item is (Teachers can motivate and facilitate learning language process) 10% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 65% agreed, while 20% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed. For the last item, 10% of the respondents strongly agreed. Also, 45% agreed, while 40% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed (different from Sinhala, Japanese passive voice is used to express someone's feelings and is hard for the learners to understand). Table 2 below presents the percentage of the suggestions to reduce the difficulties in teaching the passive voice.

Table 2: Percentage of suggestions to reduce the difficulties in teaching passive voice of Japanese

Variables	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
A positive attitude encourages learners to learn the passive voice	6	30	14	70	0	0	0	0
Visual aids are one of the best materials to teach passive grammar	4	20	10	50	6	30	0	0
Watching Japanese videos of natural conversations will help learners to understand the usage of passive grammar	5	25	11	55	4	20	0	0
Uses of multimedia projectors have a great impact on the results of learning outcomes	3	15	11	55	5	25	1	5
Uses of authentic materials are also important to give the learners a good knowledge of the Japanese culture	6	30	14	70	0	0	0	0
Giving more chances to speak with Japanese native speakers will encourage learners	3	15	9	45	5	25	3	15
Increasing the number of hours on practice of the passive voice will fluent the learners	4	20	13	65	3	15	0	0
Teachers should motivate and facilitate the learners as motivation has a great impact on the results of learning passive voice	2	10	12	60	6	30	0	0

n=20

Regarding this table, its first item; (Positive attitude encourages learners to learn the passive voice), 30% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 70% agreed. In the next item, 20% of the respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed, while 30% disagreed (Visual aids are one of the best materials to teach passive grammar). The third item in the table states; (Watching Japanese videos of natural conversations will help learners understand the usage of passive grammar); 25% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 55% of the respondents agreed, while 20% disagreed. For the next item, 15% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 55% agreed, while 25% disagreed and only 5% strongly disagreed (uses of multimedia projectors have a significant impact on learning outcomes). 30% of the respondents strongly agreed with the next item, and 70% agreed.

In contrast, none of the respondents disagreed on that (Uses of authentic materials are also essential to give the learners a good knowledge of the Japanese culture) Regarding the sixth item of the table which is (Giving more chance to speak with Japanese native speakers will encourage learners), 15% of the respondents strongly agreed. Also, 45% agreed, while 25% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed. Regarding the seventh item of the table (Increasing the number of hours on the passive voice practice will become fluent the learners), 20% of the respondents strongly agreed; also 65% agreed; while 15% disagreed. The last item of the table (teachers should motivate and facilitate the learners as motivation has a significant impact on learning passive voice) 10% of the respondents strongly agreed; also 60% agreed; while 30% disagreed.

6. Results and discussion

The current study is focused on difficulties in teaching the passive Voice of Japanese. According to the teachers, most of the students who learn the Japanese language as a foreign language are less interested in the Passive Voice of Japanese. The research gave the information that, although Sinhala and Japanese have the same grammatical structure and the passive voice is used in both languages, there are differences in the usage of the languages interference of L1 on L2 acquisition. The results show that the cultural background, the complexity of Japanese passive voice, attitude, and negative transfer strongly affect learning a new language, influencing the teaching and learning process.

The interviews with the teachers show that learners have a poor understanding of the culture of Japan, complexity of passive grammar, negative attitudes of the learners. Moreover, lack of practice and lack of authentic materials are problems in teaching passive voice to the learners. To give the learners a good knowledge

of Japan's cultural background and reduce L1 interference on L2 acquisition, the uses of authentic materials and increasing the number of hours of practice are essential. As a result, the current study's findings show many difficulties in teaching passive Voice to Sri Lankan learners. Moreover, at the same time, the findings propose some crucial material and ways to reduce the difficulties.

7. Conclusion and suggestions

In teaching the Japanese language to foreign language learners, passive voice is one of the most challenging grammars that are hard to convince the learners, and the teachers suffer most. Teachers face many difficulties, mainly when learners produce sentences in Japanese passive voice. As a theoretical work, the study focuses on identifying the difficulties when teaching Japanese voice grammar to the native Sinhalese who learns the language in the secondary schools (G.C.E. Advanced level) and the adult learners who study the Japanese language in other languages private institutes. The study also focuses on unique methods that can be applied to reduce teachers' difficulties when teaching passive voice to the learners and minimise the number of errors learners make when making passive sentences.

Teachers have difficulties in teaching the Passive Voice due to many reasons. One reason is that the students are less interested in the voice grammar of Japanese. There are many differences in the grammar of the Passive Voice between Japanese and Sinhala, and learners make many errors in producing passive sentences. Therefore, although teachers try to teach the Passive Voice, learners lose interest in learning passive grammar. L1 interference in L2 acquisition is also a reason in teaching Passive grammar. As Japanese syntax is structurally similar to Sinhala, learners get the wrong idea that all sentences should be constructed the same way. So unknowingly, learners have the interference of Sinhala when making Japanese sentences. Lack of practice and lack of authentic materials are some difficulties the teachers face in the teaching and learning system. Although the uses of authentic materials are also essential to give the learners a good knowledge of Japanese culture, many schools do not have the chance to use these facilities.

Learners cannot learn the language by themselves. To improve their language knowledge and learn the culture, they need good guidance. Only the teacher can give the learner good guidance and participate in this process. In the teachers' role, teaching methods and strategies are also vital. Especially the uses of authentic materials are essential for the learners to get a good knowledge of the Japanese

culture, and that way, learners can reduce the number of errors in producing passive voice sentences.

In conclusion, it shows that teacher's role is vital in teaching Japanese as a foreign language, especially in teaching passive voice. It depends on the methods, teacher's role, strategies performance, and environment in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers must have a good plan and use the best techniques to minimise these difficulties in teaching passive Voice of Japanese, such as practising the passive Voice of Japanese compared with the Sinhala language, having contacts with Japanese native speakers, and having a good attitude. Then the teachers will be able to reduce their difficulties, give a good knowledge of Japanese culture, and make the learners make appropriate and accurate passive voice sentences.

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Compound Verbs in Japanese and Bengali with a focus on the Compound Maker Verb¹

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Abstract– A compound verb is a common linguistic feature prevailing in two Asian languages, Bengali and Japanese, in an enormous amount and frequently used. Its usage is more frequent in Indo Aryan languages than in the south Indian languages. A compound verb is a linguistic phenomenon in which more than one verb combines to serve a combined lexical meaning. Primarily, the combined meaning derives from the lexical meaning of the first component (first verb). Certain verbs (the second verb or the compound maker) combine with the first verb to form a compound verb in both languages. This second verb is restricted in number in Bengali, whereas Japanese compound maker verbs seem enormous. This article attempts to discover the essential characteristics, such as compound makers, compound verbs, and combining mechanisms in Bengali and Japanese. Compound verbs are more closely related to vocabulary than grammar, and therefore, memorising them instead of following grammatical rules would be more helpful. This article has made an effort to find out about the basic structures, types of the compound verbs of Bengali and Japanese compound verbs, and their 'compound maker' components in both languages.

Keywords Compound verbs · Bengali · Japanese · First verb · Second verb · Compound maker verb ·

¹ This study is solely inspired by the article “Khanna, Anita et.al, Paper No.: 日本語の文法 (Japanese Grammar: An Overview) Module: 16 複合動詞 (Compound Verbs)”. Compound verbs with the composition of Verb1+Verb2 have been taken into account to make this paper. Nominal like জমা করা/joma kora/ to submit, গবেষণা করা/gobesona kora/ to research etc. in Bengali and サ変動詞 like 提出する, 研究する etc. in Japanese which are also considered as compound verbs in both languages are excluded in the study.

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1. Introduction

Compound verbs are a commonly existing linguistic feature in the Bengali and Japanese languages. Both languages are enriched with compound verbs. Compound verbs are linguistic phenomena where more than one verb is united to produce one combined meaning. The first verb can be considered first, or Verb 1 (from now on referred to as the first verb), and the following verb can be considered second or Verb 2 (from now on referred to as the second verb). The second verb is also called the 'compound maker' verb. In both languages, the first verb contributes most to form the overall meaning of the combination, whereas the second verb plays the role of a modifier to complete the meaning. 40% of Japanese verbs are considered compound verbs (National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics/NINJAL). A compound verb consists of 'V+V' (Verb+Verb) or a verb and a noun 'N+V' (Noun+Verb). One of the components is a 'light verb' or 'vector', which *'bears inflections, affects the actions art of the joint predication and adds, instead of its inherent lexical meaning, subtler semantic information such as benefaction, suddenness, volitionally, forcefulness, etc.'* (Chatterjee 2016 p.55). Another component plays a significant role in providing the complete lexical meaning of the combination. That specific component is the 'primary' component. Pal (1966) terms this particular component as the 'compound maker' due to their potential to indicate certain meanings according to the light verbs. A compound verb is also called a 'complex verb' for its' complex structural feature. However, in both languages, making compound verbs may be considered a productive process in expressing different meanings of one verb with the help of a compound maker.

2. Formation of compound verbs in Japanese and Bengali

2.1 Japanese

- a. 食べ込む/tabekomu/ (食べる/taberu/+込む/komu/)
- b. 見合わせる/miawaseru/ (見る/miru/+合わせる/awaseru/)

The examples show that the first verb changes into the conjunctive form (連用形) in most Japanese compound verbs and the second verb remains unchanged. NINJAL categorises Japanese compound verbs in five groups depending on the component verbs forming the compound verb.

- a. Combination of two normal verbs
- b. Combination of a conjugated verb and a normal verb
- c. Combination of two verbs where the connection between the verbs are difficult to find out

- d. Combination of a normal verb and an auxiliary verb
- e. Combination of verbs which can be considered as a derived from the noun.

However, very few exceptional instances can be seen such as 見いだす/miidasu/ (見る/miru/+出す/dasu), 見て取る/mitetoru/ (見る/miru/+取る/toru) where the first verb can be seen in a different form other than the conjunctive form.

2.2 Bengali

As Chatterjee (1988 pp. 354-355) indicates, Bengali Compound verbs can be formed by inflecting Verb1 with two different components, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

	With the conjunctive ৗ(এ)/e/	With the verbal noun/infinitive/participle -তে/te/
Examples	দিয়ে দেওয়া/diye dewa/ to give away	দিতে চাওয়া/dite chawa/ to wish to give
	খেয়ে নেওয়া /kheye newa/ to eat completely	খেতে দেওয়া/khete dewa/ to allow to eat

Chatterjee (1988 pp. 355-356) also classifies the compound maker verbs into six groups, each based on the meanings they denote while combining with the first verb inflected with the above components.

- i) With the verbal noun/infinitive/participle -তে /te/:
 - a. Inchoatives/Inceptives, b. Desiderative, c. Permissive, d. Potentials, e. Acquisitive, f. Continuatives
- ii) With the conjunctive- ৗ(এ)/e/:
 - a. Inceptives, b. Staticals, c. Continuatives, d. Intensives/Indicatives, e. Habitual, f. Examinative/ Appreciative.

As the above classifications indicate, it is also a possible phenomenon among Bengali compound verbs that one first verb may form different compound verbs with different compound maker verbs denoting an identical meaning. Bengali linguists such as Pal (1966), Datt (1935), Bykova (1966) categorised Bengali compound maker verbs more or less aligned into two groups – *duratives* and *intensifiers*. Previous studies on Bengali Compound verbs indicate that Bengali compound maker verbs are limited in number. Although there are variations in the

total number of Bengali Compound maker verbs depending on the linguists, the number is more or less than 14.

This paper makes an effort to determine the frequency of occurrence of the second verb in forming the compound verbs in Japanese and Bengali by surveying ten selected basic verbs, which are as follows in Table 2.

Table 2

Japanese	English	Bengali
する/suru/やる/yaru/	to do	করা/kora/
行く/iku/	to go	যাওয়া/jawa/
来る/kuru/	to come	আসা/asa/
食べる/taberu/	to eat	খাওয়া/khawa/
話す/hanasu/言う/iu/語る/kataru/しゃべる/shaberu/	to speak/say	বলা/bola/
見る/miru/	to see	দেখা/dekha/
聞く/kiku/	to listen	শোনা/shona/
読む/yomu/	to read	পড়া/pora/
書く/kaku/	to write	লেখা/lekha/
走る/hashiru/	to run	দৌড়ানো/dourano/

3. Survey

3.1 Japanese

The following chart presents the list of compound verbs formed with those mentioned above ten selected verbs in Japanese by combining with different compound makers. The database is based on the compound verb lexicon provided by the NINJAL.

Table 3

Verbs	Compound verbs
する やる	やり上げる、やり落とす、やり掛ける、やり込める、やり過ぎ す、やり付ける、やり遂げる、し合う、し当たる、し合わせる 、し交う、し通う、し暮らす、し着く、～詰まる、～届く、～ 止まる、～なやむ、し渡るやりっ放す
行く	行きあたる、行き通う、行き着く、行き止まる、行き違う、行 き詰る、行き悩む、行き渡る
来る	-
食べる	くいあらず、食い入る、食い切る、食い込む・食らい込む・食 べ込む、食い下がる、食いさす、食いしばる、食い倒す、食い 違う、食いつぶす、食べ荒らす、食べ散らかす・食べ散らす、 食い付く・食らい付く、食いつなぐ、食い詰める、食い止める 、食い残す・食べ残す、食べ分ける、食いしめる、食いはぐれ る、
話す・言う ・語る・し ゃべる	話し合う、言い当てる、言い誤る、言い争う、言い表す、言い 及ぶ、話しかける、言い聞かせる、語り聞かせる、言い切る、 言いくるめる、いい消す、しゃべり込む、話し込む、言い込め る、いい止す、言い洩る、言い捨てる、言い足す、言い立てる 、しゃべりたてる、言い出す、言い散らす、言いつかる、言い つくろう、語り継ぐ、言いつける、言いつたえる、語り伝える 、いいつのる、言い習わす、言い残す、言いつぱなす、言い放 つ、言い張る、言い含める、いい触らす、言い古す、言い負か す、いい曲げる、言い漏らす、言い渡す 言い交す、言い落す、言い逃れる、言い繕う、いい伏せる、言 い寄る、言い退ける しゃべりっ放す、しゃべりまわる、しゃべりかける 話し疲れる、話し明かす、語り明かす、語り掛ける、語り合う
見る	見上げる、見当たる、見合わせる、見出す、見送る、見落と す、見返す、見限る、見掛ける、見せかける、見交わす、見る 切る、見極める、見くびる、見比べる、見越す、見込む、見下 げる、見据える、見透く、見過ごす、見捨てる、見初める、見 いたてる、見違える、見繕う、見つける、見積もる、見通す、 見とがめる、見届ける、見とる・見て取る、見とれる、見直す 、見なす、見習う、見慣れる、見抜く、見逃す、見残す、見計 う、見果てる、見放す、見晴らす、見せびらかす、見開く、見 惚れる、見舞う、見守る、見回す、見回る、見破る、見入る、

	見え透く、見追う、見分ける、見渡す 見下ろす、見知る、見切る、見立てる、見遣る、見下す、見抜く、見せかける、見せびらかす
読む	読み上げる、読み落とす、読み誤る、読み返す、読み聞かせる、読みこなす、読み込む、読み止す、読み過す、読み進む、読み進める、読み違う、読み違える、読み飛ばす、読み取る、読み流す、読み慣れる、読み古す
書く	書きあぐむ、書き上げる、書き著す、書き表す、書き入れる、書き写す、書き置く、書き起こす、書き落とす、書き下ろす・かきくだす、書き替える、書き加える、書き込む、書きさす、書き進む、書き進める、書き捨てる、書き添える、書き足す、書きたてる、書きためる、書き違う、書き散らす、書きつける、書きつぶす、書き飛ばす、書き留める、書き取る、書き投げる、書き習わす、書き抜く、書き残す 書き起こす、書き連ねる、書き飛ばす、書き殴る
聞く	聞き入る、聞き入れる、聞き落とす、聞き及ぶ、聞きかじる、聞き比べる、聞き込む、聞き知る、聞きだす、聞き違える、聞きつける、聞き伝える、聞き咎める、聞き届ける、聞き取る、聞き流す、聞き慣れる、聞き逃す、聞き残す、聞きっぱなす、聞き古す、聞き分ける 聞きただす、聞き惚れる、聞きっぱなす
走る	走り込む、走り去る、走り着く、走り出る、走り抜く、走り回る、走り寄る、走り抜ける

Apart from the above compound verbs, numerous compound verbs are formed with the compound makers such as 始める, 終わる, 続ける, 掛ける etc. These compound maker verbs are flexible enough to combine with almost each of the given basic verbs in Japanese. When combined, both the first verb components and the compound maker remain intact with their original meaning. Table 4 presents the compound verbs that can be formed with these standard compound makers.

Table 4

Verb	Compound maker verbs							
	始め る	過ぎ る	直す	掛け る	続け る	出す	終わ る	切 る
する・やる	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
行く	○	○	△	○	○	○	△	△
来る	○	○	△	△	○	○	○	○
食べる	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
話す・言う・ 語る・しゃべ る	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
見る	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
聞く	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
読む	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
書く	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
走る	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

○ Indicates the possibility of forming compound verbs with the given compound maker.

△ Indicates the compound verbs with a limited possibility in the usage.

As Table 4 indicates, these common compound makers can combine with almost each of the ten selected verbs.

3.2 Bengali

In Bengali, compound verbs can be constructed in two ways as described earlier with the conjunctive $-(\text{এ})/e/$ and infinitive/participle $-(\text{তে})/te/$. Compared to the number of Japanese compound maker verbs, Bengali compound makers seem to have the trend of somehow limited in number. Let us look at the examples of Bengali compound verbs in Table 5.

Table 5

Verbs	Compound verbs	
	conjunctive - (এ) /e/	infinitive/participle – তে/te/
করা	করে নেওয়া করে ফেলা করে থাকা করে দেখা করে যাওয়া	করতে লাগা করতে পারা করতে থাকা করতে যাওয়া
যাওয়া	গিয়ে থাকা গিয়ে দেখা গিয়ে ফেলা	যেতে চাওয়া যেতে দেওয়া যেতে পারা যেতে লাগা
আসা	এসে পড়া এসে থাকা এসে দেখা	আসতে চাওয়া আসতে লাগা আসতে থাকা আসতে পারা
খাওয়া	খেয়ে নেওয়া খেয়ে ফেলা খেয়ে দেখা খেয়ে যাওয়া খেয়ে থাকা	খেতে লাগা খেতে থাকা খেতে চাওয়া খেতে পারা খেতে পাওয়া খেতে দেওয়া
বলা	বলে নেওয়া বলে ফেলা বলে থাকা বলে দেখা বলে যাওয়া বলে দেওয়া	বলতে থাকা বলতে দেওয়া বলতে পারা বলতে চাওয়া বলতে পাওয়া
দেখা	দেখে নেওয়া দেখে ফেলা দেখে থাকা দেখে যাওয়া দেখে দেওয়া	দেখতে চাওয়া দেখতে দেওয়া দেখতে পারা দেখতে পাওয়া দেখতে লাগা

শোনা	শনে নেওয়া শনে ফেলা শনে যাওয়া শনে থাকা শনে দেখা	শনতে চাওয়া শনতে থাকা শনতে দেওয়া শনতে পাওয়া শনতে পারা শনতে লাগা
পড়া	পড়ে নেওয়া পড়ে ফেলা পড়ে যাওয়া পড়ে থাকা পড়ে দেখা	পড়তে চাওয়া পড়তে দেওয়া পড়তে থাকা পড়তে পাওয়া পড়তে পারা পড়তে লাগা
লেখা	লিখে নেওয়া লিখে ফেলা লিখে দেওয়া লিখে যাওয়া লিখে থাকা	লিখতে থাকা লিখতে চাওয়া লিখতে পারা লিখতে পাওয়া লিখতে লাগা
দৌড়ানো	দৌড়ে নেওয়া দৌড়ে থাকে দৌড়ে ফেলা (?) দৌড়ে যাওয়া	দৌড়াতে চাওয়া দৌড়াতে দেওয়া দৌড়াতে পারা দৌড়াতে লাগা

4. Observation

If we carefully see the examples of Japanese compound verbs above, we can find only one type of compound verb. One significant characteristic is the 'compound makers' position in the compound combination. Unlike Bengali compound verbs, Japanese compound makers do not always follow the fixed sequential order and, depending on the compound maker, they can be placed as the first verb or as the second. Japanese *light verbs* or *vectors* are conjugated in the same form while combining with the primary verb's compound maker.

The examples show that compound verbs are frequent in Japanese and Bengali languages. Except for the verb 来る, all other verbs can be seen forming compound verbs with the help of different compound maker verbs. On the other hand, in Bengali, these two verbs do not show the same frequency, while constructing compound verbs inflected by both the infinitive/participle -তে/te/ and conjunctive -(এ)/e/.

Another trend shows that Japanese compound maker verbs are not as fixed or limited as the Bengali compound maker verbs. Japanese compound verbs can be seen formed by different compound maker verbs, while Bengali compound verbs shown in the chart are much more flexible in forming with the help of the same compound maker verb. The same trend can be seen about the inflecting components, i.e. infinitive/participle -তে and conjunctive -(এ).

Notably, both languages show the same trend in making the combined meaning of the compound verb. In both languages, the first verb (in Bengali, the inflected verb) remains intact with their meaning or otherwise. The compound maker verb strengthens or completes the meaning of the preceding verb by providing the meanings of acquisition, permission, potential, static, depicted in Table 6.

Table 6

Conjunctive -(এ)/e/	infinitive/participle -তে/te/	Conjunctive -(এ)/e/	infinitive/participle -তে/te/
করে নেওয়া করা + নেওয়া to do + to take to do	করতে লাগা করা + লাগা to do + to set to/to start to start doing	দেখে দেওয়া দেখা + দেওয়া to see + to give to check/correct	দেখতে দেওয়া দেখা + দেওয়া to see + to give to allow to see
খেয়ে নেওয়া খাওয়া + নেওয়া to eat + to take to eat completely	খেতে লাগা খাওয়া + লাগা to eat + to set to/start to start eating	পড়ে দেওয়া পড়া + দেওয়া to read + to give to read out (for someone)	পড়তে দেওয়া পড়া + দেওয়া to read + to give to allow to read

On the other hand, the Japanese compound shows the same trend as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

食べ込む 食べる + 込む to eat + to take to eat	見合わせる 見る + 合わせる to see + to match/adjust to stop functioning
খেয়ে নেওয়া খাওয়া + নেওয়া to eat + to take to eat completely	পড়তে দেওয়া পড়া + দেওয়া to read + to give to allow to read

Japanese compound verbs show the same frequency in forming with the same compound maker verb in another similar feature. Let us look at Table 6, showing the possibility of the formation of compound verbs in which ten selected verbs form compound verbs combining with the same compound maker verb.

This study shows the fundamental trends of compound verbs in Japanese and Bengali. The above study shows the enormous and frequent existence of compound verbs in Japanese and Bengali. However, a closer look from a broader perspective is required to get the overall picture, such as the semantic connections between the two verbs.

This article attempts to find the essential characteristics, such as compound makers, compound verbs, and combining mechanisms in Bengali and Japanese languages. Further profound observation is needed to know the comprehensive linguistic features like their structure and how their lexical meanings establish an acceptable complete meaning in the compound verbs. Compound verbs are more closely related to vocabulary than grammar, and therefore, memorising them instead of following grammatical rules would be more helpful.

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Reflection of Early 20th Century's Japanese Society and Culture: Perspective of Bengali Women

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Abstract- The world knows Japan was secluded for consecutive 200 years during Edo Period, and after that, the renowned Meiji era started in 1868. Before this Meiji restoration, Commodore Matthew Culbreath Perry did several expeditions to Japan, and he wrote a book namely *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan Performed in the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, under the Command of Commodore M.C. Perry, United States Navy* in 1862. This book was translated from English to Bengali as *Japan* by Madhusudon Mukhopadhyay in 1863 and was the first book written in Bengali on Japan according to the existing materials found yet. This translation has opened the door of Japan to Bengal. On the other hand, India was partitioned in 1947, and till 1947, several renowned individuals went to Japan and the mass for specific purposes. Five women went to Japan before 1947, and all of them penned it as a memoir or travelogue. Hariprabha Takeda, Sarojnalini Dutta, Abala Basu, Shanta Devi, and Parul Devi. This article is all about these Bengali ladies' perceptions of Japanese society and culture after the Meiji Restoration. Society and culture reflect the similarity and diversity of a country, and these were the write-ups where the records of those westernising Japan are available.

Keywords Meiji · Taisho · Women · Travelogues · Bangla · Japan · Seclusion · Books · Japanese ·

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1. Introduction

Japan was a closed country for conjugative two hundred years at Edo period (1603-1868), which is also addressed as the Tokugawa period. Several reasons played as essential components for this seclusion, but seclusion provided three essential explanations to be more precise. First, the emerging Christianity led Japan to colonialisation and be a territory of another country. The second reason is that Japan always wanted to protect their land from cultural colonisation through seclusion, but the truth is, not only the culture, Japan was afraid of the emerging power- which was all around. They viewed outsiders as a threat to their power. Only the Dutch and Portuguese were allowed for the business commodity. Stating about the third reason - the three unifiers controlling the Tokugawa or Edo Japan from decades were Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) and there is a story which clarifies the pattern of how these three reunified and kept integrity inside Japan- it is stated as Nobunaga squeezed the dough; Hideyoshi baked the pie, and Ieyasu ate the pie (Woods, 2021).

These three were adamant about enduring their autocracy, and seclusion was one of the critical components to continue the supremacy they had acquired and practised for several decades in the name of the government (幕府). Therefore, they choose to continue with an anti-foreign and anti-Christianity policy for more than long two hundred years in the name of seclusion.

Before Meiji Restoration, in 1953, Culbreath Matthew Perry started his expedition to Japan from America and attempted three to four times; finally, in 1858, Matthew entered Japan, and the so-called 'chained country' was forced to take some concrete decisions regarding their seclusion policy. According to Hunter, during the 1840s, these official approaches increased, and Perry made his very first approach in the year 1853, but the Japanese government repeatedly denied him. Finally, in 1858, the US-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce was concluded, and Japan opened itself partially for the first time after more than two hundred years of seclusion (Hunter,1989).

Commodore Matthew Culbreath Perry did quite a few excursions to Japan, and he wrote a book, namely *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan Performed in the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, under the Command of Commodore M.C. Perry, United States Navy*. The original book was written in 1856 and was translated from English to Japanese first in 1862. In 1863, this book was translated from English to Bengali as *Jepan* by Modhusudon

Mukhopadhyay was the first book written in Bengali about Japan according to the existing materials found. This translation has unfastened Japan to Bengal (Das, 2012).

In the last half of the 19th century, India went through turmoil in social and political issues. From Bengal's side, India was partitioned in 1947, and till 1947, many famous people went to Japan for specific purposes. Among them, Manmothonath Ghosh and Sureshchandra Bandhapaddhay took the lead. Manmothonath went to Japan on April 1, 1906, and reached Yokohama on April 30 to learn technical science (Ghosh, 1910). Sureshchandra Bandyopadhyay left Kolkata on December 10 and reached Yokohama on January 10, 1907 (Banerjee, 1910). If we categorise people who visited Japan into four categories: political purpose, business purpose, cultural purpose, and personal purpose, Radha Binod Pal, Rash Bihari Bose, and Subhash Chandra Bose were in Japan on those days for political purposes. Manmothonath Ghosh and Sureshchandra Bandhapaddhay went for business purposes and learned technicalities. Rabindranath Tagore, Mukul Dey went to serve cultural purposes, and last but not least, Hariprabha Tadeka, Shanta Devi, P.C. Sarkar went to Japan for personal purposes.

One thing must be mentioned here: most of the people who visited Japan at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century penned their experiences as memoirs or travelogues for further acquaintance. All those people who went to Japan tended to write about their experiences, and thus they conserved their history in a form. This article emphasises these five women: Hariprabha Takeda, Sarojnalini Dutta, Abala Bose, Shanta Devi, and Parul Devi. Five of them were educated enough, and among them, Sarojnalini was self-educated, and all of them were from a sophisticated and well-groomed background and the upper strata of the Bengali society.

Hariprabha Devi, Sarojnalini Devi, Abala Bose, Shanta Devi, and Parul Devi went to Japan along with their husbands. The timeline of this research is the early 20th century, and at that time, Bengal was also going through social turmoil and absconded regarding women's position in Bengali society. People of Bengal perceived common interest in Japan and these memoirs and travelogues are the indication and evidence of their sheer curiosity. Considering Japan, it was also going through a complex and perplexing situation as they encountered Meiji Restoration in 1868, and after that, Japan was open to all who were attracted to it. Moreover, Hariprabha entered Japan when Japan entered the Taisho era (1912-1926). Japan faced several difficulties encountering the west and the whole world after waking up from two hundred years of deep sleep and self-abundance.

Among them, Hariprabha was the first who travelled to Japan even before Rabindranath Tagore himself. Rabindranath visited Japan in 1916 for the first time and then in 1924 and 1929, and he published the famous *Japan-Jatri* Book at the year of 1919. So, after Meiji Restoration, Hariprabha was the first Bengali woman who visited Japan and wrote a memoir according to the existing documents found so far. Before Hariprabha, in the port areas like Yokohama and Kobe, Indian merchants and traders started their living from the later part of the 19th century, and most of them were from Gujrat, Sindhu, and Maharashtra (Huq, 1999).

In this discussion, one important thing must be said. It is a known factor that the conception and idea of 'home' that humane consists have always been persisted in our minds do not matter wherever we go. When we encounter a new culture, our mind starts comparing with one's own culture, belief, and society- in light of new pieces of knowledge that we gathered in a different land. In this article, the writer offers an overview of how these five women travellers, who had visited Japan in the early 20th century, had tried to portray Japanese society and culture from their perspectives. In this course of the discussion, one thing is pretty evident these five women travellers who travelled to Japan in the 20th century were undoubtedly not of the regular type of people.

2. Literature review

Haripravha Takeda, Sarojnalini Dutta, Abala Bose, Shanta Devi, and Parul Devi went to Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, and several research studies were conducted on Hariprabha Takeda. Monjurul Huq is the pioneer who found her book from India Office Library, London, and reprinted it in 1999. The name of the book is *Bangomohilar Japan Jatra*. This book is an eye-opener for those who work on Japanese Studies because she was in Japan and wrote about Japan before Rabindranath Tagore was there in 1912. An article is also found on Hariprabha written by Monjurul Huq in the 'The transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan,' and the write-up is titled *The Bride from Bengal: Hariprabha Takeda in early Taisho Japan*. It is also a significant work to depend upon. The article *Mirroring the Self in the Light of the 'Other': Early 20th Century Travelogues on Japan* written by Pratyay Banerjee in the journal namely *The Journal of the Comparative Literature of the Association of India* in 2015 had also represented Hariprabha's acuity of Japanese society and about social dimensions and position of women obstinately. However, he had included more travelogues of Monmothonath Ghosh and Shureshchandra Bandhapaddhay for detailed discussion. Besides that, Shudakkhina Ghosh had mentioned and discussed

Hari Prabha's journey in her write-up *Ghor Hote Angina Bidesh: Bangimohilader Vhromon Kotha* in *Balaka* (Bangla magazine) (Ghosh, 2012).

Barun Mondol, a researcher of Gourbango University, wrote an article as *Hari Prabha Takeda Bongomohilar Japan Jatra: Unish shotoker Nari Vhabnar Aaloke* in a journal namely *Pratidhwani the Echo* in 2018. He and Sudhakkhina Ghosh also mentioned and discussed Sarojnalini Dutta in their research works. Muntasir Mamun wrote an article in 2004 in a Bengali magazine *Kali o Kolom* as '*Hari Prabha Takedar khonje*', and he focused on her as the first lady from Dhaka visiting Japan in the early 20th century. Subrato Kumar Mondal also did his research in this field, and some vital information could be found from his book *Shekaler Bangla Shamoyik potre Japan*.

More information could be found in Vhisshyodev Chowdhury's book *Jonantike Muktijuddhyo o Onanyo Probandhyo*. Vhisshyodev also remarked Hari Prabha as the first women writer from Dhaka who wrote about Japan from 1901 to 1920.

Shimonti Ghosh compiled a book in 2010, namely *Indumadhav er Chin Vhromon and Sarojnalini's Japane Bongonari*, and from her preface and Sarojnalini's own write up, we get to know about Sarojnalini's travelogue and her. Besides this, her husband Gurusaday Dutta published another book as an autobiography, namely *Saroj-Nalini*, after her demise. Specific no article is found concentrating on Sarojnalini Dutta only. The article's writer has presented a paper on Sarojnalini Dutta, concentrating on Shimonti's write-up and shared documents.

A book composed and compiled by Daymantee Dasgupta in 2017 as *Abala Bosur Vhromon Kotha* on Abala Bose and a write-up is also available, but the article's source is not reliable and not reliable adequately given. Jayati Gupta, in the year of 2020, wrote a book namely *Travel Culture, Travel Writing, and Bengali Women, 1870–1940*, and in her book, except Parul Devi, all four names are mentioned, and she tried to keep all the travelogues written in the 20th century by women under one single roof.

Shanta Devi and Parul Devi are the two names who were always in the shadow whenever it came to memoirs or travelogue. No mention has been found so far. They both went to Japan and penned their observation as others like Krisnavabini and Hari Prabha, but their names were forgotten easily in due course. A little information could be gathered on both the ladies through their works only. So far, it could be found, Rabindranath wrote a letter to Parul Devi, and it seems she was a relative of Rabindranath Tagore somehow (Tagore, 1958).

This discussion will continue as in two major parts. The first part will focus on a trivial biographical observation and the background of Hariprabha Takeda, Sarojnalini Dutta, Abala Bose, Shanta Devi, and Parul Devi. The later part will emphasise their observation and perception about westernising Japan, which is reflected in their memoirs.

3. Research methodology

The methodology of this study is solely based on existing literature analysis, book, and article review. As qualitative research is the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting non-numerical data, this study will proceed with qualitative analysis, and as there is no scope for data analysis, no survey is required for this particular study.

4. Short biography and background: Hariprabha, Sarojnalini, Abala, Shanta, and Parul

4.1 Hariprabha Takeda (1890-1972)

Hariprabha was named Hariprabha Mallik before her marriage as her father was Shashivushon Mallik and her mother was Nagendrabala Devi (Sengupta et al., 1976). She was born in 1890, possibly in Dhaka. Her parents were social actives in those days, and they worked heart and soul for their organisation, namely Matriniketan. As an outstanding achievement when Bengali women were not adequately educated, this Mallik family took the initiative to work for women. According to Sudhakkhina Ghosh, Shashivushon Mallik and her wife used to be addressed as Shebok (Attendant male) and Shebika (Attendant female) of their Hermitage (Ashram) Matriniketan. One thing must be cleared here that though the word hermitage is used to explain their organisation in actuality, their organisation was considered Ashram, where people could live if they do not have any support and relatives to depend upon (Ghosh, 2012). This Mallik Family was worshipers of the Brahma religion. Brahma religion originated and was



Hariprabha Takeda
Source: Monzurul Huq, Bongo
Mohilar Japan Jatra.

founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828, and Hariprabha's family was one of the few followers of that Brahma religion. The people associated with this new religious thought were comparatively progressive, so they agreed to marry their daughter to someone different from them in every aspect. Hariprabha got married to Uemon Takeda in the year of 1906.

After the Meiji Restoration, those who initiated exploring the world by going abroad, Uemon Tadeka, was one. First, he worked in a soap factory as a 'Bulbul' soap factory, but later he managed his factory as Dhaka Soap Factory, and it is mentioned that possibly he was patronised by his in-laws for this factory (Huq, 1999). Discussion on Hariprabha's institutional education is unattended and excluded in all the documents found. How far Hariprabha studied at school and about her organisational education could be a relevant question here, but it could be easily said that she was educated enough to write a travelogue being the first woman from Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 1915. According to Samsad Bangla Choritabhidhan, Hariprabha wrote another book, 'Shaddhyi Gyan Devi'. However, the manuscript is not available yet (Sengupta et al., 1976).

In an article, it is proposed (Mondol, 2018) that Hariprabha went to Japan in the year 1912 for the first time and then in 1928 and lastly in 1940 and the travelogue she wrote '*Banga Mohilar Japan Jatra*' was based on her travels took place in 1912, 1928 and 1940 but the context of the original book reflects that this was her first visit to Japan in 1912 and the book was solely composed based on her very first visit. Some confusing information is also available about Hariprabha, and more research is needed before concluding that.

4.2 Sarojnalini Dutta (1887-1925)

Sarojnalini Dutta went to Japan, accompanying her husband Gurusaday Dutta and her son Birendrasaday Dutta. The family started for Japan on April 17 and reached May 14, 1920, by ship. Firstly, some personal information should be rendered about Sarojnalini Dutta. On October 9, 1887, Saroj was born at Bandel (Hoogly), West Bengal, India. His father, Brajendranath Dey's and mother Nagendra Nalini Dey had frequent communication with Brahma Samaj in those days (Sengupta et al., 1976).

Sarojnalini was the pioneer and a reformer of the movement for uplifting women in Bengal in the early 20th Century. In a word, she was a feminist. She initiated the formation of Mahila Samitis (women's institutes) in Bengal. She started her first Mahila Samiti in 1913 in the Pabna district by developing friendly

cooperation among the pardahnashin (veil-covered) ladies. Subsequently, she started the Mahila Samitis of Birbhum (1916), Sultanpur (1917), and Rampurhat (1918) districts, respectively (Dutta, 1925).

Sarojnalini was the secretary of the Indian Section of the Calcutta League of Women's Workers (later Bengal Presidency Council of Women), member of the Council of the Nari Siksha Samiti (Women's Educational League), and Member of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation's committee to make suitable arrangements for allowing women to elect councillors. She was also the vice president of the Sylhet Union- an association set up to promote female education in the Sylhet district (Dutta, 1925).



Sarojnalini Dutta

Source:<http://sesquicentennial.blogspot.com/2013/01/rabindranath-and-gurusaday-dutta.html>

She was married to Gurusaday Dutta, who had an incredible life full of events, but among all other alternatives, he was a social reformer, and that should be considered his first and foremost significant position in society. He thought about the lagged behind women of those days primarily concentrated on women's education. After Sarojnalini's marriage, she also started thinking and started working together with her husband for women's education; moreover, in addition to that, she had connections with nationalist activities as well. One aspect must be remembered that she worked hard to demolish the conservative culture called 'Abaya' in Arabic, which means hiding women's faces and entire bodies with some cloth named Barkha. In a nutshell, Saroj tried her best for women's freedom, and she understood the bitter truth that this could never be ensured without education. So, she took several initiatives to make Indian women aware of their rights; for example – being aware of their right to education, the right to enjoy their freedom, and the right to think independently.

It is deplorable that when this book '*Japane Bongonari*' was finally published, Saroj was no more. Her Husband Gurusaday Dutta had compiled her write-ups and published them in her remembrance. Respected Jagadanando Roy had written the preface of her book. Saroj died in 1924, and the book was published in 1928, four years after her demise. It was published in a journal in the same year, namely

'Bangalakshmi' divided into fourteen parts. Later, in 2010, the book *Japane Bangonari* (Sarojnalini Dutta's part) was compiled by Shimonty Sen.

4.3 Abala Bose (1865-1951)

Abala Bose was born on August 8, 1864, in Bangladesh at Barishal. Her father was a social reformer, Durgamohon Das (mother-Brahmyamoyi Das). They used to live in Telibagh, Dhaka. She was married to the renowned scientist Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose in 1887. Abala studied at Bethune College, and in 1910 she became the Sampadok (Principle) of Brahma Balika Biddyalaya and continued the position till 1932. She and her sister (Sarala Devi) contributed immensely to establishing Gokhel Memorial school (Sengupta et al., 1976).



Abala Bose

Source: Dasgupta (ED). Abala Basur Bhromonkotha

Abala Bose established Nari Sikkhya Samiti in 1919. She worked hard to establish an organisation, namely Adult Primary Education for older people. Abala's written articles on women's education and empowerment were published in *The Modern Review* journal (Sengupta et al., 1976). *The Modern Review* (1907) was a monthly magazine published in Kolkata founded and was edited by Ramananda Chattopaddhay (Eisamay, 2019)

Abala visited several places in India, and once Rabindranath Tagore accompanied them. Talking about abroad, Abala visited England, Italy, America, France, Germany, and Japan. In 1925, her first travelogue was published after travelling Europe in Prabashi magazine titled '*Bangali Mohilar Prithivi Vhromon*'. In 1914, they travelled Europe for the fourth time, and at that time, in 1915, they started from San Francisco and reached Japan's Yokohama port on April 7 (Sen, 2017). Abala Bose worked hard to create an Adult Primary Education centre with the money funded by Jagadishchandra Bose after his demise, and she died in the year 1951 at the age of 87. Shudhirchandra Sarkar proposed that Abala Bose had established Bhidyasagar Banibhaban for widowed women of that period (Sarkar, 1964).

4.4 Shanta Devi (1893-1984)

Shanta Devi was born on April 29, 1893. Her father, Ramanando Chatthopaddhay, was an eminent journalist and social reformer. Their homeland was in Bankura district, West Bengal, India. Shanta Devi and Sita Devi were two sisters who were renowned for their effective contribution to the Bengali and English literary world. Both of them were grown up in educated surroundings, and having a father like Ramanando Chatthopaddhay, who was the editor of *Prohashi Patrika* and *Modern Review* at his time, was enormous support for them. Shanta Devi was also a student of Bethune College as Abala Bose was. Shanta Devi received the Padmabati award in 1914 for being the first female student who passed Bachelor of Arts. She was excellent in English, Bangla, Hindi, and Sanskrit. Her first translated book was *'Folk Tales of Hindusthan'* in Bengali from *'Hindusthani Upokatha'*. Famous writer Upendrakishor Roychowdhury had drawn the pictures of that book (Sengupta et al., 1976).



Santa Devi

Source: Santa Devi, Purbasmriti

In 1917, the English-translated version of *'Tales of Bengal'* was published by Oxford University Press, and Shanta Devi did the work. Shanta was married to eminent historian Kalidas Nag in 1925. She wrote many books and novels like *Jibondola*, *Chirontoni*, *Duhita*, *Alakhjhora*. Some of her childhood stories were also renowned for their attractiveness. Stories written by her are *Ushashi*, *Sithir Sindur*, *Badhubaran* – so on and so forth (Das, 2003). She obtained a Bhubonmohini gold medal in 1949 for her remarkable book *'Bharat Mukti Sadhak Ramanando o Ordhyo Satabdir Bangla'*. *Purbasmriti* was one of her memoirs. (Sengupta et al., 1976).

The exact date of Shanta Devi's travel to Japan could not be found, but after her return, she wrote her travelogue in four segments, which started in 1938 at *Prabashi Journal*.

4.5 Parul Devi

Parul Devi was the last person among the five women, and she went to Japan for very few days. No reliable document is found about the actual date of her visit.

Any biography of Parul Devi could not be found in *Samsad Bangla Sahittyo Sangi* or *Samsad Bangla Charitavhidhan*. Some letters were evident that Parul Devi was Rabindranath Tagore's Granddaughter as Rabindranath addressed her as his granddaughter in his poem. In a letter to Parul Devi, Rabindranath mentioned Mira Devi as Parul Devi's aunt, so it could be imagined that Parul Devi was in the Tagore family tree. From another source, it could be found that Parul Devi was the wife of Alakendranath Tagore, who was the son of famous artist Abanindranath Tagore (Lahiri, 2021). All know that Abanindranath Tagore was the son of Rabindranath's brother Gaganendranath Tagore. In short, Abanindranath Tagore was the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. Parul Devi went to Japan along with her father (it is not clear father or Father-in-law), husband and daughter, which meant Alakendranath Tagore and Abanindranath Tagore (possibly) both accompanied her to Japan.

5. Japanese society, as observed

As we go through the write-ups written by these five women, they all visited Japan from 1910 to 1945. Hariprabha was the first person who visited in 1912. . After Meiji Restoration, when Japan compared herself with the rest of the world – found herself lagged and tried to become advanced, taking every possible measure. Kazuhiro Watanabe had described this turmoil simply but magnificently with very few words. Specifically, when Hariprabha had reached Japan for the first time, in 1912, the Meiji Government ended its sad legacy, and prince Mutsuhito died after reigning for over 45 years. In the reign of Mutsuhito, Japan defeated China in 1894, and Japan conquered Russia in 1905. In 1912, with the demise of Mutsuhito, the effort Japan has been delivering to be a so-called modern country came to its next step forward (Huq, 1999).

For better understanding, it will be more precise if the perception of these ladies could be compartmentalised based on their observation. Their observations will be discussed here as a whole about Japanese society and culture where-People, social strata, education, Japanese houses, Japanese women, festivals, dresses, food, religion, visited places- so on and so forth will be incorporated.

5.1 People

Starting with Hariprabha Takeda, she was the first who went to Japan in 1912, as mentioned before. Hariprabha had viewed and candidly rendered about Japan. She had described Japan flawlessly as she witnessed. Hariprabha's work had no

comparison with Rabindranath's *Japan Jatri* from the context of its aesthetic. Hariprabha's write-up was more like a diary where she shared her experiences visiting a new country. She possibly avoided making any political statement and, in her writing, also, Hariprabha evaded political portions of both the countries and mainly wrote about Japanese society and customs. From a social perspective, when Hariprabha reached her in-laws' place, many people came to see a foreigner, and sometimes her father-in-law got annoyed facing so many people every day. It reflects that in those days, Japanese people were not very familiar with foreigners so, whenever they encountered one, they could not miss the chance to observe her and know the world unknown to them (Huq, 1999). It is understandable through this above-written part that Japan was locked for so many years and mass people who lived in the countryside, they were interested about the outer world and so they frequently came to see someone who came from India, and it could also be found in the book that they were eager to know about the society, culture, and customs of Hariprabha's country (Huq, 1999, 37). All these women faced almost the same experiences.

Hariprabha mentioned that all the workers who worked in the hotel or the attendants of the ship were so well behaved and well-mannered, they were always attentive about their guests or border or guests' convenience (Huq, 1999, 35). Abala Bose also mentioned the attendee's attentiveness to their borders. She observed and understood it as one of Japan's marketing policies to win passengers' goodwill for the proposed contact and collaboration in future voyages. (Dasgupta, 2017,103). Saroj reached Japan on May 14, 1920, and just only after two days of staying in Japan, she went to a concert on the 16th and attending that concert, she was mesmerised witnessing Japanese women and children. She mentioned that the women came along with their children, but they were so well-mannered that they enjoyed the concert fully without any disturbance. Saroj felt that these children were well-mannered because their mothers taught them to be so. The mental tranquillity of these mothers had been reflected through their children. The thing which made her more astonished was that the fathers of those children who were singing and taking part in this conference had arranged this program to promote their child's creative and cultural excellence. For the first time, Saroj came to hear Koto and Shamisen, and she found Koto quite similar to Piano, and Shamisen had some resemblance with Indian Sitar. She liked Japanese music (Sen, 2010, 171-173).

The tea culture of Japan was a focus for her appreciation. Wherever she had visited, she was always enchanted with the Japanese green tea offering system. Sarojnalini liked how Japanese people performed their tea ceremony. Saroj had

met Geishas also. She went to watch Cherry dance, and there she witnessed Geishas performances and noticed that they were overdressed and did excessive facial makeup, but Saroj had denoted that as another way of preparing oneself (Sen, 2010, 181-172). In her book, she described Jujutsu also. Saroj found the Japanese Card exchange system unusual (Sen, 2010, 214).

Sarojnalini Dutta also never complained about the attendees in her book. She instead praised an unknown person who was a Japanese national and tried to help them find their ways to bank on the very day they have reached Japan - though they denied taking the favour offered by him (Sen, 2010, 170). Shanta Devi stated that Japanese people knew English well, but she observed that they did not know English and were perfectly okay with that (Sen, 2010, 170). Parul Devi mentioned that all these Japanese people were busy doing something. She had compared Japan with Europe and said that even the people of Europe were not as happy workers as the Japanese were (Devi, 1342). Saroj Nalini, Abala, and Hariprabha found the Japanese greeting system very interesting, especially the Japanese bowing culture that Japan practised for so long, which was enchanting for these ladies.

5.2 Social stratification

Every society has its sections and divisions regarding social stratification to understand this. Japan also has its version. According to Hariprabha, there is no such first-class, second-class compartmentalisation inside the train as we have in our countries till today (Huq, 1999, 40). Comparing this with her own country, she found that Japan did not promote social stratification in the name of race or commodity, though there might be several arguments on that note. Concentrating on the context, Abala also noticed while travelling that Japanese people act in a much more civilised way compared with the other countries. Japanese people were well-aware that they were superlatives, but all the passengers of their ship were treated equally. It is mentioned that the Director of the shipping company had invited all of them for dinner so, it could be said that Abala did not notice and mention any social inequality during her visit (Dasgupta, 2017, 103-108). Shanta Devi did not touch on this topic. Parul Devi said they all work together very hard to build a better society (Devi, 1342). Parul Devi and Shanta Devi stayed there for a short period. Sarojnalini mentioned in her book directly that Japanese people do not have any social stratification, so they do not hesitate to eat sitting anywhere (Sen, 2010, 236). However, she mentioned a first-class and second-class sitting arrangement in Japanese trains (Sen, 2010). All social stratification is undoubtedly

not dependent on sitting arrangements inside the train, but most of them mentioned Japanese train and tram and about the sitting arrangements in their works. Any social classification discussion is not found in the available text.

5.3 Education

Among these five women, Sarojnalini talked much about Japan's education system as she was mesmerised with Japanese initiatives and ideas to educate their children, especially the girl child. Sarojnalini was a social reformer, so she had a personal interest in the Japanese education system and visited several schools to obtain ideas from them. She went to High School for Girls. According to Sarojnalini, as students entered from the main gate, there was a large garden and a playing place at that high school. A vast place was allocated for high school girls, where students were 750 in number, and 30 to 40 teachers were available. Saroj noticed that they used a skirt on their kimono while drilling. A Science laboratory was also located inside the school, and Saroj was astonished watching the Japanese girls doing their things by themselves and their sincerity towards their study (Sen, 2010, 184-187).

Doshisha School was an American Missionary school. The students of this school were not exceptionally pragmatic for hard-core studies. She found the students doing classes for domestic science. The number of students was 600, and among them, 200 were the school's borders. One specific thing Saroj found interesting was that the schools did not depend on books for education; they were doing practical each thing to make it more understandable (Sen, 2010, 201-202). Both Abala Bose and Hariprabha also noticed this specific idea. Both of them probably visited Doshisha school while travelling to Japan. Sarojnalini visited Kyoto Imperial Higher Industrial School, one where students learn how to design something and do the chemical dying, Stencil at cloths, weaving by hand and machine (Sen, 2010).

After visiting primary School, Sarojnalini noticed that the compound of the primary school is bigger than the high school compound, and inside their premises, they had a museum and bird statutory. There were 550 students in that school, and the number of teachers was 23. Sarojnalini mentioned a governmental rule that if a student has belonged to that prefecture where the school is located, the government will pay his or her fees (Sen, 2010, 203-207).

Sarojnalini visited Middle School for Girls and boys also where the number of teachers was 40, and the number of students was more than 800. According to her,

the school had two to three science laboratories. Most of the girls stayed as a boarder in this middle school. The speciality of this school was that the school used to teach their students about nature; learning about nature was also a part of their study (Sen, 2010, 203-207). Moreover, there were places to do exercise, museums, and hospitals. Abala Bose also mentioned these school activities in her write-up (Dasgupta, 2017, 108). In front of the Middle English School canteen for boys, Saroj noticed something had been written in Bengali "*Amra Kaaj korar jonnyo khai, khawar jonnyo kaaj kori na*", which meant that we eat to do works, we do not work to eat. In their write-ups, Parul Devi and Shanta also mentioned the same things about the Japanese unique schooling system (Sen, 2010, 212-213).

Saroj mentioned that she had visited places for women who have had their vocational training and technical education curriculum. There were 2000 students from primary, middle, and high school levels in that school. From 4 to 17 years, girls could enter these schools for vocational training. The children here do not do mainstream study at all, and they learn how to make dolls, learn about nature, sing-song and draw pictures. Saroj had visited vocational and technical education for men also (Sen, 2010, 255-259).

Parul Devi visited some of the Japanese schools, and she compared them subconsciously with the schools of her country. She was astonished, noticing that the girl's school had a department as Laboratory of Manners where they teach how to act accordingly and live one's life (Devi, 1342).

5.4 Japanese houses

Regarding Japanese houses, Shanta Devi had mentioned in her write-up that a small garden was indispensable in Japanese houses. According to her Japanese house without a simple touch of a garden is sparse. Parul Devi once visited someone's place and mentioned that Japanese houses are immaculate, no dust can be found anywhere, and they do not use sandals inside the house; they are significantly sincere about their cleanliness. (Devi, 1342). Abala Bose also discussed Japanese houses similarly, such as wooden houses, significantly clean and perfectly organised household materials (Dasgupta, 2017, 107).

Sarojnalini Dutta described Japanese houses were decorative but not ornamental. Saroj mentioned that Japanese houses are not complete without a small place for a garden. House doors were made of wood and paper, and their houses were mostly wooden, and unnecessary furniture was a ban in Japanese houses. She mentioned

the tokonoma and about where they placed the ikebana, though Saroj was unaware of the Japanese words but mentioned those. She and Hariprabha successfully felt the pulse of the Japanese sense of beauty witnessing those houses (Sen, 2010, 179-182).

Hariprabha was married to a Japanese national. She could see Japanese houses and household things much more closely than the others as a Japanese person's wife. She used some Japanese words very casually, which is relatable to her situation. She also mentioned their well-furnished houses where unnecessary things were strictly avoided. Shoes were not allowed inside their houses, and she described that their houses did not resemble the conception of the house we had prior in our mindset (Huq, 1999, 46).

5.5 Japanese women

Sarojnalini was mesmerised by observing that Japanese women were primarily free. They were answerable to their family members for sure, but they used to go out and buy groceries freely. Do works without any male supervision. From the context of those Indian ladies, this sort of free movement was indeed surprising. Sarojnalini once mentioned that Japanese women are happy because they are free. Witnessing Japanese women's fashion, Saroj perceived that they were not interested in ornaments. Though they wear some expensive pins in hair other than that r, there was no gold or silver as adornment. Japanese people fix their teeth well, but that was never counted as a showy fashion. The way Japanese women make their hair, Saroj found that fascinating. It did not have any semblance with the Indian one. However, Japanese ladies used to apply various hairpins as the Indians do (Sen, 2010, 174-75).

Saroj mentioned in her book that India had a trend to marry their young girls at the age of 15 or 16, but Japanese ladies get married at 22 or 23, but none of them remains unmarried. Saroj found this very interesting. She felt disappointed when she noticed all the girl children were liberated and appropriately educated. Saroj tended to compare her country with the country she had visited, and while comparing the literacy rate with Japan, she found it frustrating (Sen, 2010, 175).

Hariprabha also mentioned the position of Japanese women inside their society. She said that Japanese women do not have any occlusion in their freedom. According to Hariprabha, Japanese women are free, happy-go-like, but if their mother-in-law is unhappy with her, the marriage could reach its end easily (Huq, 1999, 50). From the Japanese context, this could be easily understandable that

Japan has their UE (家) and SOTO (外) concept, and they never allow anyone to break their inner circle, and they are comfortable being reluctant to their outer circle (Ikeno et al., 1949). Abala Bose also mentioned that Japanese women are educated, hard-working, and experts in household activities. Abala found Japanese women are purely unpretentious, away from wearing ornaments (Dasgupta, 2017, 106).

Both Shanta Devi and Parul Devi mentioned that Japanese women were spontaneous and hard-working. Parul Devi said in her write-up that Japanese women could work like four men at a time with a happy face. (Devi, 1342). Shanta Devi also mentioned Japanese women's sense of beauty and their hospitality. Precisely, Japanese women were comparatively empowered to some extent compared to our expanse at those days.

5.6 Festivals

Saroj attended a Japanese festival, namely Omikoshi, which resembled the Rath-Jatra in Hinduism when she was there. An Omikoshi (神輿) is a sacred religious palanquin (also translated as a portable Shinto shrine). Shinto followers believe it serves as the vehicle to transport a deity in Japan while moving between the main shrine and temporary shrine. Saroj had watched Japanese Drama also. From her description and the photo shared in this book, it could be said that it was kabuki that she had seen, and she mentioned that the drama has some resemblance with Bengali Jatra –pala (Sen, 2010, 223-227).

Hariprabha was there with her in-laws at the time of Japanese New Year festivals. He penned in her write-up that Japanese people enjoy significantly at the time of their New Year festival; they pray for a good year, play kite-flying, wear new clothes, and enjoy for at least seven days. It seems that they try to enjoy and gather energy for the entire year by enjoying their most important festival (Huq, 1999, 39-40). Abala Bose mentioned in her write-up that a Scottish couple accompanied them to Japan, and Abala came to know that they had been to Japan twice before but missed the Cherry Blossoms festival, so they came again to witness the Cherry Blossom festival. Abala also said that Japan is the land of natural beauty, and they are the worshiper of exquisiteness. Nature of Japan is ready to mesmerise the rest of the world with her enchanting beauty. In a word, Japan is unique. Moreover, Abala revealed Japanese culture with two separate festivals for boys and girls. Abala witnessed these two festivals while staying in Japan, and she said that the fish Japanese people hang on the top of their

household as one of the customs of these festivals were colourful, fascinating, and captivating (Dasgupta, 2017, 105-106).

Parul Devi also joined their Cherry Blossom festival residing there, and she elaborated it as, at the time of Cherry blossom, people got keenly festive and enjoyed their life thoroughly during this spring season (Devi, 1342).

Shanta Devi introduced many aspects of Japan, but she did not mention the Japanese festival. She talked about Japanese temples and shrines elaborately (Devi, 1345). When she visited Japan, she did not get any chance to witness their festival and enjoy it.

5.7 Dresses and foods

All these women talked about Japanese dresses and their getups, as Kimono was so original, eye-catching, and very Japanese - those who get in touch with Japanese custom, never forget to mention Japanese dresses and 'Geta'. Sarojnalini cited in her book that in a concert, she found Japanese women wearing kimonos which attracted her the most, especially the 'Obi'. 'Obi' was the focal ingredient of that attraction. Saroj noticed that the more money they had, the more expensive their Obi was. Another thing Saroj noticed about Japanese women is that they are significantly concerned about choosing their kimono colours. The women were well aware of the fact while selecting colours of the Kimono in combining their age, status, and complexion. Saroj mentioned in her book that the young girls wearing kimonos and wandering around were just like butterflies from one flower to another. However, sometimes loud colours were very appreciated. Sometimes Saroj found their hairs extremely ornamental (Sen, 2010, 172-177).

Hariprabha also mentioned their Obi uses. Hariprabha noticed that Japanese women are very fancy about their hair makeups, and they used something relatively different than a pillow for sleeping to ensure that their hairstyle remains unfussy and to refrain from being messy. Hariprabha contributed more by saying that Japanese people usually do not use ornaments but like to decorate their hair with fancy hairpins and hairbands. They used flowers also for decorating their hair, especially the young generation (Huq, 1999, 47-48). Abala said that she did not like Japanese dresses at all. Their dresses were clean and well-suited, but those were never beautiful. Shanta Devi and Parul Devi also said almost the same thing about Japanese dresses, like the others, especially Parul Devi, stated about Obi and their colourful Kimonos (Devi, 1342).

Regarding Japanese food, Sarojnilini stated Japanese food was terrible for her. The taste of Japanese fishes and the scent that came out from Japanese cuisine demanded Sarojnalini to be accustomed to. Sarojnalini said superlative about Japan throughout her travelogue, but Saroj disliked food (Sen, 2010, 188-189). Hariprabha did not convey her thought about Japanese food as Saroj did, but it was Hariprabha's in-law's house, so she got the chance to cook on her own, and she did that also (Huq, 1999). Thus, we can understand that food was a significant discomfort for both the ladies. Parul Devi stayed in Japan for a little, and she had her food with Bengali people, so she did not talk much about Japanese food, but she tasted Japanese green tea several times, which tasted bitter to her (Devi, 1342).

Shanta Devi mentioned that when she was in Japan, she noticed that Japanese people wore Japanese dress for the lower part and western dress for the upper portion. Moreover, they used to wear a hat with their dresses and an overcoat for the winter season, which was funny to observe. All these fashions were nothing but a mimic of western culture. Ladies started using scarfs along with their kimono. Their shoes were also changed along with the new breeze from the western part (Devi, 1345).

Shanta Devi did not talk much about Japanese cuisine, but Abala Bose mentioned authentic Japanese cuisine – rice, fish, and pickles. Hariprabha, Sarojnalini, and Abala mentioned that Japanese people were not accustomed to deserts with dairy products. Three of them mentioned that Japanese desserts were made with rice and sweet beans in their writings. They found it astonishing, and from the perspective of a Bengali person, it is hard to believe in deserts that were not produced from dairy products.

5.8 Religion

These women repeatedly visited Japanese temples and shrines, but some delivered a detailed analysis of the temples and Goddesses. After visiting several sacred places, Shanta Devi found some resemblance with Hindu Gods and Goddesses with the Japanese version. Sarojnalini also mentioned that Japan was very sincere to protect its heritage and tangible cultures like temples and Shrines. Saroj compared this with the condition of their homeland and felt frustrated that Indian people are unaware and reluctant about these things.

Hariprabha and Parul were from the same religious background – both practised the Brahma religion, though they did not know or meet each other, but both

visited several Japanese temples and shrines and understood the necessity of amorphous God, and both of them had mentioned that. Shanta Devi was from a different background, and the things she had observed were focused on Buddhist rituals, and as mentioned earlier, she found some God and Goddesses who have a resemblance with Indian deities. Abala did not put much light on the religious sights for some reason.

5.9 Visited places

From the point of natural beauty, Saroj found Japan exceptionally aesthetic and artistic. Especially, Parul mentioned that the love and respect for their motherland- make the land more beautiful, gorgeous, and stunning. Abala mentioned Japan as the heaven of natural beauty but did not mention any specific visited place inside Japan. From some sources, it is visible that Jagadishchandra Bose delivered her speech at Waseda University, so they visited the Waseda University (Devi, 1342).

Among them, Sarojnalini visited the most. Parul Devi mentioned visiting Osaka where they enjoyed Cherry dance and remarked Tokyo, Kobe, Kyoto, and Nara as her visited places. (Devi, 1342). They were in Kyoto for three days and visited the Hozu River, Biwa Lake, Buddhist Temple. She especially liked Nara for the deer, and she mentioned that. She also visited Fuji Mountain and compared it with Nikko's mountains, and she found Fuji Mountain more attractive.

Sarojnalini visited Arima, which was situated in Kobe prefecture. She noticed that the people of this place, especially labourers were economically solvent. Saroj had written that the fountain water containing sulphur was good for health, which is why these people were so healthy and happy looking.

Sarojnalini, Shanta Devi, Parul Devi – all of them visited Maruyama Park. Saroj meant the famous Maruyama Park of Kyoto, and all these ladies mentioned this park. Saroj found big red fishes inside the park, and the place was a bit uneven, and that was the park's beauty. Saroj liked Biwa Lake, but unfortunately, she found the lake too noisy and loud, with many people coming and leaving (Sen, 2010).

Hari Prabha visited some of the parks near Tokyo. She mentioned those as 'Asaku (probably Asakusa) park', Ueno Park, Hibiya Park. Hari Prabha went to Kyoto also. It could be understandable through her write-ups that she visited some of the

Kyoto temples and elaborated on how Japanese people pray and chant (Huq, 1999).

Saroj visited Kinkakuji Temple. She stated that the temple was in Japanese style and the nature of that place was appealing and artistic. According to her and Shanta Devi - there was no furniture, not a single thing without the Amida Buddha inside the temple. She went to Honganji temple and witnessed 300 years old paintings of Peacock, swans, and flowers. The people who went to worship were chanting accordingly, saying 'Nama Amitav'. The thing that made her most astonished was that the temple also had an office and Japanese people were reasonably practical about their system and when it comes to religion - even though they remain the same (Sen, 2010, 179-182).

Shanta Devi went to Nara from Osaka and mentioned the famous park of Nara as Parul Devi did. Shanta Devi visited Nara Museum. She also visited Daibutsu in the Todaiji temple in due course and stated that she visited Arashiyama and Kinkakuji temple in Kyoto (Devi, 1345). While visiting Nara, Saroj had mentioned that she used Rickshaw as a vehicle. With the Rickshaws' help, they also visited temples and saw deer. Saroj had shared a photograph of her son feeding deer some food in Nara Park. Saroj noticed that Japanese people went to places to enjoy natural beauty to learn from nature but comparing the situation of her homeland, our people do not have the experience to go out and learn from nature.

Sarojnalini found the Daibutsu temple unique, and she mentioned that it was the best thing she had seen coming to Japan. She also mentioned that Goutam Buddha was born in India, but Japan had bestowed him with the due respect he deserved all the way (Sen, 2010, 131-132).

Regarding village life, Hariprabha's in-laws' house was in a village, so she lived in the village and experienced Japanese villages for an extended period. Though sometimes she found people annoying, she enjoyed living in Japanese villages most of the time. Parul Devi did not mention Japanese villages as she stayed there very short. Saroj noticed that people do not waste anything in Japanese villages, and they try to use the garbage as fertiliser. She went to Kanazawa Horti-culture School also (Sen, 2010). Saroj noticed that village areas were more organised, there were signboards everywhere, almost all the places were neat and clean. The department of agriculture offered a price for those who would not leave an inch of space unused. Saroj also visited soap factories (Sen, 2010, 151-55).

The most visited tourist spot was Nikko and Shanta Devi, Sarojnalini, Parul Devi, and Hariprabha – none of them missed the chance to visit Nikko. They went to Nikko to see the cemetery and temples. Among these temples, Saroj mentioned that she had witnessed the three wise monkey's photos at those temples, which went from India to Japan saying –'Do not Speak Evil, do not hear evil, do not see Evil' (Sen, 2010,264) Saroj went to Nakano, an agricultural university, Tokyo and Yokohama also but it was sad that she stayed three days to Hakone to see Mount Fuji but could not see that. However, they could not see the great Mt. Fuji because of the cloudy weather.

6. Conclusion

Both countries encountered hurdles and hitches at the end of the 19th Century and the 20th. Renaissance started in Bengal in education, culture, and thought in the latter part of the 19th century and continued till the first half of the 20th century. The concentration on westernisation and following the west unquestionably had hypnotised the whole world, and Bengal was not out of that consequence. Women's education and educated women's social up-gradation was in progress at that time, and some of the educated women's contributions to society had enhanced the social and cultural diaspora of Bengal for sure. Considering the context of visiting Japan -these names were on top of that list.

Along with the famous Krisnabhabini, these women also proved themselves in every way that they were educated enough to think independently and inscribe their thoughts. It was when Neo-polarization in the socio-cultural sphere of contemporary Bengal began with the traditional religious reform movements, and from this, the introduction of the Brahma doctrine originated. People got the chance to think inversely and learn to compare. On the other hand, after encountering the western world and the whole world for more than 200 years, Japanese people are also in dilemma and quandary what to receive and what to deceive. The dilemma was in what to imitate undoubtedly and what to protect as authenticity. The observation of these five women about Japan was nothing but the honest deliberation of their understanding. For instance, Hariprabha and Shanta were from a background where Bharma doctrine was promoted, so when they saw Japanese Shinto temples, they understood the profundity and impact of formless God.

On the other hand, Shanta Devi was from a hard-core Hindu upbringing, so she found resemblances with Japanese God and Goddesses with Hindu deities. None of them was wrong either, and both were correct from their perspectives. All these

people were honest in their judgments. Parul Devi and Abala Devi were mesmerised and amused at the hospitality and mannerism the Japanese women delivered, and Saroj was speechless observing their education policies, especially for women. Parul Devi raised her concern about how a country as small as Japan has made such progress in the last fifty years, and they (Indians) were lagged. All of them were from different areas, but all these travellers understood one essential component of Japan's prosperity. Their prosperity was their patriotism which never let them be failed as a nation.

After analysing their write-ups, the outcome came out: Japan learned hospitability, mannerism, and business. Japan is the heaven of natural exquisiteness, Japanese education policies are full-proof, and Japanese cuisine is not that tasty. According to them, Japan is small in size. They never uttered and remained silent about one thing which was reflected in their writings: Japan may have scarcity in recourses, Japan might be imitating the western world, Japan could easily be defeated, but Japan will never fail.

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'Meritocracy' to 'Parentocracy': (De) constructing the Theoretical Dilemma in Basic Education of Japan and Bangladesh

Md. Jahangir Alam*

Abstract– Globally, access to basic education is a universal fundamental human right. Conversely, governments of underdeveloped and developing countries experience several challenges in ensuring equity in basic education. Along with the government initiatives, equity in basic education also depends on parental socio-economic status. Japan has achieved significant success in students' learning outcomes regardless of parental SES and might serve as a role model for Bangladesh to ensure equity in education. This case study research comprehends the dynamics of parental SES in accessing quality basic education for their children in Japan and Bangladesh. This paper argues that historically, meritocracy played a fundamental role in education. However, owing to the cultural paradigm shift, Parentocracy appears to be the better option for improving children's academic outcomes. The central theoretical argument of this study is to cognise whether meritocracy or Parentocracy in the modern education system can bring equity among children. This paper finds that Bangladesh can implement the Japanese experience through curriculum modifications and play-based learning approaches to ensure equity in basic education. Finally, parental involvement is vital in ensuring equity in education to accommodate all children to receive quality basic education in Bangladesh.

Keywords Basic Education · Equity · Meritocracy · Parentocracy · Japan · Bangladesh ·

1. Introduction

The social underpinnings of educational selection have long been a subject of interest, in addition to demonstrating the significance of basic education as a

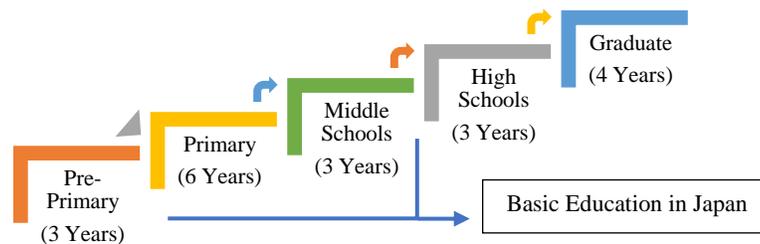
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predictor of future life opportunities, which demonstrates an expanded comprehension of the critical role of equitable educational opportunities (Cuervo, 2016). Sociologists have evaluated educational reforms' outcomes to determine which has resulted in more 'accessible' and 'equitable' for society. From a societal standpoint, two categories of enlightening theoretical approaches might be distinguished: meritocracy and parentocracy. According to Michael Dunlop Young's Meritocracy theory, every individual should be assessed purely based on merit and competence (Allen, 2011). In addition, Madzanire et al. (2012) argued that parentocracy is a social system in which a child's education is strongly influenced by parental financial means and ambitions rather than the student's aptitude and efforts. Meritocracy is minimally considered in Bangladesh, whereas many parents are moving towards a parentocratic educational policy. Basic education in Japan lasts nine years and consists of six years of elementary school and three years of middle school; in Bangladesh, basic education lasts five years of primary education. The Japanese educational system is well-organised, enabling students to succeed while growing into well-organised individuals (Cummings, 2014). Education in Bangladesh lacks co-curricular activities that enable brain development to unwind throughout their school years. Japanese children grow into competent and well-balanced adults due to a comprehensive educational system that includes moral education, physical education, clubs, and other engaging activities. Following the meritocracy principle, it could have been feasible to assure a reasonable distribution of education. Some children cannot attend primary school; additional educational substitutions should ensure equity. This paper shows that Bangladesh should unite the aspects of the Japanese basic educational model to restructure its academic approach to address the theoretical policy shifting from meritocracy to parentocracy over time.

2. Background of Basic Education Policies in Japan and Bangladesh

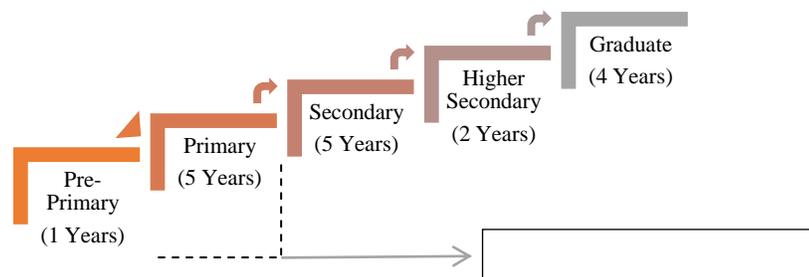
Being one of the world's most advanced nations in terms of technology and educational development, Japan has an engaging curriculum to offer. As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, education in Japan begins at the age of six with primary school and progresses through middle school, high school, and university (Kubota, 2016). The basic education period lasts until the end of high school (9 years) for Japan (Takayama, 2011), where the basic education is at the primary level (5 years) in Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh, 1990). There are four years of educational policy gaps considering the basic education system in Japan and Bangladesh.

Figure 1: Basic Education in Japan



Source: Prepared by the author.

Figure 2: Basic Education in Bangladesh



Source: Prepared by the author.

This research ascertained the flaws and loopholes from the Japanese basic education perspective. Due to the diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds, disparities are more likely to be seen in Bangladesh. The schooling process of children differs based on their socio-economic status. It is assumed that people with higher socio-economic status send their children to private schools rather than a nearby government institution. Nevertheless, the scenario is different in Japan, where government institutions are prioritised for their service, ambience, and teaching. The service quality of public schools in Bangladesh is substandard, and parents prefer sending their children to private schools despite private schools being more expensive. Parentocracy is more likely to be witnessed in the education sector due to the pandemic scenario in Bangladesh, where educational institutions were suspended for over 17 months. Compared to government counterparts, private institutions have been providing classes partially. Therefore, despite budgetary constraints, parents always want to provide their children with

the best possible quality of education. Bangladesh lacks a solid foundation on meritocracy makes it more likely to discriminate in the basic education system.

3. Conceptualising the Basic Education of Japan and Bangladesh

Japan and Bangladesh have more similarities in education system management, particularly in the basic education system. In Japan, the education sector is decentralised, and each provincial government controls the education system of its own by possessing its autonomous education board. Currently, even the MEXT (Monbukagakusho) has significantly little authority over the school curricula in Japan (Wieczorek, 2008). Japan is one of the leading countries to ensure quality education for all. Education is compulsory and utterly free in Japan until the 9th grade, often known as junior high school (Stevenson, 1991). The Japanese government heavily subsidises education to ensure maximum output. Government budgets encompass infrastructural expenses, educational equipment expenses, teachers' salaries, and other several expenses. The majority of the students in Japan tend to go to public institutions rather than expensive private ones (Parmenter, 1999). This tendency indicates that public schools are providing quality education in Japan. The government of Japan also provides many privileges for children with disabilities to ensure basic education for all (Kayama, 2010). All these efforts from the Japanese government have played a vital role in making Japan one of the most advanced countries in education.

More importantly, Japanese students can choose their preferred career path while still in school. Before graduating from high school, most students have to fill up and submit a form about their own career choices and aspirations, which significantly impacts their future career pathways (El-agraa & Ichii, 1985). They are offered various courses concentrating on various career objectives, which significantly shapes their skills and expertise according to their intended career path. Unfortunately, students in Bangladesh do not get the same privileges as Japanese students, and Bangladesh has yet to develop a well-integrated educational system. Another unique feature of Japan's advanced education system is that all the schools arrange mandatory club activities and sometimes supplemental classes whenever needed, encouraging students to stay on track rather than drop out and get demotivated (Gibson, 2011). In Japan, the teachers in the public schools receive a decent salary from the government, which motivates them to value their jobs and continue providing quality education to their students (Wada, 1993). All of these approaches by the Japanese government have made it

possible to ensure quality education for every Japanese student, which Japan considers to be its most significant achievement.

In Bangladesh, the scenario is quite different, as many students drop out just after the fifth grade. Basic education is still not free for all in Bangladesh in a true sense, and most parents afford to provide their children with the necessary educational opportunities. However, the government of Bangladesh is planning to ensure compulsory education for every student until 8th grade, completely free of cost for the government school only, although the procedures are yet to be implemented (Mujeri, 2010). What is more startling being that the government-owned schools fail to provide quality education in most cases, and not all parents can afford to send their children to private schools? In the remote areas of Bangladesh, many public schools are left vacant or simply with a handful of students to enrol in the education process, raising serious concerns about the sector's future. Due to poverty and lack of support from the respective stakeholders, many students cannot receive the minimum standard education. Unfortunately, children with disabilities have the most difficulty getting a basic education in Bangladesh, as there are only a few special schools. The government also lacks sufficient passion for ensuring children with special needs receive compulsory basic education, resulting in an unwanted inequity (Calarco, 2014).

On the contrary, teachers working in public schools of Bangladesh are underpaid, which demotivates them from continuing their noble profession. The students also do not participate in club activities in most schools, as there are no facilities (Nath et al., 1999). Thus, they also get demotivated because of the obsolete curriculum, and it severely hampers the manifestation of their potential. Bangladesh has a lot to learn from Japan to ensure quality basic education for all.

4. Review of literatures

DeWiele and Edgerton (2015) argued that the parentocracy refers to social strategy, promoting parenting authority and market-oriented schooling resolutions, and a practical, interactive parenting elegance focused on structured, progressive, and extra-curricular activities which encourage early education. Socially disadvantaged children are more prone to academic insufficiency than their more advantaged peers, and the impact is even worse among those with the highest degree of academic performance. Geographic factors such as district poverty and local educational opportunities may explain the socio-economic discrepancy in the academic match. These matching issues in basic education significantly influence individual future income and career opportunities,

including university participation and labour market performance (Maragkou, 2020). However, social justice comes in several situations, from developing the vision of culturally responsive schools not to leaving children behind (Hyttén & Bettez, 2011; Cuervo, 2016). It fosters the active participation of students in their education and assists teachers in creating environments that promote empowerment, participation, and critical learning (Hackman, 2005). It is described as a process and an end-goal that aims to engage everyone in a collectively designed society to meet their desires and necessities (Bell, 1997). Far from being supplanted by a 'philosophy of parentocracy,' meritocracy remains the primary legitimation standard for allocating life opportunities and the primary reason for the persistence of social disparity in democracies. The meritocratic concept is firmly entrenched in basic education (Waldow, 2016; Madzanire & Mashava, 2012).

Basic education is more important than higher education in most modern education economies. Households without formal education are six times poorer than those with school access. It is necessary to increase basic educational opportunities and cultivate fundamental intellectual skills vital to global achievement (Haque, 2014; Rahman et al., 2005). Bangladesh has taken numerous initiatives to advance primary education, including the implementation of laws for public education, the provision of free school textbooks, the abolition of fees for schools, the provision of financial aid for rural and underprivileged students as well as girls through to the secondary level, supplementary participation in education outside schools and an extension of pre-primary education. It has already achieved tremendous progress in elementary education, notably in the enrolment of gender equality. However, low-quality learning offsets quantitative enrolment gains, making learning for all essentially unproductive (Banu et al., 2018).

The national curriculum of Japan did not formally mandate sustainable development of education; instead, it highlighted a fundamental educational process that contributes to the accomplishment and building of a sustainable society from the very beginning of basic education. This paradigm has been replicated and adapted to different situations across East and Southeast Asia and generated a promise for South Asia (Didham et al., 2012). Basic education in Japan was appreciated in the early 1980s because of its egalitarianism. Indeed, inequities and inequalities between places prompted education in Japan to be viewed as a social problem in the post-war period, and uniformity of education was attained by progressive investment in education and more extravagant government expenditure per student in disadvantaged prefectures (Matsuoka,

2014). Now, the national curriculum of Japan exposes pupils to equitable treatment of students recognised for their balanced and fundamental education. They standardised the standards of quality education to be deconstructed, to move away from the burden of national examinations, and to emphasise each student's interests and abilities (Wieczorek, 2008). However, Japan is a robust closed society, not a stable open society with its atmosphere, commonly demonstrated in the education sector. The introduction of a market mechanism from the fundamental educational stage, where global competition for the initial project will rise and boost academic production; moreover, further assistance from this confined framework (Arimoto, 2015).

According to Diaz-Serrano (2020), the transition to secondary education is accelerated in impoverished and lower-middle-income countries by extending mandatory schooling times. This strategy is successful only in countries where the duration of compulsory education surpasses the duration of basic education. Kubota (2016) noted that the modifications to Japanese compulsory education in 2002 decreased the number of pupils attending schools, and school breaks increased. The changes have increased the household expenditure for students in public junior high schools on supplementary education, for example, pre-schools, artwork, athletics, and culture. In higher-income families than in lower-income households, the effect of modifications on expenses was more significant. A longer compulsory school term reduces the time allotted to tertiary education and the average time spent in schooling (Lu, 2018).

5. Theoretical framework of Basic Education

This study adopted the prominent theories, namely Meritocracy, Parentocracy, and Social Justice theory, to understand the basic education scenario in Japan and Bangladesh. Meritocracy is a political process in which people are granted economic and political authority based on their competencies rather than their wealth or social status (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Sociologist Michael Dunlop Young (1958) introduced meritocracy through his dystopian political and satirical novel 'The Rise of the Meritocracy' (Dench, 2006; Willetts, 2006; Young, 2001). The concept 'Parentocracy' refers to the notion that parents are in charge of their children's education. It specifically relates to Phillip Brown's (1988) 507 marketization initiatives of education, which attempted to offer parental greater control over children's education. Social Justice is a philosophical and political theory that claims that the theory of justice has elements beyond those contained in civil and criminal law, economic supply and demand, or conventional ethical

framework. Nancy Fraser (2008) formulated the theory of Social Justice in education, shown in Figure 3, to show the interconnections with meritocracy and parentocracy for education and development.

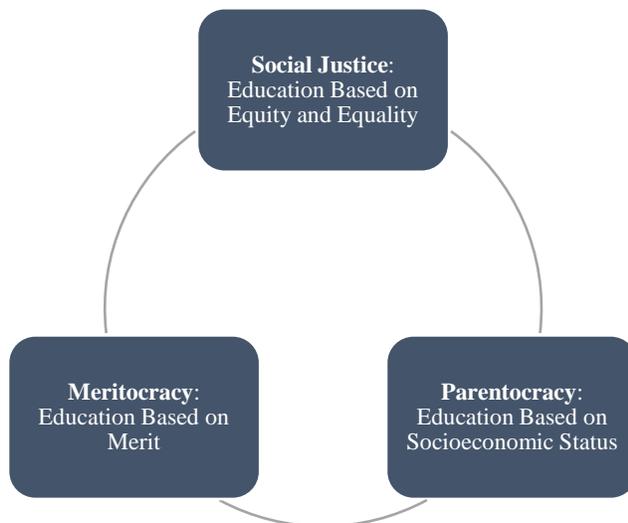


Figure 3: Theoretical Framework relating to Basic Education

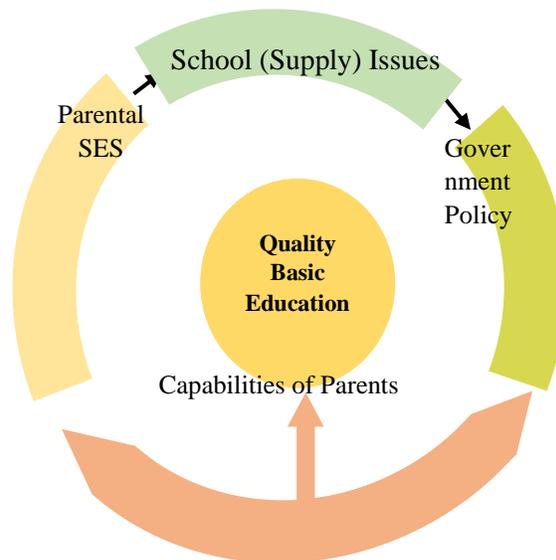
Source: Prepared by the author.

Since World War II, education has been considered the principal 'saviour' of the meritocratic ideal in advanced capitalist economies. Meritocracy is a broad sociological term often used in modern sociological research, notably in education. Most people consider meritocracy an ideal societal selection based on an individual's accomplishments, ambitions, and competitiveness, and it is frequently compared to other historical, social selections in a positive light. Even though the term 'meritocracy' had not yet been coined, the theory of merit-based rewards was essential to the systemic functionalist concepts that have evolved to characterise sociology in recent decades (Liu, 2016).

In the emergence of a modern educational paradigm, Parentocracy has significant implications for sociologists' understanding of the role of education in advanced capitalist cultures, particularly the link between education and authority. Instead of merit, parentocracy emphasised family, class, gender, and ethnicity. The king's son will be king is the perfect instance of parentocracy (Dale, 1989). Liberals prioritise state control of education to guarantee it is organised on meritocratic

principles. This level of government involvement is expected, and it is believed that the best people should be placed in the most challenging jobs, regardless of class, gender, or ethnicity. The state maintains socio-economic inequities by legitimising school selection outcomes as fair contests rather than competitions (Brown, 1990). However, parental capabilities primarily ensure the quality education for better learning outcomes of their children (Hartas, 2014), shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Parental Capabilities for Quality Education



Source: Prepared by the author.

The connection of theory and practice with the moral use of power shows why social justice is vital at all times as an educational intervention. The theory explains that students of all social classes are equal as individuals, and they all should get equal access to basic education. Social justice necessitates active struggle and is inextricably linked to educational theories and activities of practitioners, schools, academic institutions, and government officials (Bogotch, 2000). The previously cohesive interpretation of Social Justice is now increasingly split between demands for restructuring and rights for perception. Claims of recognition are becoming more prevalent. The fall of communalism and

the emergence of free-market dogma in fundamentalist and progressive forms are manifestations in education (Henderson & Waterstone, 2008).

6. Methods

This study followed a qualitative case study method that included document reviews, cross-case analysis, and theoretical discourses to understand the academic dilemma in Basic education of Japan and Bangladesh. In recent years, our world has evolved increasingly sophisticated, making it more challenging to understand what others perceive and experience. In-depth discussions, document evaluation, and case study research are popular in qualitative research. Ten case studies were selected based on purposive sampling to understand Japan and Bangladesh's basic education development phenomena. The collected data were analysed based on thematic content analysis to explain the basic education scenario in Japan and Bangladesh. Finally, expert interviews were also conducted to triangulate the findings in explaining the theoretical dilemma in Basic education.

7. Findings

7.1 Parental capability approach for equity

The parental socio-economic conditions in Bangladesh primarily impacted the basic education access for all children. Most parents reported that they decide on schooling for their children, where the government does not control them. The government should provide equal access and financial benefits for all children; however, many parents mentioned that parents decide their child's schooling due to government limitations, teachers' qualifications, and overall institutional qualities and environment. On the other hand, in Japan, in most of the reported cases, parents do not concern about the delimitations like in Bangladesh. Although, they are more concerned about the learning outcome and government support in ensuring equity in basic education. Based on the reported cases in Bangladesh, parental actions support the emergence of parentocracy in ignoring the meritocracy for basic education. However, in considering the reported cases in Japan, considering the school facilities, meritocracy is still the ultimate consideration among the parents.

7.2 Curriculum substances

Considering the importance of basic learning, although there are discrete curriculums in Bangladesh, namely the Bangla version, English version, English medium, and Madrasa education, could be mentioned. In Bangladesh, the discrete curriculum in a single education system is causing the dilemma of parentocracy vs meritocracy issues to be more prevalent than Japan's single-styled curriculum, which undoubtedly ensures access for all in basic education more stable. The distribution of a wide range of education 'goods' and 'bad' and students' assessment of their experience with equity in elementary schools is a highly fruitful and informative platform for future social justice conversations. In education, the vital importance of a fair and equitable school is primarily threefold. The guarantee of fairness or equity at schools in both structures and everyday activities is worthwhile, for it is necessary to try to restore justice when it is breached and things that need to be considered. As a result, the parentocratic role in Bangladesh makes the hurdles among the children to access basic education due to curriculum issues.

7.3 Length of compulsory and Basic Education

The length of basic schooling in Bangladesh needs to be extended, significantly preventing dropouts in the school system. Extending the length of schooling increases the educational expenses of low-income parents but encourages students to progress to the next level of education. As students join employment quickly as per their qualifications, the per capita income of each household improves, which will generate a highly qualified workforce, and their incomes grow due to better quality acquired that redefines long-term social justice on a cyclical basis. Extended compulsory basic education matters for the children to avail a decent job; however, considering the Japanese cases, many children in Bangladesh do not get any decent job based on their basic educational qualifications. As a result, the rate of child labour increases. Finally, many parents reported that they do not find any significance in studying more years of schooling as many parents reported that the basic schooling system should be result-oriented.

Further, some parents mentioned that one year more schooling does not impact their future careers. The government could not ensure any job opportunities except the number of graduates increasing, ultimately impacting the unemployment rate. However, most children participate in compulsory basic education in Japan and get employment opportunities. On the other hand, parental

socio-economic status ensures their child's schooling in Bangladesh, and justice in education is absent. The parentocratic role plays a vital role in child schooling. As a result, the length of basic schooling does not ensure justice in education where due to government limitations, it enlarges the inequality among the society.

7.4 Capability approach and shifting paradigm

Parental capabilities generate inverse associations and boost the gross enrolment rate concurrently. Socio-economic income disparity influences the outcome of children's schooling; parents who earn more spend more on schooling for their child's extra-curricular activities, acquiring more quality and skill development. On the other hand, families with limited resources avail themselves of schooling opportunities as per government facilities at a lower cost. Parentocracy leads to social disparities that are one of the impacts of lengthy schooling. In Bangladesh, parental capabilities matter in ensuring their children's schooling due to diverse income groups among society. To ensure social justice, the government must initiate providing a better school environment and learning opportunities for all, which most of the parents reported for the case of Japanese experiences. However, in the case of Bangladesh, parents are the ultimate source of their child's schooling. Parental aspirations matter for their child's schooling in Bangladesh, leading to the shifting paradigm from meritocracy to parentocracy. However, in the case of Japan, parents are more dependent on government schooling services, and as a result, meritocracy is more critical for child schooling. The Shifting paradigm of basic education in Bangladesh, remarkably from meritocracy to parentocracy due to government budgetary limitations and increasing disparities among the children.

7.5 Equity and justice in Basic Education

In Bangladesh, the shifting paradigm increases disparities among children learning outcomes. Equity and equality need to be achieved by enhancing the quality of government schools to minimise this socio-economic gap and disparities. A quality school environment provides students from all socio-economic backgrounds with numerous opportunities and priorities to complete their meritocratic education to give an excellent impetus to upward social mobility. Many parents are subjectively mentioned that the government must ensure and allocate financial assistance on a need-based assessment for broader participation in basic education irrespective of school's type. Region-based allocations must be made separately, considering the financial disparities between

individuals among all regions. The social justice system in Japan advocates the basic education opportunity equally for all children, focusing on social disparities or income groups. It might be a daunting process for the government of Bangladesh to ensure equal rights among unequal people in ensuring equity. Due to government initiatives, parental income does not impact children's participation in basic education in Japan. However, equity is difficult to ensure as per the heterogeneity of class structures among the society in Bangladesh.

In order to build a just society, resilient basic educational development is crucial. Separate processes can be established to provide pupils additional time during vacation and weekend breaks and greater creativity to be exercised, not focusing only on public examination. In Bangladesh, many respondent parents reported that allocating more time for extra-curricular activities, equating rural-urban breaks, taking extraordinary steps might create a spirit of cooperation rather than competition, all of which may help ensure social justice. There has been much debate among the parents in Bangladesh on the equitable distribution of limited resources across and within institutions, including income, influence, jobs, prestige, and benefits in kind.

7.6 The COVID-19 pandemic and Basic Education

Globally, many countries have decided to shut down academic institutions for the time being to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Japan shuttered educational institutions in March 2020, sparking discussions on how to manage the education system both during and after the outbreak. Japan's academic calendar typically starts in April, whereas the academic year in other countries begins in September or January each year. Japan's academic session has also been recommended to begin in September as part of the strategy to strengthen education regulation. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) generated a financial aid system for education in April 2020. This system comprises tuition fee reductions, exemptions, and scholarship distribution. Besides, students request tuition discounts from their schools, especially private institutions, since they are not using school facilities. Again, many students struggle financially due to the loss of part-time employment or a decline in family income. None of Japan's schools has reduced tuition costs to assist students; instead, some institutions have provided financial assistance via scholarships or grants. Finally, due to the acceleration of digital transformation, Japan's education system underwent significant changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in Bangladesh, the government public schools are free of cost, but the other

schools incur fees from the parents. After the COVID-19 outbreaks, all the schools were closed to ensure child safety starting a remote learning system. However, due to the parental socio-economic conditions, the modalities did not work for the case in Bangladesh. Most of the children are not engaged in learning due to socio-economic disparities.

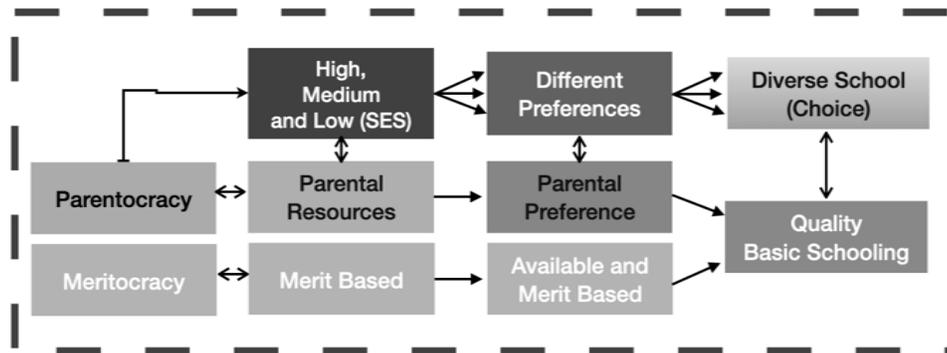
8. Discussions

Bangladesh's educational justice appears unattainable due to parental socio-economic conditions as a developing nation. This study appraises the theoretical predicament of both Japan's and Bangladesh's basic education system through the social justice theoretical lens, considering the parental capability approach. The capability approach, which Nobel Laureate economist Amartya Sen formulated, is commonly used in education policy domains. The parental capability approach is built on two fundamental concepts: functioning and capabilities. In Bangladesh, parental capability leads children's education and welfare due to patriarchal behaviour and customs that motivate children to live a life they find worthy while accepting the existence of social and structural obligations.

In reverse, capability indicates parents' ability to function within these restrictions and transform the actual possibilities into valued functioning and, eventually, children's knowledge and welfare. Meritocracy can be seen in the Japanese basic education system, where most children attend public schools. In contrast, parentocracy can be seen in the Bangladeshi primary education system, where private schools are more valued (Arrow et al., 2000). As each individual is different, Japanese basic education focuses mainly on the child's ability and provides need-based resources (Parmenter, 1999). As a result, they get the highest value from their functioning and capabilities in child learning irrespective of gender orientation (Castilla, 2008).

On the other hand, in Bangladesh, the basic education system focuses more on capabilities and uses individual wealth instead of merit to achieve that goal. So, despite having merits, children from low-income families do not get utilities or resources. As a result, the highest value from functioning and capabilities is not always achieved and negatively impacts, which extends the social inequality among children considering the parentocracy and meritocracy approach shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Theoretical Dilemma in Basic Education



Source: Prepared by the author.

Not all parents in Bangladesh afford to send their children to excellent schools, which are private in most cases. Moreover, the expenses for education are pretty overwhelming for many parents (McCoy & Major, 2007). The education expenses create an invisible opportunity divide between the rich and the poor (Stevenson & Stigler, 1994). Thus, educational equity is impeded in Bangladesh. The scenario is quite the opposite in Japan, as all public institutions provide quality education to all children. Most parents voluntarily choose these public schools over the private ones for their children (Lu, 2018). The government also endorses expenses for basic education to a great extent, which makes it easier for Japanese parents to continue their children's education. Unlike Bangladesh, children with disabilities receive much assistance in attaining basic education in Japan, and there are many special schools for them (Kayama, 2010). As a result, children do not have to drop out of mainstream education, which is excellent for the Japanese government. Besides, children living in remote areas also receive all kinds of assistance from the higher education authority (MEXT) in Japan, making it easier to continue their education. Bangladesh has many shortcomings in this regard. Every year in Bangladesh, many students drop out of the education process due to parental socio-economic challenges ranging from poverty, direct or indirect social discrimination or injustice, parents' unawareness towards literacy, child marriage (Mujeri, 2010). Still, after all these years of independence, Bangladesh is enduring a meagre literacy rate because of all these challenges and the lack of proper policy implementation (Shohel & Howes, 2011). To overcome this situation, Bangladesh should consider Japan's experiences and implement necessary policy measures as follows:

- First, the government should provide equal facilities for all children in basic education. Japan provides all of its students the same facilities for basic education. It does not matter whether the student belongs to a particular family or cast or whether the child is meritorious enough to get those benefits. They emphasise making all the students equally skilled. Bangladesh should apply the Social Justice Theory for children's basic education to make all students equally qualified to make each of them a human resource (Cummings, 2014).
- Second, the government should ensure equal financial assistance for families. In Japan, compulsory education is twelve years, and compulsory education widely represents basic education. In Bangladesh, compulsory education is for a brief period and basic education. Bangladesh should increase the duration of compulsory education, which will give solid and durable basic educational opportunities. On the other hand, it reduces educational expenses for parents and reduces the child labour rate (Nakayasu, 2016).
- Third, the government should ensure mandatory schooling area mapping for broader access to quality education. Parentocracy is extensively perceptible for basic education in Bangladesh. Wealthy parents are sending their children to private and renowned schools. On the contrary, poor and middle-class families send their children to primary educational institutes without paying extra tuition because of financial constraints (Mijs, 2016; Alam, 2020). To terminate this social inequality, the government should emphasise the admission of all students to government primary schools. Every student from any family has to study in the nearest government school (Cameron, 2011).
- Fourth, the government should ensure in-service teacher training and a quality school environment for all schools. The Bangladesh government must endeavour to improve all schools' quality of school environmental development to achieve equity and equality in basic education and attract affluent families' attention to government schools. The teachers should be qualified and well-trained. Government schools must be equitable, highly qualified, and well-trained teachers compared to private schools to bring social justice. Issues relating to educational quality should be resolved in a revised or new act implementation (Aboud & Hossain, 2011).

9. Conclusion

Parentocracy is the primary influence on Bangladesh's present basic education system; regardless of public or private schools, all children must get a standard fundamental education. This study suggests that many children do not complete their basic education after a few years in primary education due to several limitations causing due to parental capabilities for quality private schooling in Bangladesh. The institutional education infrastructures are insufficient to ensure that all children receive a quality basic education. It can be claimed that all eight provisions of Bangladesh's compulsory basic education act are devoted to ensuring the enrolment of children between the ages of 6–10 years. Regrettably, the government policies could not ensure complete access and basic education quality. A key finding of this research is that significant improvements are required among the government schools to be as effective as private schools to expand the meritocratic policy in Bangladesh. A joint partnership between public and private institutions in the management and monitoring of schools and teacher skills development can be entirely considered. Although parental capabilities play a vital role in basic schooling, the meritocratic system should consider better children's outcomes to ensure justice in education. The government stakeholders could play an influential role in ensuring equal facilities for all children in basic education. This study suggests that the quality of education in public and private schools should be monitored regularly to ensure social justice for children and contribute to Bangladesh's enlightened future.

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A Contemporary Indian Expatriate View of Japan: Orienting an Indian in Japan by Pallavi Aiyar

M.V.Lakshmi*

Abstract– In recent years, with the movement of people across nations, be it for economic or political reasons, by choice or due to economic or political circumstances, the opportunities to interact with one another across borders of one's own country have increased. This can be seen in various milieus such as the workplace or socially, through informal and formal platforms, through person to person contact and social networking. Diaspora literature is one of the significant genres of literature that has emerged because of this movement of people across borders, and it has established itself as a genre of literature in its own right. Another related genre of writing, namely, 'expatriate writing', has also gained prominence. It would be important to note that expatriates, unlike diaspora, are people who move to another country by choice, for a limited period with a definite purpose or intention and are not permanent immigrants.

This paper will explore a work of contemporary Indian expatriate writing on Japan to understand Japan as seen through the eyes of an Indian expatriate writer. Expatriate studies can be studied as a specific discourse or given the distinction of a literary genre, much like the work that is called a feminist or a Marxist theory (Ilyas, 2018).

The above statement refers to expatriate writing as a literary genre like feminist or Marxist writing with a theoretical basis. *Orienting an Indian in Japan* by a female Indian journalist - Pallavi Aiyar, written in the year 2021, will be analysed for her perception of Japan. Before discussing the book and the author's insights on Japan, the paper would first elaborate upon the genre of expatriate writing and the unique perspective it offers vis-à-vis that of a tourist or a traveller's account or a work of fiction.

Keywords Expatriate writing · India and Japan · Non-fiction · Self and the other · Stereotypes ·

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1. Literary and non-literary accounts of a country

Fictional literature has contributed immensely in defining and propagating images and stereotypes of a nation in the eyes of the other. When it comes to an understanding of the images of Japan or other Asian nations of the East, the perception has been primarily dominated by an 'Orientalist perspective' defined by the West.

Study of foreign literature for Images of one's own nation is significant in not only contributing to the understanding of the 'other' and the 'self' in foreign literature but also in bringing about some evaluation of the literature of another country from an outsider's perspective, as Peter Boerner states in his article,

"National Images and their place in Literary Research"- Germany as seen by Eighteenth-Century French and English reading Audiences" (1975).

Besides, it is felt that the process of writing about the 'other' helps in understanding one's own self as the writer compares, contrasts and evaluates the 'other' based on his or her worldview. This paper discusses how an expatriate does not just observe but, having lived within the society of the other, has a unique perspective of writing about the other through the case study of a contemporary Indian expatriate's account of Japan.

2. Defining the expatriate gaze and its significance

Even as diaspora studies have flourished with time, especially in recent years, the sub-set of expatriate writing remains relatively unexplored. It is essential to define the word expatriate and elucidate the term expatriation.

The term expatriate in common parlance is used interchangeably with diaspora, immigrant, or migrant worker. However, it is essential to note that the motivations and reasons for moving to another country define an expat as different from the diaspora. Expatriates are people who move to another country by choice with the intent to stay there for a defined duration or are unsure of the same. Unlike immigrants, they do not permanently shift their residence to another country.

The perspective of an expatriate is formed with the comfort and advantage of viewing and experiencing the country of her/his current residence at his or her own leisurely pace, unlike the more fleeting experiences of a tourist or a traveller. The length of stay and the breadth of the experiences of a life shared with the other expatriates and natives, while being immersed in the culture of the resident

country, lends them an opportunity to view and experience the country of their residence. The opportunity here refers to the range of day-to-day experiences, forming and reforming opinions, moving outside the limited scope of viewing a country as a tourist or even a traveller, in a relatively 'secure' environment with fellow expatriates who may be co-inhabiting another country. The confidence of knowing that one has a haven in the foreign land in the expat community would also perhaps encourage the expatriates to look at aspects of the country of their residence that may not have interested them as a tourist or a traveller who have limitations on time, and resources and a more well-defined and planned itinerary.

3. Prominent accounts of foreign nationals in Japan

When one talks of the broad genre of Japan's portrayal through the eyes of expatriates who set foot in the country and then went on living in it to make it their home, one finds that the tradition is richly decorated with prominent names such as Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo), Donald Keene, Donald Richie, and Pico Iyer among others. Each has contributed immensely in building an image of the country as someone who seeps in the experiences and not just catches fleeting images alone as a tourist may. An expatriate has the advantage of time on his/her side, where he/she gets an opportunity to live and experience the mundane day to day happenings in a country and capture personalised images of the country, besides what "ought to be" seen, explored, or perceived as, defined by popular notions or stereotypes. Moreover, on account of spending a significant amount of time in a country, his or her impressions and perceptions are unique in that while they may be reiterated due to repeated experiences during the period of stay, there is a possibility of them even being redefined because of the time and opportunities provided.

Lafcadio Hearn, also known as Koizumi Yakumo, is a prominent expatriate who chose to live in Japan and make it his home. His representative works, prominent among which is *Kwaidan* are about Japanese Culture, ghosts, spirits. His work provides a 'western' perspective on Japan and brings it to the fore. Amongst the other prominent names, there is Donald Keene. His contribution as a Japanologist who has written in English and Japanese and translations is well recognised in academia. He also chose to stay in Japan after the Tohoku earthquake in 2011 and stayed there for as long as he lived till the year 2019. Other names of expatriates who made Japan their home for a long time and are known to have contributed significantly to understanding Japan is Pico Iyer-an English expatriate born to Indian parents who also chose to live for a prolonged time in Japan and wrote

books such as *A Beginners Guide to Japan: Observations and Provocations* (2019) on it as well.

The reason for citing such examples is to emphasise the relevance of understanding the 'other', which is even more significant today where the geographical lines blur when working with and socially interacting with the other, especially when opportunities for working overseas arise in today's world. In this scenario, travellers, tourists, and fiction writers provide perspectives on Japan, which help us in comprehending a country, a people and her culture. The paper adds to these by analysing the expatriate gaze of an Indian, who has the advantage of living with the insider if it can be called that, using the example of one contemporary work *Orienting an Indian in Japan* by Pallavi Aiyar, while touching upon perspectives on culture, society and people of Japan as covered in the book.

4. *Orienting an Indian in Japan* – about the book

The book *Orienting an Indian in Japan* is a contemporary non-fictional account of an Indian expatriate woman's experience in Japan written by Pallavi Aiyar. The author is well-travelled, having lived in many countries such as the United Kingdom, Indonesia, China, and has written about her experiences in China, where she spent around seven years in a bestselling work titled *Smoke and Mirrors: An Experience of China*.

Aiyar talks about her experiences and observations during her near four-year-long stay, mainly in Tokyo from 2016. Early in the book, she documents her impressions of the place with the following quote:

"In many ways, it was more inscrutable and less familiar than China had been to me before I moved there. In China, there had at least been the fried noodles and chilly chicken beloved to Indians. But encouraging raw fish was not an appetising, or even particularly intelligible, moment for an Indian "(Aiyar, 2021).

Even though she had prior knowledge of J-pop songs, vending machines, Haruki Murakami and had a reading list of many authors such as Soseki and Tanizaki, recommended to her before she left for Japan. She even enrolled on Japanese language classes beforehand. What follows are ten diverse chapters that touch upon her observations, experiences and perceptions of Japan and her understanding of it through witty and interesting anecdotes and some thought-provoking incidents that she shares through the book.

4.1 Reiterating pre-existing notions and breaking stereotypes

When we take any single work of literature, be it fiction or non-fiction, to interpret a country or understand her culture, there is a danger of stereotyping it. One of the most critical aspects of the definition of the word 'Stereotype' as given by Lippmann, is in the expression of 'our' beliefs. The word 'our' refers to an undefined entity of people who collectively think of something similar, thereby stereotyping it. However, it is essential to note that such stereotyping also causes people to think of things the way they do, binding them in a cyclical relationship.

Lippmann argues that the Stereotypes thrive and are based on building consensus, as has been pointed out by Richard Dyer in his article the "Role of Stereotypes", and thereby the 'collectives' of what 'we' think of 'them' are used to build the argument for consensus. However, what is important to note is that the consensus is not real but rather the very stereotypes that help build consensus (Dyer, 2002).

If the experience contradicts the stereotype, one of two things happens. If the man is no longer plastic, or if some powerful interest makes it highly inconvenient to rearrange his stereotypes, he poohpoohs the contradiction as an exception that proves the rule, discredits the witness, finds a flaw somewhere, and manages to forget it. However, if he is still curious and open-minded, the novelty is taken into the picture and modified. Sometimes, if the incident is striking enough, and if he has felt a general discomfort with his established scheme, he may be shaken to such an extent as to distrust all accepted ways of looking at life and to expect that usually, a thing will not be what it is generally supposed to be (Lippmann, 2008).

The paper has chosen the book *Orienting an Indian in Japan* with the premise that it provides a new lens for an expatriate to view, understand and experience Japan. The book reveals what may be already known to those who have heard or read about Japan, reiterating some notions about the country while revealing more nuanced aspects based on the author's own experiences and observations.

The book starts with the chapter 'Lost and Found' and talks about how most things that one may leave behind in public transport or even mistakenly lose, such as umbrellas, lunch boxes, or even wallets, are often found back in Japan- a phenomenon rarely possible in most other countries as she mentions. Aiyar talks about the innate trust that people have in one other, which is inculcated from a very young age and cites the example of witnessing a primary school child commute to school by herself on the local train. The safety of neighbourhood convenience stores-*Konbini* and the police posts-*koban*, acting as safe havens for

lost children to wait, of fostering interdependence is reiterated, enabling even small children.

"Over the years, I have concluded that trust bred trust, good deeds encouraged good deeds... It was the result of the normalisation of civic behaviour. This normalisation accounted for the village-like levels of public faith in the urban jungle of one of the world's biggest cities" (Aiyar, 2021).

Interestingly, the chapter glorifies aspects of Japan that may be unique to her. The author is very perceptive of a possible fallout that these facets of Japan may have. She mentions that while the strength in the "collective" may foster interdependence and encourage mutual trust and civic responsibility, it may also result in the suppression of 'idiosyncrasies and spontaneity' amongst people.

Such examples bring out the uniqueness and rarity, if not impossibility, of such things happening anywhere. That, however, intersperses the chapter with examples of how mundane and routine jobs such as opening bank accounts getting a phone or internet connection are somewhat tedious and unexpectedly time taking unlike other countries she had lived in, highlighting a contradiction as far as living with ease was concerned in the highly advanced country. The author sums up the chapter, 'Japan is a blend of first-world societies with an anthropologically complex society.'

4.2 Contradictions within Japanese society, as in any other

The book throws light on contradictions that the author experiences in Japan. One of the first things a foreigner may notice in Japan is how well planned and clean the public spaces are. Spaces and cleanliness are aspects that the author, too, cannot help noticing. She contrasts how Japanese temples are pristine, clean, and calm, while Japanese homes do not mirror the same philosophy. The homes are places where people hoard things in small, constricted spaces, making them *Gomi Beya* (loosely translated as garbage rooms), where the problem worsens with the rigorous implementation of norms for garbage disposal. Minimalism and planned public spaces as against excessive consumerism and hoarding at homes, in other words, are things that bring to light the contradiction in varied spaces in Japan as the author sees it.

The author even dedicates an entire chapter to the concept of hygiene in Japan and how toilets in Japan are those that she has seen which are more advanced than anything she had seen in any part of the world, which is also antithetical to how

these spaces are seen or maintained in India. She thinks the Japanese people excel in making beautiful what is usually not considered 'beautiful spaces' whether it be the precision and detail paid to toilets all over the country or to the utility (man) hole lids that make the utility hole art a piece of aesthetically pleasing thing to look at than just a utilitarian item to cover utility holes. She talks about how cleaning and taking responsibility for one's surroundings is inculcated into their daily regimen right from school.

Even as the book provides exciting perspectives on Japan, it does touch upon some defining features of the country by alluding to notions of Japanese aesthetics, sensitivity to nature and seasons, and artificial things such as vending machines that offer a wide range of examples that showcase Japan for the reader through the author's eyes. The ease of living on a day-to-day basis in Japan because of the many amenities and ease of procuring them is contrasted with the difficulty for a foreigner like her to get a phone or internet connection or even open a bank account owing to the many rules that exist.

She also dedicates a significant number of pages to how Japanese people have engaged in the practice of *Kintsugi*- Japanese art that heals the broken ceramics with gold, a practice that resonated with the author, and she gives the title 'Breaking and healing' to her second chapter. While talking about the various aspects of modern westernised Japan and lifestyle, she also perceives Japan as more Asian than a Western nation despite Japan having modernised infrastructure to match or even surpass any Western Nation. This concerns mental health and the stigma associated with the condition in Asian societies, which she talks about by referring to the social problem of *hikikomori* (social withdrawal).

Towards the end of her stay in Japan, the author experiences the COVID -19 pandemic in Japan at its start and reveals that Japan was perhaps better as a nation with social distancing and masks already in place much before the pandemic started, braced to face the odds of the pandemic than most other nations were. However, she is surprised by the handling of this unexpected turn of events, whether the switch from offline to online education in schools for a few months or work from home policies that exposed the inability to improvise or try new things at short notice. The continued use of *hanko* (stamps engraved with names which are essentially used as signatures for official documents) which needed people to still go to the workplace, which is where they were placed, or of many public schools relying on hard copies of work sent to students through snail mail are examples of this reluctance she cites.

Even as she acknowledges how any country, for that matter even India or China has their contradictions and that no single truth is enough to comprehend them, the fact that she is not overwhelmed by the 'unique Japanese ways' and is perceptive to the many shades of reality that lie therein is significant in shaping her perceptions of Japan, and for not falling for the usual and typical tropes that may be associated with a country.

She summarises her understanding as follows- "It was this contradiction that made it real, not the Orientalist stereotype of a land full of people gazing at the moon, or a humourless dystopia of overworked salarymen, neglected wives and cluttered apartments. It was sometimes both and at times neither, and mostly it was in-between."

4.3 Japan and the Gaijin gaze

The book traverses a path where the author tries to present Japan as seen through the eyes of a foreigner during her stay. While the book's focus is clearly on Japan, what is also significant is the author's self-awareness about her being an Asian, an Indian in Japan and is perceptive of perhaps the Japanese gaze back on her as well.

The chapter 'No Foreigners please, we are Japanese' in the book talks about how Japan tries to maintain its homogeneity and harmony. In the process of doing so, certain sections classes of Japanese society, whether it be foreigners such as Chinese and Korean people, or the Ainu or even *burakumin* (outcastes occupying the lowest level of Japanese social strata) who get side-lined or even discriminated against, are treated differently as the 'other'. Even though burakumin has been equal from the legal point of view since the Meiji era, their access to education or engagement in public life is seen to be limited. This aversion to and denial of diversity in Japan for the sake of harmony is perhaps the reason for the discrimination against these classes. Even problems of *Kikokushijo* (returnee children of repatriated families) manifest how the Japanese people are not open to diversity even if one of their own lives long enough in another country and returns.

However, Aiyar's meeting with an Indian politician in Japan makes her rethink her perception and acknowledge that Japan was perhaps finally opening up to diversity and cites examples of how people of mixed Indian descent won a beauty pageant in Japan in recent years, even though some people did not wholeheartedly accept the winner; or the increasing number of foreign employees in Japan. Interestingly, however, the author is not someone who jumps to judge the

Japanese for this selectiveness or bias. Instead, it triggers self-introspection, and the author writes about the class system in India, which makes her more self-aware of how there were cases of discrimination by Indians against their own, based on region, religion, caste, or caste colour.

When talking about language, the author refers to the complexity of the three scripts in the Japanese language, the complexity of counters that change with the kind of object they are used for, and variation in address terms depending on whom one is talking to, besides politeness and the very discreet and meaningful silences that intersperse conversation. Silences and pauses, as she observes, are an integral part of Japanese aesthetics, whether in painting or architecture or even savouring rice wine or Japanese social behaviour. She does persevere in learning the language for nearly a year.

4.4 India and Japan- bridging the differences

While some incidents and experiences make the author aware of differences and similarities between Japan and other countries such as China and India, the author predictably alludes to instruments that have brought the two countries closer over time. Starting with Buddhism, which she talks about, she refers to more recent exports from India which have been welcomed by Japan, i.e., Indian movies.

To cite some of the famous Japanese impressions and Images of India, she mentions monks, movie stars, revolutionaries, and elephants (Indira). Some of the prominent names she mentions are Rajnikanth for movies, Radha Binod Pal as a prominent judge whose favourable judgement for Japan was welcomed and is remembered by many, Rash Behari Bose and the many Indian deities that are still worshipped in Japan.

The one characteristic that is hard to miss for anyone is perhaps the Japanese pursuit of perfection, which is reflected in many facets of life, such as the Japanese work ethic and observed in the making of Japanese meals by the author. While the author contrasts the *Shokunin* (craftsman) culture of Japan with *Jugaad* (making do with) of the Indians, she also rightly points out the similarity between the relation of a *shisho-deshi* (Teacher-disciple) in Japan with the *Guru-shishya Parampara* (tradition of the Guru and disciple) in India. The comparison may be simplistic in that it does not touch upon the very rigorous facets of how Indian people may train, primarily via arts, music, and even to become a professional chef. However, perhaps the author's vision is clouded by how this pursuit of perfection is much more readily perceptible in Japan in every field, including

cooking, and it is possible to witness for an ordinary person than it is in India, perhaps.

5. Conclusion

What can one conclude from analysing one expatriate writing in Japan? As the author herself states,

...the book was ultimately probably as much about me as an observer, my circumstances and predilections, as it was about Japan. It was best to read it as a haiku- a subjective suggestion of a mood, a tantalising glimpse, a truth yes, but only one of many.

The paper attempted to analyse *Orienteering an Indian in Japan*, as a commentary not as much about Japan the country about which the author writes, since no single book can perhaps capture the complexity of a country, but more as an endeavour to signify and assert the significance of the expatriate voice of experience in lending a unique perspective on a country. What is also equally significant for the expatriate herself in her overseas stay is engagement with the 'other', culturally and socially, and to be understood as much as to understand- an aspect of expatriate writing which can be the focus of future research in the area.

As Aiyar's account reveals, the notions and stereotypes formed about a nation are tested, re-tested, remade and ever-changing when experienced over a length of time. Perhaps the one aspect of importance here is the people-to-people interactions and bonds she formed, made possible due to the extended period of her stay in Japan. In Aiyar's case, this is seen in the form of meeting people such as Kunio Nakamura- someone who had been holding workshops on *kintsugi*. He opens her eyes to the philosophy of the art of mending broken ceramics, which touches her at a much deeper level. She happens to meet some more people who become close enough to discuss the problems of online schooling of their children, etc., in other words, mundane problems as a fellow human than as a foreigner. Another aspect that the stay enables her is learning the language to realise the nuances, the complexity of silences, and the multiple scripts, among others ...something that may be more of an impediment only for a tourist who visits the country for a shorter period.

The book is also instrumental in revealing as much about the expat writer- Aiyar herself through her self-reflection of being an Indian, her own culture, finding common ground with Japan at times, while at other times revelling in how unique a race the Japanese were and sometimes also reflecting on one's follies and

strengths, thereby providing a more rounded experience than simply glorifying or abhorring the 'other'. It is also revealed that even when pointing out Japan's uniqueness, she is vigilant to not fall into the trap of orientalising the country as is often done through the Western gaze.

The book concludes with the author mentioning that she feels unqualified to have completely understood the complex nature of a country through her work and uses Tagore's words from *Spirit of Japan* to state,

My stay here has been so short that one may think I have not earned my right to speak to you about anything concerning your country. I feel sure that I shall be told to idealise certain aspects while leaving others unnoticed.

A non-fictional account such as a travelogue or a diary written about one's experiences in another country is undeniably valuable in understanding the perceptions of an outsider, as much as literary works that are more stylised and offer different perspectives. The expatriate experiences then occupy a space that is common to both the literary and the non-literary genres-one where the author is influenced by the literary aspects of writing, as is Aiyar, such as Haiku from which she extensively quotes in the book, while at the same time not allowing them to overshadow her own experience and take on the country. It is a space worthy of exploration, given the number of expatriates from India in Japan and vice-versa. The area has the potential of being explored in much more depth to further the understanding of one another through the ordinary day to day experiences which offer invaluable insights into knowing the 'other' and, in the process, understanding the 'self'.

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Hikikomori: How the Youth of Japan are Living as a Shut-in

Pratyusha Majumder*

Abstract – Hikikomori in Japan is a condition in which affected people want to withdraw from society and often do not leave home for days. First identified in Japan in the late 1990s, current studies suggest that the condition is far more widespread than previously thought. Some researchers saw the growth of the withdrawal phenomenon in 1980, and it is linked to the collapse of the "bubble economy" of the generation and the beginning of the recession in Japan in the 1990s. However, withdrawal has recently become a global phenomenon primarily found in developed countries such as South Korea, China, the United States and the United Kingdom. This work provides a detailed analysis of hikikomori. Starting with the definition, it discusses explicitly the type, stage, common traits, causes, impact, and more recently, the impact of covid-19 on hikikomori.

Keywords Hikikomori · Japanese youth in shut-in · Withdrawal phenomenon ·

1. Summary

A variety of severe social withdrawal, referred to as hikikomori, has often been represented in Japan and is characterised by adolescents and young adults who become recluses in their parents' homes, unable to figure out or visit a college for months or years. Not solely in Japan, this development has been wide unfolding in most developed countries like South Korea, the United States, the U.K., China, and conjointly Republic of India, Oman.

In this paper, we tend to discuss every detail of hikikomori. First, we tend to begin from the process of what hikikomori is. Then it is followed by its severity, causes and differing kinds. Also, this paper discusses the common traits of the

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hikikomori affected individuals and numerous treatment approaches. Another important thing is whether hikikomori should be diagnosed if another medicine disorder accounts for the symptoms. Some authors argue that the term "secondary hikikomori" ought to be used if comorbidity is a gift and a minimum of part explains the syndrome, whereas, within the absence of an intercurrent medicine diagnosing, the term "primary hikikomori" ought to be used. Lastly, this paper includes its impact on the world and the worsening result of Covid-19 on this subject.

After learning various analyses on hikikomori, this paper concludes with various non-clinical approaches for this development. Also, because society and its expectation play an enormous role in developing this withdrawal syndrome, there is a powerful ought to modify this mentality of individuals.

2. Definitions

Social withdrawal is outlined as the need to measure reception for over six months, avoid social conditions and relationships, and inflict severe distress and incapacity. The Japanese word Hikikomori suggests "acute social withdrawal" in easy English.

According to the Japanese Ministry of Health Welfare and labour, withdrawals enable people to remain in one area of their home for over six months, not move to college or work, ignore home for over six months, and not move to college or college relationships. Tamaki Saito, a psychiatrist, defines hikikomori as "a condition that becomes a haul by the late twenties, stays reception, and does not participate in society for over six months." It does not seem to possess another psychological drawback.

Analysing the works of researchers currently, withdrawal is outlined within the following sentences.

1. Pay most of the time reception
2. Permanent shunning of social things and social relationships
3. Sustained withdrawal for over six months
4. Exclusion of individuals who maintains personal relationships
5. Presence or absence of mental illness

Psychiatrist Alan Teo initially characterised hikikomori as a "modern hermit" in Japan. Meanwhile, literary and communication scholar Flavio Rizzo represented hikikomori as a "postmodern hermit" (Wikipedia, 2021).

3. Appearance and severity of Hikikomori

In Japanese, the word 'Hikikomori' was widely employed in Japanese society as its verb kind, "hikikomori." Collectivism is powerfully unmoving in Japan, and as a result, cluster formation is straightforward. However, once people leave a bunch and become isolated, they are named "isolated persons." Thus, people who pay paydays, weeks, or months reception from teams, particularly colleges and workplaces, are like Hikikomori in Japan. Since the Nineties, withdrawal from adolescents, generally up to their 40s, has been attracting attention as a new social downside in Japan (M. Suwa, K. Suzuki, 2013). In Japan, the development of Hikikomori is copied back to what was generally referred to as "truancy" within the Seventies and Eighties. Several incidents were "social withdrawal" or withdrawal within the late Nineties. A medical speciality study of people (WHO) found that 1.2% of the population between the ages of 15 and 49 in Japan from 2002 to 2006 experienced social withdrawal for over six months. One review of population-based studies in Japan with 12 cities and 3951 people showed that 0.9% to 3.8% of people had a withdrawal history (PCN, 2019).

According to the Japanese government statistics discharged in 2010, 700,000 Japanese people were defined as Hikikomori, with an average age of 31. This includes Hikikomori, who is currently in his 40s (as of 2011) and has spent 20 years in isolation. This cluster is usually referred to as "first-generation Hikikomori" people who died in their 60s, and there is concern regarding reintegration into society referred to as the "2030 problem". In step with a 2016 Japanese workplace survey, "people who are socially withdrawn for over six months" were between the ages of 15 and 39, and 540,000 people in Japan (Wikipedia, 2021).

In the initial epidemiological study of this Hikikomori phenomenon in 2003, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare expressed that 45.5% of withdrawal cases had no life-long experience with the mental state, which we tend to decide as immediate withdrawal. 33.3% of patients were diagnosed with psychosis, mood disorders or different psychiatric disorders, 32% were diagnosed with biological process disorders, and 34.7% were diagnosed with temperament disorders (M. Suwa, K. Suzuki, 2013). Report from the Japanese Cabinet Office; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; in step with various articles since 2010,

concerning 19% of patients with the social-psychological disorder will be classified as hikikomori, and concerning 18% of patients with Hikikomori will be diagnosed with the social-psychological disorder (Hamasaki, Y., Pionnié-Dax, N., Dorard, G. et al. 2021).

4. Stages of Hikikomori

Hikikomori may be a gradual formation of one's own state. Social withdrawal is split into three stages, supported by Italian scientist Marco Crepaldi.

First stage: Boys and girls begin to acknowledge the urge to be socially isolated while not having the ability to do that consciously. They notice discomfort and anxiety once interacting with others and feel lonelier relief. This beginning involves behaviours like occasional refusal of group action or defrayal time on a lonely activity (Hikikomoriitalia, n.d).

Second stage: The victim consciously elaborates on the urge to segregate and reasonably attribute it to social interaction or relations. Most of their time is spent within the bedroom, dedicated to lonely activities. Social contact with the surface world is entirely restricted to the virtual ones cultivated by the web(Hikikomoriitalia, n.d).

Third stage: At this stage, the victim decides to surrender to the urge to be socially isolated fully, and step by step, grows aloof from the oldsters and relationships formed on the web. Hikikomori is sort of fully isolated and is exposed to the great concern of developing psychopathology (Hikikomoriitalia, n.d).

5. Classification of Hikikomori

Based on the research (2013) at Nagoya University and Aichi Shukutoku University, withdrawal can be divided into immediate and secondary withdrawal.

1. Primary Hikikomori: This study defines "primary hikikomori" as a hikikomori development that this construct of mental state cannot explain. In primary hikikomori, adolescents do not have severe diagnostic psychopathology, and however, they are unable to enter society and adapt to their surroundings (M. Suwa, K. Suzuki, 2013).
2. Secondary Hikikomori: This study defines secondary withdrawal as when an individual suffers from a variety of severe psychiatric disorders such as

emotional disorders, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (O.C.D.), personality disorders, and pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) (M. Suwa, K. Suzuki, 2013).

Also, according to a study by French psychiatrist Maïa Fansten, social withdrawal is often divided into four parts.

1. Alternative withdrawal: This type of hikikomori decides to be isolated because it does not adapt to the standard social dynamics of recent persons. The quote from genius Maïa Fansten is a way to avoid normalised adolescence and live in a different way." This sort of withdrawal precedes and is decided by sturdy existential depression (Hikikomoriitalia, n.d).
2. Reactionary Withdrawal: This type is outlined as a "symptomatic response to situations of great family stress". Victims selections to withdraw that was significantly traumatic were made inside the family or social surroundings. It contributes to powerful feelings of tension and stress in these subjects(Hikikomoriitalia, n.d).
3. Resigned Withdrawal: This type is outlined as "a way to escape strong social pressure". The victims were thus engulfed by the expectations of others that they determined to cover. Great social competition is one of the most causes of the fast unfolds of Hikikomori in Japan(Hikikomoriitalia, n.d).
4. Cocoon like Withdrawal: Myr Vansten defines this type of withdrawal as "a stop of time to believe that you cannot become an autonomous adult." In this case, Hikikomori patients seek an escape, isolated from their responsibilities and obligations as an adult (Hikikomoriitalia, n.d).

6. Common traits and causes of Hikikomori

Analysis of various research books and research reports reveals several characteristics. It is as follows :

1. Shame: It has long existed in Japan with patients with this malady as associate setting liable to the development of hikikomori. The Japanese tend to make social teams and structures that emphasise indirect communication. Behind that is the influence of bound values emphasised in Japanese society, like shame. In things wherever individuals are

embarrassed, the concept of "disappearing oneself" has long been thought to be a virtue (PCN, 2019).

2. **Over-independence:** Amai will significantly impact the incidence of hikikomori in Japanese society. Dependent behaviours associated with "Amai" are administered to believe that oldsters forgive everything. Hikikomori, particularly people who put up their families, will be affected with "Amai" to the extent that oldsters settle for their kids to remain reception for extended periods (PCN, 2019).
3. **Selectively social:** Except for being asocial, it has been found that some socially withdrawn youths will handle communication with people unconnected to their work or life, act with their people and relations, and maintain social contacts through digital means. It suggests the youths utterly lose their ability to socialise despite staying reception for a protracted time. Some socially withdrawn youth are willing and able to categorise their own social withdrawal experiences or even tose their own social withdrawal experiences or even occasionally require visits with friends and part-time jobs. Moreover, the web provides them with a convenient channel for social communication reception. They will chat online with strangers in privacy and nameless to develop virtual social networks and intimacy. Through these virtual social networks, they will possibly receive peer support and recognition and even redefine their social identity to be a lot positive and socially acceptable to regain a way of usefulness (Tim MH Li, Paul WC Wong, 2015).
4. **Hopelessness:** Several options characterise this component, like harsh world perceptions, world helplessness, and disappointment at work. Most of the victims were still traumatised by their experience before retreating from society, and they typically mentioned that the world was too harsh to take care of. A hikikomori patient said the following: "The first time I worked, the world was so harsh, and taking responsibility at work was too hard for me. I had to quit. I picked up a free employment magazine, went home, looked through it; I became depressed, and I could not break out from it" (Open Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2016).
5. **Fear:** Victims are often in danger of bullying. Victims feel that their weakness meant that their only choice was to cover from society. One hikikomori patient said, "I am a weak person. I can only hide in the dark; I am that kind of person" (Open Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2016).

6. **Mistrust:** Trust was usually destroyed by disappointment and negative past experiences that built self-defence mechanisms and caused social behaviour. The experience of being intimidated in school will result in the final distrust of those who undermine relationships. One hikikomori patient maintained, "I do not trust them... the distrust and dislike because of my experience... I condemn most people I see or talk to because of my misanthropist thinking... As a result, I condemned most of them... I will not even trust them to hold a letter for me... To get betrayed by somebody, you first have to trust someone" (Open Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2016).

7. Hikikomori: Main reasons for Japan's withdrawal

1. **Social pressure:** Japan could be a country with terribly sturdy social pressure. People perpetually feel the pressure of their peers to keep up with typical social prescripts and also the expectations of others. Japanese people tend to create teams, and therefore if there is anyone who cannot be a part of the cluster or is they will be different from people, they will naturally be isolated. Moreover, step by step results in withdrawal.

The nature of Japanese culture is to attempt perfection and productivity, and one is anticipated to meet all social obligations to the very best potential customary. This hyper-focus on potency has an unwittingly light-emitting due to creating a culture of shaming and, therefore, the stigmatisation of failure. The obsession with perfection has been verified to be notably poisonous to the student population of Japan. The pressure to stand out in examinations and secure a well-paying job significantly affects students' mental well-being. Those that fail to evolve to the present establishment usually notice themselves driven into turning into hikikomori to avoid public humiliation or, worse, resort to committing suicide.

2. **Strict education system:** The Japanese education system imposes excellent demands on adolescents. Different expectations, a high concentration on competition, and memorisation of facts and numbers aimed toward passing entrance exams for succeeding stage of education cause a high level of stress. Confucian values of the society- the education system is considered crucial in society's overall productivity and success. At intervals generally of this social framework, students usually face terrible pressure from oldsters and society to adapt their orders and doctrines. Whereas these doctrines are a part of the Japanese society, they are

progressively rejected by young Japanese in varied ways in which, as well as withdrawal.

3. Parental pressure: "Parental investment in a very child's ideal self" is a crucial purpose that ought not to be neglected (M. Suwa, K. Suzuki, 2013). People invest from child to child so as for them to be the best person. Indeed, tutorial and employment expectations in adulthood are nerve-wracking. However, if people fail to measure up to their expectations, they either hide in shame or, step by step, become victims of withdrawal.
4. Role of modern technology: The relationship between these phenomena and the latest communication technologies like the web, social media, and video games has not been definitively established. However, a minimum of its thought-about is a deteriorating issue that will deepen and nurture the withdrawal. Consistent with Takahiro Kato, associate professor of medical speciality at the University in Fukuoka, video games and social media have reduced the quantity of time people pay outdoors and in social environments that need face-to-face interaction (Wikipedia, 2021). The appearance of mobile phones, and smartphones, may additionally boost the matter, on the condition that people will still trust games and online aquatics anyplace in bed.
5. Japan's unique way of thinking: The Japanese have a novel means of thinking. There are ethical rules like labour, the purpose of life, and the Bushido code in Japan. They are terribly troublesome and usually shy. Overwork, tutorials and social pressures cause loads of stress for the Japanese. However, they select not to share their feelings with anyone. It is believed that sharing one's hardships will cause hassle for others. Therefore, these concepts will generally create a private victim of withdrawal.
6. Other social situations: In Japanese society, adult-age daughters who do not have any external jobs and suffer their oldsters are known as Kajitetsudai [domestic helpers]. Some Kajitetsudai and a few shufu [housewives] do not socially interact with individuals outside their immediate family and are in a very hikikomori-like condition. We tend to suspect that such girls could have a powerful sense of loneliness.

8. Effects of Hikikomori

Hikikomori seems only to have a negative effect. They contribute to the rise of problems in Japan, such as the declining birth rate, the increase in the labour force, and the overall impact on the Japanese economy.

1. Financial burden: Like the Japanese non-profit organisation NPOLila, some organisations try to combat the monetary burden of the withdrawal development on the Japanese economy. Currently, 1.15 million of the population are stricken by withdrawal in Japan, placing immeasurable pressure on people to keep up their families. Also, if Japan faces a declining population, it creates a sizeable monetary burden (Wikipedia, 2021).
2. 8050 Problem: The problem of 8050 refers to people within their 50s whom their parents supported in the 1980s. In 2019, Japanese psychiatrist Tamaki Saito counselled that hikikomori patients be suggested on sensible recommendation and create heavy finance for hikikomori kids. (N.H.K. World Japan, 5th May 2019). This 8050 issue was exacerbated throughout the covid-19 pandemic. People in their 50s, who were plagued by hikikomori, have significant issues due to their parents being affected, or they died together, according to the N.H.K. News Japan, some organisations and NG. Os supports them, or a minimum of training them to figure independently.
3. Declining birth rate: The Japanese currently have one in all all-time low fertility rates in the world, and at constant time, one in all the best longevity rates. As a result, the population is constantly dropping and progressively weighted toward older people. Once peaking seven years, at 128 million, Japan's population has been falling — and is on a path to say no by a couple of million people a year (The Week, 9th January 2015). One million Japanese teens and young men, Hikikomori became shut-ins, with nearly no human contact beyond their parents. The hikikomori withdrawal is attributable to social embarrassment — unhealthy grades or romantic rejection. The longer they drop out, the other shame they feel in an exceeding society wherever one's standing and name are preponderating and exhausting to alter. Parents, and particularly mothers, usually modify the withdrawal. "In Japan, mothers and sons usually have a dependent, co-dependent relationship," says specialist Tamaki Saito, who is the 1st known disorder within the Nineties. A government program

sends feminine reach counsellors called "rental sisters" that coax the hikikomori out of the house. However, that program does not invariably work. As one shut-in of fifteen years aforesaid, "I lost my probability."

4. **Suicide:** Suicide is probably the foremost forceful behaviour seen during medical speciality disorder. Even though no epidemiological information exists, there are various cases of hikikomori persons who committed suicide. Though the connection between hikikomori and suicide tends to be adequately elucidated, and we tend to be adequately elucidated. We tend to believe that the act of hikikomori is also thought about as a precursor symptom of suicide. We tend to propose that the eagerness to escape from the world is ordinary familiar to each suicide and hikikomori. Hikikomori is also an alternative-suicidal behaviour. Curiously, a recent analysis study from a survey of young people's attitudes of 5000 residents in Japan (aged 15–39 years) has steered that the hikikomori condition is one of the chance factors of suicide. We believe that more investigations that specialise in this angle should be conducted (PCN, 31st May 2019).
5. **Death by loneliness:** On the opposite hand, the problem of kodoku-shi [death by loneliness] amongst the old has become a significant social issue in Japan. In such cases, single older people are left to measure alone once the death of a partner with no social interactions and ultimately pass on themselves, remaining undiscovered for days, weeks, or maybe months. We can suppose that a minimum of many months before death, they may be in a very Hikikomori-like condition (Kato, Shinfuku, Sartorius, & Kanba, 2017).

9. Prevention of Hikikomori

Even if Japan suffers from hikikomori, there is still hope. The foremost necessary step is to treat the victims of hikikomori. According to psychiatrists, family relationships play a vital role, not solely individual care. Oldsters and their youngsters usually visit along for psychological subject matter. Additionally, to psychotherapy, many organisations and N.G.O.s are operating to assist victims of hikikomori. We all know that Japanese society is incredibly harsh. Individuals usually describe the victim of Hikikomori as lazy, ignoring the severity. Even when the victims have recovered, individuals tend to ignore them. Moreover, individuals should be different in the current issue, and society plays a significant role.

1. **Family support:** Since most people with hikikomori prefer to be alone initially, it is improbable that they may obtain support (PCN, 31st May 2019). So, if you see signs of the condition in your blue-eyed ones, you must intervene. However, it will not be simple, and you may need to wait and see. Some individuals, particularly teens, could also be a touch aggressive if you try to bring them out of isolation. Teach yourself what precisely the condition is. Therefore, you do not confuse it with another psychiatric disorder. Here, the person is not judgmental and encourages them to require support from consultants.
2. **Psychological support:** When it involves psychosocial support, it is onerous for therapists to realise direct access to hikikomori; analysis to search out different and effective treatment plans to help hikikomori has been in progress. One such treatment arrangement is targeted at the families of hikikomori. Such focus primarily includes academic intervention programs (e.g. lectures, role-play) that square measure in gear towards reducing any loath stigma that family members have towards medicine disorders like hikikomori. These academic programs are derived from different established family support programs, specifically psychological state care (MHFA) and Community Reinforcement and Family coaching (CRAFT). CRAFT trains members of the family family-specific positive and purposeful communication, explicitly-, whereas MHFA provides skills to support hikikomori with depression/suicidal like behaviour (Wikipedia, 2021). Studies up to now that have changed the family unit's activity response to a hikikomori has yielded positive results, indicating that family behaviour is essential for recovery, but any analysis remains required.
3. **Non-clinical approaches:** Non-clinical professionals like social staff and educators, however, accept the diversity of people and resist pathologising this specific youth drawback. In developed countries, youth social withdrawal has been a recent issue that any youth will encounter. To assist youths facing this issue, non-clinical professionals promote integration into one's own social role; foster cooperation and independence; cultivate endurance, patience and perseverance; raise one's knowledge; acknowledge one's ability and self-worth. The final goal of serving socially withdrawn youths is to draw them out from their rooms to return to high school and, therefore, the marketplace and integrate them into thought social participation (Tim MH Li, Paul WC Wong, 2015).

4. Group therapy: Although there has been primary stress on educating relations, there are still medical care programs for the hikikomori to participate in. As an example, the utilisation of exercise medical care. The individual psychotherapy strategies that area unit being stressed in current analysis area unit primarily impelled on cultivating self-assurance inside the hikikomori. Thereupon being same. However, studies have described that efficacious treatment towards hikikomori needs a many-sided approach instead of the use of 1 individual approach, like individual psychotherapy or group therapy.
5. Social approaches: 'Free-space' team activities and support teams offer opportunities for socially withdrawn youths to socialise with others. Most socially withdrawn youths actively participate in cluster interactions initially; instead, they exhibit reticent behaviour by listening to others' conversations. Gradually, they will begin to speak with organisers and check out to require half in social activities. However, organisers must be compelled to prepare tuned-in teams for various socially withdrawn youths sensitively, be wakeful to stigmatising labels and messages within the teams and avoid authoritative direction; otherwise, competition, conflict and participant dropout may occur within the teams.

As for the shape of activities, it is suggested that a rigid arrangement should be avoided. Organisers are suggested to form - informally, tailor-made activities, loosely regular, flexible, occasional and even sudden. Organisers are advised to stay career on socially withdrawn youths to participate in activities and make their minds up on an appropriate schedule as a result of intensive activities will build the youths exhausted. The time and weather can also influence the attendance of socially withdrawn youths and the atmosphere of activity.

6. Educational approaches: Social employees and educators provide different coaching programs for socially withdrawn youths. For example, social skills coaching is organised to equip such youths with the social skills, such as emotion management once endeavour others, and social skills needed for exploring social relationships and permit them to expertise a sense of connectedness. Work coaching and job-seeking help are also vital to relinquish socially withdrawn youths' understanding of the new economy and, therefore, the skills needed within the modern market. Job opportunities with flexible operating hours on an endeavour basis will first be provided within the coaching or serving to s organisation. Socially withdrawn youths will learn through trial and error

in part-time jobs and, bit by bit, understand their operating vogue and place in society (Tim MH Li, Paul WC Wong, 2015).

10. Hikikomori phenomena in other countries

Though hikikomori was first delineated in Japan, it is unclear whether or not the development could exist elsewhere. Specialists have debated whether or not hikikomori may be a culture-bound syndrome specific to Japan or a syndrome found in any other country. Some have reportable hikikomori-like phenomena in countries like the Sultanate of Oman, European nations and Korea. However, the sole rigorous medicine study of hikikomori is from Japan, and it indicated a period prevalence of over 1 Chronicle among young adults in Japan. Two experimental studies showed that 1.2% of the community population in Japan (around 232,000 people) had experienced youth social withdrawal, and 1.9% of people in the metropolis were socially withdrawn youth (Around 16900-41000 people). A less representative study by Lee et al. (2013) suggested that a pair of 2.3% of high school students had been found to experience the state of social withdrawal in Korea.

11. Covid-19 impact on Hikikomori

Studies have shown that people isolated due to hyperbolic loneliness have a hyperbolic stress-related mental disease, supported by previous outbreaks (SARS, MERS) (Wikipedia. 2021). Researchers say hikikomori could also be a post-pandemic development. However, particularly covid19 exacerbated his 8050 drawbacks in Japan. The 80-year-old people are seriously affected, and also, the 50-year-old youngsters' area unit is tormented by an epidemic alone. Additionally, as hikikomori prevails within the pandemic, specialists draw a lot of sympathetic and constructive attention to the present issue.

12. Conclusion

In this paper, we specifically discussed the difficulty of hikikomori. We also discussed how hikikomori victims, their parents, and society should play an equal role in abolishing this issue. Moreover, alongside Japan, the withdrawal phenomenon is often seen in other countries like South Korea, China, the U.S., the UK, India, and Oman. After the 9/11 and Lehman shocks, children appear to possess entered society and become harder to take care of their own lives. Youth unemployment is rising in India and European countries, and children also are

experiencing many problems. However, anyone can consider that the primary generation of hikikomori emerged in Japan in 1990, making it even more severe.

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Comparing Women Empowerment issue in Bangladesh and Japan and Its Possible Impacts

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Abstract – *This research investigates women empowerment issues by comparing Bangladesh and Japan and finding out its possible impacts in those countries. By using qualitative method, the examination of the research provides a result that women's position is increasing in Bangladesh and Japan day by day, and this comparison keeps mainly positive impacts though it has negative impacts. However, countries societal mindsets cannot be changed by writing a research paper. Many societal, organisational, governmental long run and short run initiatives and frameworks are needed for improving women's position. Though several issues may create problems, we hope that women's social, economic and political position will be improved to their family, society and the whole world as well*

Keywords Women Empowerment Development Bangladesh Japan

1. Introduction

Women's empowerment is a multi-dimensional process that significantly impacts a country. It is one kind of realisation for women about their power to do anything according to their capability for the nation and the world. Moreover, most importantly, 'power' is not just a word written in books and girls would only memorise it or not a good which can be brought from a supper shop and automatically power will be transferred to them selves. In this harsh reality, power must be acquired, and after that, everyone should be practised to preserve it in-depth (Islam, 2014). Therefore, a vibrant society should be established where women can exercise their power. In the woman empowerment sector, Bangladesh has been progressed a lot in the previous twenty years (Haque, 2021). As a

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developing country, Bangladesh has arisen competition with developed countries like Japan on women empowerment, though it still faces many problems and limitations. However, Japanese economic diplomacy with a stable economic condition cannot get their women's rights or proper utilisation of their women talent yet (D'AMBROGIO, 2017). Consequently, it is crucial to make a woman's position better concerning man, which is a critical survival issue for a society (Tarique & Zafar, 2008).

2. Literature review

2.1 What refers to women empowerment?

Empowerment refers to doing something with own strength or money or making own decisions oneself. At the same time, women empowerment reflects financial, social, political stability. Though development thinkers state that a country's natural development can achieve women's economic stability, other theorists believe that women's political position will be stronger in the meantime when a country reaches its political and economic stability (Tarique & Zafar, 2008). Women's saving nature, honesty, patience, moral character, loyalty, hospitality, warm regards to respected person word, health and beauty consciousness are core factors for empowering a woman (Islam, 2014). However, no single exceptional factor for women empowerment may improve their position in society without active participation.

2.2 Why does the term women empowerment come?

Increasing inequalities made women vulnerable, and it impacted them badly to enjoy all kinds of human rights (Tarique & Zafar, 2008). Women work day and night endlessly at their house without any cost, giving their time and energy just looking after family members, and their only responsibility is to raise children. However, if they can invest their time, energy, intelligence, and experience in productive work besides working at home, they can financially be stable and support their family. We all want equal rights between men and women. However, we never overlook the challenges that make our long wishes impossible. In Bangladesh, the absence of primary education of rural women is the core challenge, besides lack of their practical intelligence, strong personality, inability to take their own decision create hindrance for women to look forward (Islam, 2014). Here we make laws, talk about women empowerment, and wish to make a women-friendly gender-equal society, but what are we doing in reality?

Without family and societal support, lack of women working friendly environment, violence against women, early marriage are crucial reasons women cannot become empowered. On the other hand, gender base wages gap, mate-harassment, lack of child care centres, less job security, long working hours are the main reasons that kept Japanese women under the darkness of unemployment (D'AMBROGIO, 2017). As women face obstacles, the term 'women empowerment comes.

2.3 Present condition of women in Bangladesh

Here in Bangladesh, in most cases, women's productive capacity is never utilised correctly. Women have that much capability to produce something new that can contribute to Bangladesh's socio-economic development. However, fewer employment opportunities for women and men's control over production capital keep women behind men (Islam, 2014). Besides, early marriage badly affects girls' primary education, resulting in women being un-empowered. Due to the absence of the light of education, women have fewer job opportunities. So, Women empowerment is an increasingly important issue in Bangladesh, where 49.42% of the population are women (BBS, 2018). Our cultural values, social norms and conservative family structure are the main obstacles for the small number of female students participating in educational institutions. No woman can run faster or go further without family or societal support. Besides violence against women and male dominance, many rural women feel ashamed to talk with opposite gender people, outsiders of their family members are the reasons that create problems to educate a female child (Islam, 2014).

About 71.2% of Bangladeshi females took their primary education, whereas 75.2% of males and 76.7% of males took secondary education in Bangladesh (BBS, 2018). On the other hand, only 46% of female students enrolled post-graduate students (BBS, 2020). After completing secondary education, girls get married in most cases, resulting in fewer students participating in a post-graduate program. After graduation, females tried to get a job without experience and technological knowledge. However, it is a matter of sorrow that they hardly get a job with their educational qualification.

To think practically, rural and urban, women are now drastically taking part in economic activities. Rural illiterate women's participation in the national labour force is higher than urban educated women, with 37.6 for rural women and 30.8 for urban women (Khatun, 2018). Ready-made Garments (RMGs) is a significant sector where rural and urban women work and earn handsome salaries. Survey

results show that 60.80% of women work in RMGs published in 2018 and conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (NEWAGE, 2020). However, female participation in RMGs fell from 2015 because of automation, and women were not experts to handle a machine (NEWAGE, 2020). More than 3 million females are currently working in the RMGs sector (Haque, 2021). Besides working in RMGs, women work in tourism, hotels and restaurants, telecommunications. Many more wanted to be an entrepreneur (Khatun, 2018). They are also involved in the mass media corporate job sector. Microfinance is an opportunity for Bangladeshi women to become an entrepreneur and a chance to become an empowered people. Most of the rural women are earning money by micro-financing.

A study conducted by Islam (2014) results that 60% of rural Bangladeshi women responded that their position became improved because of interacting with the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (Islam 2014, p.6). Many national and international organisations are working together for empowering Bangladeshi women, and Japanese NGOs are also working to improve this sector. They are now trying to increase female education, strengthen women's leadership from the root level, build women's capacity, and increase social awareness about empowerment (Islam, 2014). In contrast, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Bangladesh has gained progress in four sectors- education, health, economic activities, and political participation- published in the 'Gender Gap Index of 2017' (Wazed, 2017).

Bangladesh's honourable prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, considers as a role model of women empowerment in this region (Wazed, 2017). Besides, in the parliament of Bangladesh, 22 female representatives servicing as a Member of Parliament (MP) (Anik, 2019). According to Article 28 (2) of the Bangladesh Constitution, women can enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, both national and public. However, this equal number of women representatives in both countries' parliament does not express that the women's position in Bangladesh and Japan is strong like males. Alternatively, constitutional declarations cannot allow women to actively join in the political sector or stop violence against women. Many women get harassed, sexually abused, and raped every day in Bangladesh, and those women do not get justice. In reality, a few rape incidents were informed to the police for investigation. An article published in Dhaka Tribune, March 2021, regarding the number of rape issue related police cases are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Number of the raped case file to the police (Bangladesh)

Year	Number of police cases
2018	6766
2017	4695
2016	4331

Source: Dhaka Tribune, March 2021.

We have legal frameworks and laws for women's rights, but our legislation is problematic. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Bangladesh has progressed to bring a gender-equal society (Wazed, 2017). However, we may talk about improvement and achievements, but there are still many vacancies. So, to empower women, our mindset should be changed, and women should take advanced skill development programmes in higher education and acquire leadership power that may enhance their opportunities in our job sector (Khatun, 2018).

2.4 Present condition of women in Japan

Still, Japanese society structure and mass people's thinking process supports male-female inequality and violence against women, though most of the Japanese government appeared as a women empowerment supportive government (Ahmed, 2007). More than three hours, on average, female members worked at home, and most of the Japanese males still think that women's roles are limited as a good wife and a good mother (Quick Take, 2020). The Japanese government and policymakers understand that they should include women in their active workforce to revive their economy. Former Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, took initiatives to promote women empowerment, called the 'womenomics programme' (D'AMBROGIO, 2017). However, Japan took 30 years to understand that violence against women is a big issue (Ahmed, 2007).

Japan is a recognised economic power globally and started its development activities many more years ago than other developed countries. In part of that, girls' education also started a long time ago. In Japan, the primary, secondary and tertiary level female enrolment ratio is increasingly higher. In 2019, 50.7% of Japanese women completed their secondary education, 45.4% completed their undergraduate degree, 32.4% graduated and joined their workforce, 82%, and 44.2% joined as part-timers (Quick Take, 2020).

After WW2, the allied power gave Japanese women the right to use their voting power and expand their opportunity to work in public office (Ahmed, 2007). However, traditional Japanese native politicians never supported Japanese women to become empowered. Therefore, without women's participation in the political sector and policymaking process, Japan cannot continue its sustainable economic growth in the long term and will not establish a gender-equal society where sexual-based violence against women has been abolished. Japan ranked 167 out of 192 countries in women's participation in government (Quick Take, 2020). Twenty-one female representatives are currently participating in the House of Representatives in Diet (Statista, 2021). However, many Japanese women sexually get harassed in their workplace. Due to poverty, lack of child education about human trafficking and less confidence in their ability and value, makes many schoolgirls get involved in odd jobs like (Joshi Kosei) JK Business, Pornography Industry, Junior Idol Culture, where schoolgirls are being used as like as sexual commodities (Banks, 2019). Besides those, many Japanese women became raped every day, and authorities have little knowledge about it. Table 2 presents the yearly number of rape cases.

Table 2: Number of the raped case file to the police (Japan)

Year	Number of cases
2018	1307
2017	1109
2016	989

Source: Statista Research Department (23 March 2021).

The Japanese government prioritised the phrase, 'power of women', which is not established in Japanese society yet. On 26 September 2013, in the 68th general session of the United Nations (UN), former prime minister, Shinzo Abe stated that Japan government is concerned about women empowerment and addressed it as the most vital source for Japanese economic growth, and they will create a society where women can shine (MOFAJ, 2021). He also emphasised continuous cooperation with international organisations to enhance its development assistance and cooperation with developing countries regarding the power of women and gender equality (MOFAJ, 2021). At present, Japan has a global agenda to increase women's position in developing countries with strong cooperation with national and local NGOs, civil society, business industries. However, nowadays, Japan

gives more importance to making a gender-equal society within the 21st century (MOFAJ, 2019). Besides, Japan also declared women empowerment and gender equality a global agenda (MOFAJ, 2021). Their constitution also supports gender equality. Article 14 of the Japanese constitution declared that 'all the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in social, political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin' (Ahmed, 2007).

Japan is one of the most aged populated countries in the world. The childbirth rate in Japan was 1.36% in 2019 (The World Bank). Japanese women are not interested in having a baby because their maternity leave causes less job security and keeps a negative impact on their working career, and they can be fired from their workplace also (Hidge, Kestic, Trau & Zarina, 2018). However, women's participation in the workforce is increasing daily in Japan. More than three million women joined Japan's workforce from 2012 to 2019.

Due to long working hours, gender base different career paths, lack of baby care centre, absence of a women-friendly working environment are the main reasons Japanese women cannot participate in development activities (Quick Take, 2020). Another author mentioned a few more practical reasons for earning fewer wages than men have from their workplace: women's weak physical fitness, lack of experience, maternity leave, less knowledge about technology, a short length of service (Ahmed, 2007). That is why few women enter Japan's job market and get jobs in small sectors with low wages.

2.5 Comparative women empowerment in both countries

Bangladesh and Japan, in both countries, most of the time, women do not disclose what is wrong happened with them, and they sometimes take it easy as it is part of their daily lives. As they become silent, those violent husbands or people remain safe, and their lousy side story remains untold. Though Japan is socioeconomically developed, they have political stability. However, their structural barriers, cultural beliefs and societal thought about women, and male-dominated political culture are the main reasons the number of Japanese women representatives in the political sector and the policymaking process remain constant (Ahmed, 2007). On the other hand, Japanese society is known worldwide as a 'women friendly' society (Tarique & Zafar, 2008). However, the reality is quite different in Japan. However, the female primary and higher education ratio is higher in Japan, whereas the female education ratio is decent in Bangladesh. Moreover, in prospects of secondary education enrolment, life expectancy and

literacy rate gave them brighter opportunities for their future (D'AMBROGIO, 2017) rather than Bangladeshi women.

In the 1920s, the women's movement took place in Japan and courageously, they asked for their social, political, legal, educational rights, including job opportunities (Ahmed, 2007). This movement woke up all Japanese women to rethink their priority and concern of the working area, and they stopped staying under their husbands' shadows. The Japanese government arranged World Assembly for Women (WAW) in 2014, aiming to make a 'society in which all women can shine' (MOFAJ, 2021). On the other hand, the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), these initiatives of the Bangladesh government playing a vital role in empowering women in Bangladesh. Both MDG and SDG these initiatives represent women's participation in Bangladesh's political sector (Tarique & Zafar, 2008).

Women's rights are also a human right, and they have the right to live with dignity and respect, can continue working without any harassment or risk; they also have the right to lead a life with social protection. Japanese woman's economic and political participation is still limited (Ahmed, 2007). Over 83% of female children work as household child labour (Alam, 2015). In the household, those female child labourers work day and night, and sometimes they face physical and mental torture and sometimes become sexually abused by the household members. As we know before, JK business is highly expanding in Japan where school-going female children are being used by paying a certain amount of money.

Consequently, empowering women from the root level is a matter of fact and a concerning issue for both countries. Since 2017, Japan has kept an eye on JK business and abolished female children, below 18, from JK business (Banks, 2019). On the other side, Bangladesh does not have these kinds of laws that can support them and encourage them to go further stage of their lives. However, the bitter truth is that Bangladesh started its developing activities many more years later than Japan, but Bangladesh did recognisable works in the women empowerment sector. So, we wish that Bangladeshi women can bring a brighter and shinier future for themselves (Wazed, 2017).

3. Objectives of the study

The reviewed literature expresses the women's position in the society of Bangladesh and Japan. Most of the cases reviewed existing literature shows that women are improvising their position in Bangladesh and Japan, individually, of

course. However, there is no final authentic information about the comparison between Bangladesh and Japan regarding the women empowerment issue and which country is protecting women's rights appropriately. Besides that, finds the mention-able reasons for this comparison though Bangladesh and Japan have economic and political dissimilarities. Moreover, there is no possible way to determine the likely impacts of this comparison on women empowerment in those countries. Therefore, the following gaps have been identified in this research paper:

- A) Bangladesh or Japan, which country protects women's rights actively?
- B) Why has a comparison come between Bangladesh and Japan regarding women empowerment?
- C) Has this comparison kept any impact on the 'Women Empowerment' issue in those countries? Is this keeps a positive or negative impact?

4. Methodology

This research paper tries to interpret a past few documents where induction is the approach. Here mono-method qualitative is used for methodological choice, and case study is the strategy. Both primary and secondary data are being used for the findings. Primary data has been collected by taking four in-depth interviews with a semi-structured questionnaire written in English. A good number of documents, like books, articles, past research papers, organisational and governmental survey results, the newspaper has been exercised for collecting secondary data. Four interviews were taken in- 1 July 2021 and 9th& 10th July 2021, 19 September 2021, and 14 January 2022. The interviewee's lists are given in the Appendix section. To earn valuable data regarding the comparison between Bangladesh and Japan on women's position and to know its impacts, primary and secondary data has been collected through interviews and documentation. Thematic analysis of data used for presenting results of the study. All interviewees were informed about the background and aim of the study, and all interviewees consent was taken to cite names according to the necessity of the research.

5. Discussion

Empowering women is the demand of time and is highly concerning the issue at present. However, naturally, a mother is the first teacher of a child. It is a matter of unfortunate that our society ignores a mother's role as a primary instructor and

foundation builder of a child. A woman can handle everything on her own, like cooking, washing, cleaning, shopping, babysitting, taking care of other family members. Some of them may do part-time or full-time jobs with the permission of their father or husband or the eldest family members. Nowadays, some Japanese women are afraid to have a baby rather than have a baby; they are more focused on building a promising career (Responded 4, 2022). However, when doing something unusual like entrepreneurship, corporate job, or micro-business, women become nervous and hesitant. As we all know, naturally, women are unique but not confident enough to start something new (Responded 1, 2021).

5.1 Situation faced by women: Bangladesh and Japan

Bangladesh and Japan, both countries people have a similar mentality that a mother has the only responsibility to take care of the baby and be a good wife and a good mother, nothing more than that. Most Japanese males still believe in that 'good wife, wise mother' concept (Responded 2, 2021). Bangladeshi people are also thinking like that; though it makes no sense, it still happens. So, in both countries, women are in a similar position because of their similar mindsets and thought processes. Male family members want that women should stay at home. Nowadays, many Japanese school-going female children are involved in various odd jobs, and they continue this after their adulthood as well, which has become a trend now. In this perspective, we may consider that Bangladeshi women are good. However, many Bangladeshi female children work as household workers due to poverty, broken family, and early marriage. Many of them are involved in prostitution because of the necessity to earn their own cost by themselves. In Japan, there is less job security, low-income family support or financial support, and a lack of early childcare centres (Responded 4, 2022). Keep women's limited participation in the Japanese workforce. Though the government has enacted laws, all remain in vain due to proper implementation.

A person cannot change their surroundings, education system, thoughts, or people's aspects alone, so problems, harassment, negative approach, and odd words will continuously come, but women should be determined to achieve their dreams (Responded 3, 2021). Like family, trade unions, business organisations, society, and government, every country entity must prioritise females. We should make women confident that their lives are critical sources of empowerment (Islam, 2014). By empowering women, there progress not only the women but also their families, society also progressed, which can open up opportunities for future socio-economic development of a country.

Awareness building regarding this issue is the most important thing, and mass education and general knowledge about women empowerment are also necessary. Besides that, we should give our family, society, and the world this opportunity to realise women's power. Moreover, the male should understand the importance of female members, and everyone should be respectful to the opposite gender. Family and societal support can make women confident, and society should encourage and support women to believe in themselves (Responded 1, 2021).

On the other hand, the government should enhance gender-friendly laws and policies. In 2016, Japan enacted a law, "The Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace," promoting a working-friendly environment for women to balance their work and private life (GoJ, 2017). Besides, constantly exercising those regulations and necessity basis modification is also important. In the workplace, the supplier should be more robust in their capacity-building policies and initiatives, and labour policies are also given more priority to create a women-friendly workplace. Family support is also needed for women to become empowered, and family is the root of where they can start up their dreams.

Those brave women who have faced various kinds of domestic or social violence should involve in women violence related consultancy profession to more robust their legal framework. Family and friends should provide psychological, health, and economic support. Legal support should be accomplished from police, local and national NGOs, organisations. These NGOs are working for the development of females and supporting them to utilise their skills and capability in the economic expansion of Bangladesh. They are also trying to make women confident to make their own decisions by themselves in every step of their lives and contribute more to their social development. However, the government and the international community should provide final and most important support and protection to a victim who faces gender-based violence.

The family must encourage their female members and support them in every spare of their life as well as we should also trust women's capability by which women can feel confident to do something new. Now it is high time for capable women to pursue their justice. Becoming empowering a woman means that we may empower a whole family as those women can take challenges in their different stages of life without other people's support. We should develop more assertive personalities to protest violence or crimes. However, women should not fear doing anything they want to do, and this should be their priority. Do not be afraid to take the first step; do not be afraid to make mistakes (Responded 1, 2021).

5.2 Comparison between Bangladesh and Japan

Comparison is always an encouraging thing, and it will be more exciting, competitive and fruitful when it happens between parties that still have dissimilarities in various sectors. In this sense, the comparison between Bangladesh and Japan in this influencing issue, women empowerment, will make Japanese people rethink women empowerment and inspire Bangladeshi women to continue their fight to improve their position in this society. Where still women are triggered if they got first in any official success, people started thinking that there must be political or relatives influence or any sexual attraction helps females succeed (Responded 3, 2021).

Everyone knows that Japan is a significant economic power with an educated, well behaved, hardworking population and sophisticated social structure. However, still, Japan cannot establish a gender-equal society where women can live with their dignity. As a result, women's position in Japan is not like what we think about them. Still, Japanese women work in small sectors with a small amount of money (Responded 2, 2021). Japanese people's mentality does not change yet. Japan cannot make well synchronisation between its development and women empowerment, and they only think about their economic growth without considering women's participation. As a result, this Bangladesh-Japan comparison comes on the women empowerment issue.

Our government is unitedly working in an urban and rural area to develop women's overall position. The Japanese government also aimed to establish a women-friendly society. Both countries should ensure a unique institutional framework for establishing a society where social, economic, and political awareness is acquired to empower women. Weak laws and less effectiveness make women weaker and males stronger. So, the government should strictly enact laws to reduce violence against women.

Bangladesh and Japan, both countries' women's position are improving gradually but not correctly. At present, Japan wishes to tell their history to the international community about its growth from the ashes of WW2 to a gender-equal society (MOFAJ, 2019). Now women are increasing their financial and economic resource access, creating social and economic networks to strengthen their business resources, and women are not going to keep silent against the oppression created by their family or husband. They raised their voice against violence (Islam, 2014) as Bangladesh and Japan started working on women empowerment, so all of us wish that they will bring their dream come true one day.

This comparison keeps both positive and negative impacts on women empowerment issues. This comparison will encourage Bangladeshi women to continue their struggle in a positive sense. We may find out our lacking, and our government should take initiatives to remove our weaknesses. Besides, both countries have a similar mentality, so we may take lessons from each other's policy, laws, and even our mistakes and improvise our lack (Responded 4, 2022). On the other side, Japanese people will be more concerned. Hopefully, people will change their thoughts about women in both countries and be more respectful to females.

In contrast, the negative site, Bangladeshi women will be more like Japanese women's mentality where Japanese women are not interested in getting married and having a baby due to less job security which makes their birth rate decline. As a result, the number of working-class and young generation people may be declined, and aged people numbers will be increased. It may keep a negative impact on our country as like Japan. However, we hope that this reality will be changed and women will shine like the star of the sky.

6. Limitations of the study and scope of future research

This paper has examined comparatively which country is actively protecting women's rights and its possible impacts—secondary data used for clearing women's previous situation and primary data used for comparison. Due to COVID-19, three Bangladeshi and only one Japanese have participated in the interview. Besides, no recent data can present Japanese women's position to reduce cost. However, the in-depth interview has been taken from the Bangladeshi and Japanese interviewees. Therefore, fewer Japanese participants than Bangladeshi have attended an interview. So actual Japan's view regarding women empowerment is not visible, and recent Bangladeshi data are limited in the study. So, this paper's objective and discussion have a brighter opportunity for future research. This paper may diagnose comparative problems and solutions by exercising Japan's view and perspective directly by interviewing women empowerment issues.

7. Conclusion

Success never comes within over a night. However, human beings believe that success will come one day. As we believed it, we have noticed empowering ingredients hidden in a female's subconscious mind, which is proven in our existing literature. Women are now improving their position, so they are being

promoted to our labour force. They can more muscular any countries development related activities. Without their participation, no country can continue their development projects. Women's position in Bangladesh and Japan is improving but not in a way that other countries can follow. Every human being has the equal right to live, grow, and be safely protected in society; unfortunately, women are sometimes deprived of their own families. They have the right to choose their aim, but society forces them to stay home. Religious values and conservative minds of family members put women behind and do not support women to become empowered. Every country should change their mentality and support women to do what it wants to do. Society should have changed its point of view regarding women and their rights. Family is the core of society, so families should change their mindset to help women do what they wish. So, every family, society, and country should encourage women to walk beside men, not behind anyone.

Appendix: Interviewee list

Respondent	Name	Occupation	Date of Interview	Sex
1.	Nafisa Nawal Khan Chowdhury	Territory Manager, Unilever, Bangladesh.	9 July 2021	Female
2.	Dr Abdullah-AL-Mamun	Assistant Professor & Chairman, Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh	1 st & 10 th July 2021	Male
3.	Sathi Biswas	Student, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.	19 September 2021	Female
4.	Kohei Uno	Student, Kobe University, Japan.	14 January 2022	Male

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Transgenerational Trauma in Ichiyo Higuchi's *WAREKARA* - A Multidisciplinary Approach to Literary Research

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Abstract – In this paper, I examine the heroine, Omachi's fate in *Warekara* – one of the last stories of Higuchi Ichiyo, the principal female author in the Meiji era –using multidisciplinary approaches. Besides literary theory, I mainly rely on a psychological perspective and the relatively new concept of transgenerational trauma. This latter can serve as an organising force behind the story's episodic structure and also as a determining factor in the fates of the story's two heroines, Mio, and her daughter, Omachi. With the use of multidisciplinary approaches, I expect to widen the possible interpretations of *Warekara*.

Keywords Ichiyo Higuchi's *WAREKARA* · Omachi's fate in *warekara* · Transgenerational trauma in a Japanese short novel · Multidisciplinary approach to literary research ·

1. *WAREKARA*: A Short Novel by Ichiyo Higuchi

As one of Higuchi's last stories, who was considered the principal female author of the Meiji- era Japan, the short novel *Warekara* from 1896 should be paid a lot more attention than it has been before since it gives an exciting and detailed insight into the psychology of intergenerational or transgenerational trauma and Freudian hysteria ahead of its time.

One of the reasons behind the novel's relative unfamiliarity outside Japan is its fractional composition, which makes the story obscure and hard to follow by the reader. It is episodic, with only a slight connection between the chapters, more

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like a string of short stories than a complete tale. The fragmented composition and the balladist obscurity of *Warekara*, which only implies the reasons behind the happenings, make the reader thrill and successfully maintain the suspense until the end.

Reading the chapters, the stories of two women unveil: one is the tragic chronicle of the parent's marriage, the other is the life of their daughter, Omachi (Kan, 1991: 287). She is the daughter of Mio, a beautiful young woman craving money and a better social status, so she abandons her family. Her adultery causes her husband to be a bitter man towards his daughter. He gets richer and richer and weds his daughter to a prominent man. Years pass, the father dies, and Omachi lives a life of luxury and seemingly in harmony. The marriage is childless, and her people consider Omachi's behaviour extravagant. Gossip arose when she started caring for Chiba, a student staying at their house. Her husband understands but has a son with a lover, so he decides to eliminate Omachi, closing her from the world forever.

In Omachi's figure, we explore a young woman's complex emotions, maternal heritage, and troubled past. This heritage, her mother's betrayal, marks Omachi's life forever, and in the end, no matter how hard she tries to ignore it, she eventually gives in to her fate that leads to her fall.

In this paper, I examine mainly Omachi's story with the help of psychology and the concept of transgenerational trauma. Applying this to the story, I expect it to widen the possible perceptions of *Warekara* and encourage everyone to use a multidisciplinary approach to literary research.

2. Interpretation of the title

The story's title is an allusion, a usual stylistic mark of the author's writings. The word of the title appears in a poem from the *Ise monogatari*, the eighth-century work, that consists of *waka* poems and associated narratives:

恋ひわびぬ海人の刈る藻にやどるてふ我から身をもくだきつるかなⁱ

Furthermore, in another one written by Fujiwara Naoko, in the *Kokinwakashu* anthology from the Heian-period, where *warekara* – a tiny sea animal called Japanese skeleton shrimp - is mentioned in the context of *unrequited love*:

海人の刈る 藻に住む虫の われからと音をこそ泣かめ世をば恨みじⁱⁱ

In *Ise monogatari*, just like in Higuchi's short novel, the poem is attributed to a lady, the speaker is female in both poems, and *warekara* becomes the symbol of unhappiness and suffering as the fisherman's gather and dry the seaweed, the shrimps' tiny shells dry out along with it and eventually shatter – a beautiful metaphor for a lady's sorrow. Besides this, the word also has a second meaning: 'my will'³, which implies that the speaker got into the situation of her own will. In such a way, the title already foreshadows the whole story: a women's tragic fate.

The emotional needs and desires of the heroine, Omachi, are in sharp contrast to the expectations of the people surrounding her and her opportunities. She faces these social constraints many times and loses the battle in the end.

3. A heritage: the sins of the mother and grandmother

The main storyline presents Omachi's feelings, while another significant motif appears: the problem of predetermination.

Although Omachi is still a baby when her mother leaves the family, this event determines the relationship between father and daughter, and also Omachi's reputation forever:

'you know how it was when my father, Yoshiro was still alive. He said that every time he saw my face, which looked like my mother's, he became overwhelmed with anger, and he never let me close to him. I spent every single day so lonely' - tells Omachi, her husband, when remembering her father. Besides this, there is the judgement of society as a burden. The people around her consider Omachi, a whimsical person with unusual habits:

If something pleases the lady [Omachi], she gives a reward. She loved to give presents from her early childhood, which her father always hated. She is pretty extravagant. Whenever she likes, she helps others, not thinking of the consequences. It also had no deeper cause, when she gave her husband's haori, that he just put off on New Year's Day, to Yotaro, the rickshaw-puller Mosuke's only son. It was just a whim: he had no spring clothes, so she just gave them to him, out of compassion [...] She has that terrible habit of taking a bath before breakfast. Without doing it, she does not even touch her chopsticks. If she only misses a day, she cannot be helped being distressed, and nothing can please her. [...] She just orders her servants like 'Do this and that' or instructs her husband to go to Jikkenda^{iv} for dolls. Not at all like a married woman. Alternatively, when

she accompanied her husband to the temple of the great Buddha in Kawasaki, wearing a scarf typically worn by young girls. [...] She may be called a lady, but this does not mean anything. Her taste is also like that of those women. She only owes her luck to her great beauty.

These judgements are mainly based on her – or to be more precise, to her mother, Mio's –troubled past. Mio looked like a beautiful, fragile creature, adored by her husband, who did everything to please her, not even bothering with the disapproving opinion of those around him. She did not even have to do anything at home, though she was unhappy and sad.

Occasionally she disappeared from home, and eventually she left her husband and infant daughter for a well-to-do man, with the support of her own mother.

The reader knows Mio only through her husband's perception, a beautiful wife, who needs to be cared for, and we can only guess the motivation behind her actions, just like him, Yoshiro, while her real motives remain hidden. If we try to reconstruct her personality from the point of view of the people around her, a totally different picture unfolds- a passive-aggressive wife, who, with her 'womanly' ways of manipulation (Kan, 1991:290) only attempts self-advocacy, although with a morally questionable goal^v. She desires more and better than what she got. So she makes her husband henpecked, makes a fool of him, and as occasionserves,

She leaves him for a rich man. These two perceptions of Mio meet when Yoshiro reads her last note and realises he was betrayed. From this on, he comes to hate his wife and everything and everyone that reminds him of her, including his daughter, Omachi, too.

We do not know Mio's honest thoughts and feelings and her perception of their marriage. We can only conclude her actions, as we merely know her from other characters' statements, from her neighbours' or her husband's point of view. Thanks to psychology, we now know that persons *feeling responses are essentially a result of whether our expectations are met in real life. If they are met, we are pleased; if not met, we become frustrated, angry, or disappointed* ' (Chapman &White, 2019). Consequently, while Mio's thoughts and feelings are not directly represented in the short novel, we can grasp the fact that she was not happy in her marriage because her husband (at least according to his mother-in-law's words) promised her a better life while Mio's desire and expectation for a more affluent and more refined husband and a life full of luxury remained unsatisfied. Her disappointment cannot legitimise her further actions; however, it can motivate them.

Mio's daughter is from the beginning judged by everyone surrounding her based on her mother's past actions. No matter how hard she tries to free herself, Mio's past actions cast a shadow over her, and Omachi is from the beginning destined to be the extravagant wife who falls at the end (Tsukamoto, 2009).

The balladist, fragmented nature of the story arouses suspicion that Omachi may not be Yoshiro's but someone else's daughter. Her mother occasionally disappeared before the birth of her child, so it is possible that she also met other men at that time. At least after her true nature becomes known, it makes all of their married life together questionable for Yoshiro. This suspicion may be one reason for Yoshiro's hatred towards his daughter.

Some scholars find Omachi's fate genetically determined (Sakamoto, 1957), or as they say, 'her fate is written in her blood' (Yuchi, 1926). Besides society's disapproval, Omachi also inherited her mother's constant frustration, discontent, and unsatisfied desires (Shigematsu, 1992). This restlessness, this constant craving, which her surrounds have never understood, is the motive behind her actions – the possible cause of her confrontation with the old values (Shioda, 1968), the reason for her perpetual opposition (Muramatsu, 1967) (or we can even say *revolt*) that lead to the dissolution of her marriage (Tomatsu, 1995).

Besides her mother, Mio, her maternal grandmother also plays a vital role in Omachi's life and fate. This woman wanted to fulfil her own, mainly financial ambitions through her daughter; therefore, she encouraged Mio to find a more affluent, more prominent lover and elope with him while also providing an excuse for Mio's secret meetings with other men.

According to the social customs of the time, the mother should not intervene in her daughter's life, but she takes advantage of her son-in-law's hand peakedness and becomes in charge of the family.

Mio used her visits to her mother as an excuse for a long time when, in fact, she was having secret meetings. It seemed to be an acceptable reason for her absence, as filial piety^{vi} was one of the most appreciated values at that time.

When the grandmother talks to her son-in-law, Yoshiro, it looks like she is only thinking of her daughter's happiness:

There is no prospect of raising your eight-yen salary, and your expenses are also growing, as you have a child now. If anything happened, what could you do? Mio is still weak; she could not work at home to help her husband. It is not honourable to live in poverty with your wife and child. Considering these,

you should search for another job to earn more money. You will not have any excuses in the future if you cannot raise your daughter. Mio is my only daughter. Since you married her, I would like you to take care of her properly. It is not about luxury. If you only gave her some money, that is enough for a minor pilgrimage... When you married her, you promised it. If you do not do it, you break your promise. Moreover, what can we do in a situation like this? It is terrible to think that I should care not only for mine but also for others' living in such an old age. Such a shame! Furthermore, I cannot do heavy work even if I want to. As a married couple, I will not help you if I take you; 8 yen is enough for nothing. In the current situation, you should consider parting ways for a while, entrusting Mio and the child to me, even if it would be hard for both of you. You would be alone and search for a second job besides the office. It would be nice for you to try to achieve an average lifestyle. Mio is my child, so I would like her to live the way it pleases me. It only depends on you.

The behaviour of Mio's mother reminds that of Ochika, the greedy mother figure in Higuchi's *Hanagomori*, who also uses her child for her own interests. In this sense, Mio may be considered a victim of her mother's passive-aggressive manipulation, and this maternal betrayal seems to be the root of the primary trauma that Mio passes on to her own daughter, Omachi, by leaving her family. Whether she is a victim of her mother or not, Mio learned this way of manipulative communication from her mother, and her mother was the one, who implanted the craving and desire for more in her daughter's heart, thus starting the suffering of the next generations.

Which is more dominant in a person's behaviour: the upbringing (the surroundings) or one's genetics (the heritage)? It is a much-debated issue. In Omachi's case, the people around her unequivocally decided on the latter, which was the reason behind their negative attitude towards her. Later on, this worked as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Moreover, did Higuchi not show us Omachi's emotions and the depth of her soul in momentary flashes? We, as readers, would probably agree with them.

As mentioned earlier, issues lead us to the concept of transgenerational trauma. It is a relatively newly researched area in psychology, but it can be usefully applied in the case of *Warekara*.^{vii} The helpless struggling of the mother, the seemingly loving father, who does not want to understand his wife, and the tragedy of their marriage: these all are imprinted on Omachi's soul and her cells. They can be considered transgenerational traumas carried by the descendants for a long (or until they are solved). This approach could provide a more professionally

accepted explanation than the law of cause and effect, also known as *karma* in Buddhism.^{viii}

Omachi's life is influenced by her mother's bad reputation and the craving and other burdens she inherited: frustration, insolvable marital issues, and constant dissatisfaction.

Mio's and the grandmother's material desires are already realised in Omachi's life (Hashimoto, 1996), but another much more unreachable desire appears there, as we focus on emotional needs. Mio's desires were not unique at that time, as the ambition of being rich and socially appreciated (in Japanese, the *shusse*) was a typical goal for people in the Meiji era (Goto, 2001). However, Higuchi highlights in many of her stories (e.g. in *Nigorie*, *Jusan'ya* and *Wakaremichi*) that raising one's social status usually leads to mental and emotional feelings of lack that cannot be mended easily. Technically, Mio gives herself up the same way as does Okyo in *Wakaremichi* (Chida, 1993), although Okyo at least struggles to keep her independent lifestyle for a long time, only to get weary of it. Mio does not even try to accept her circumstances and deal with them.

However, Omachi inherited the craving from her mother's and her father's side: he was always desperately and unsuccessfully wanting his wife's love (Yabu, 1991), so his daughter was double burdened with hopeless yearning.

Mio's and her daughter's lives are analogous in many ways, but there are also prominent differences. They both seem like drifting, but in Mio's case, she can be considered a victim of circumstances, and she vindicates her will in an indirect – manipulative – way, almost without words (Tomatsu, 1995). In contrast, Omachi is bolder, expresses her needs verbally, and attempts to achieve her goals much more directly (Takada, 1993). Although Mio possesses her spouse's love, she yearns for luxury, while Omachi has financial stability and a well-to-do lifestyle, but yearns only for being loved and understood (Park, 1999).

None of the husbands understands their wife's emotions, and besides the helplessness (Cho, 2007) of the two women, this is the leading parallel between them. Social frameworks are like a jail for them, and they cannot break out of it.

Their desires are not easy to understand for their surroundings, as Mio's family was far from poor (Minemura, 2006), and Omachi's husband was a pretty loving spouse in the standards of their time, but these facts could not help them deal with the constant yearning.

4. Hysteria and repressed emotions

In her novel, Higuchi gives a remarkable and precise description of the symptoms and presumable causes of *hysteria* – in the Freudian concept. Higuchi was less likely to become acquainted with Western literature and the recent achievements in psychoanalysis, including the works of Sigmund Freud. Although thanks to Mori Ogai, she could have been introduced to German literal works, Freud's works starting with the 1895 *Studies on Hysteria*, were published during Higuchi's lifetime, and his other works dealing with female sexuality appeared only later, in the 20th century. Despite this, Higuchi was before her time dealing with this topic, and *Warekara*⁸ is an outstanding piece of art because it focuses in a greater depth on representing the female soul and desires.

The theme of suffering caused by repressed desires is a frequent topic in Japanese literature from early on. This suffering causes one's personality to distort, and in many stories, people become restless or even vengeful ghosts after their respective deaths only because of their unfulfilled desires or jealousy. In this respect, Higuchi's most outstanding predecessor was *Murasaki Shikibu*, the renowned writer and poet from the Heian period.^{xi} The description of hysteria (that time called *spiritual possession*) is also present in *Genji monogatari*.^{xii} This spiritual possession was an excellent opportunity for women to voice their repressed feelings and brush off the traditional roles compelled on them.^{xiii} Already Murasaki has noticed the connection between repressed desires and mental illnesses.

Higuchi is more open about these, as she does not use any euphemism:

The mistress had the habit of daydreaming, overexciting herself and then having a seizure. If the attack was too violent, she fell on her back, like now, and unleashed all of her bitterness. First, they asked for doctors' help to use a subcutaneous injection, but night and day, she had terrible seizures that she could hardly bear.

It seems to describe a hysteric seizure in the Freudian sense accurately. Freud thought that the memory of trauma could turn into physical symptoms when the patient fails to confront it, causing him or her too much mental anguish.

The people around Omachi do not search for the reasons behind her behaviour; they just pass over that she is dissatisfied and unhappy. Seemingly she does the same as her mother, although Mio's behaviour always had a particular purpose, she used it as a tool for achieving her goals, unlike Omachi, who does not have an

exact purpose, she is just longing for something, while does not even know what it is. However, her surroundings attribute her seizures simply to her extravagance. What could be the real reason behind her frustration?

Freud's 1932 work *Femininity* summarises his views about women the most clearly. He thinks that women are above passive (Kovács, 2017). However, if during sexual development a woman refuses to be like this, she has two possible ways: neurosis (hysteria) or masculine complex (homosexuality). Freud also emphasises the role of social norms in this process.

Besides passivity, the other female personality traits are envy and jealousy, rooted in deficiency (penis envy)^{xiv}. According to Freud, the only way to end this feeling of deficiency is to give birth. One can only be an ordinary woman if penis envy converts into longing for children. Freud also thought women were less capable of sublimating their desires into creative forces (Joó, 2010).

Motherhood as the primary goal constitutes society's expectation, a solid inner desire, and a primary source of happiness. Alternatively, if a woman cannot achieve it, she has to find a way for sublimation. Higuchi also did the same when turning to write.

Besides the frustration of childlessness, there are other sources of Omachi's unhappiness, like lack of appreciation and emotional neglect, even by her husband. Everyone can think of her only in stereotypes, and no one can see her true self: a woman full of love what she wants to share with someone, but not able to find a suitable partner for this desire, only supplements like the ones whom she showers presents upon. She only longs for being understood and appreciated. Maybe a child to whom she could share her love and affection would also serve only as a tool of fulfilment for her longing^{xv}.

I only know the grief of being at home day and night; I am just vegetating, fearing getting numb with it. I have no parents, no siblings, only you, whom I can ask. Nevertheless, if I had, you know how it was when my father, Yoshiro was alive. He said that whenever he saw my face, like my mother's, he got furious and did not let me close. I spent every day lonely. I only became happy when you married me. See, you have just forgiven my stubbornness. Even though I have no reason to act like that, I just cannot find the words for my gratitude that you care for me, even though it is inappropriate for a man. If I think of these, I feel so lonely, so terribly miserable, no matter what I do. I thought I should not tell this, but I told it anyway. I cannot hold back this pain anymore. What should I do if I feel like this? I am solonely.'

Omachi opens up to her husband with these words, but he jokingly interprets this as jealousy. Even so, her most profound relationship is with her husband, as he is the only one with whom she can be honest about her feelings. Regarding the husband's reaction, it is evident that he wants to keep a distance from her, which can be a possible reason for the souring of their marriage^{xvi}. He never really tried to understand his wife's feelings. Even though he is a good man, he represents contemporary views: women are more like beautiful decorations but not equal partners. He respects and maybe also loves her in his particular way, but it is not enough for Omachi.

No wonder the wife falls into depression. Right after the conversation with her husband, we read these lines:

The mistress was pondering, and even if she had no reason to do that, her heart was running high. Nowadays, even if the sky was sunny, it was like dim for her. Even when bathing in the sunshine, she had strange thoughts. In the evenings, when one could hear the sounds of rain and wind, it was like people were coming, knocking on her door, waiting for being let in. As she was lonely, she took the koto and played the only song she liked. But she could not continue playing because she became despondent that she was only playing to herself. Tears came to her eyes, and she put off the koto. Once, when having her shoulders massaged by the maid, she asked her to tell a love story to cheer herself up. However, she was listening sadly after a while, no matter how merry the story was. She wanted herself to be burning in the flames of love.'

Not long after this, her behaviour becomes more extreme: after periods of apathy, she sometimes shows growing affection for Chiba and has seizures when she desires the help of the student. Moreover, with this behaviour, she seals her own fate.

The dangerous border crossing begins on the cold, lonely night when she visits Chiba and begins to care for him. Her surroundings consider it a whim, but later, when she calls his name during her seizures, it is unforgivable for a married woman.

Since she was no man, she could not bear when a seizure came and be it day or night, she always called for Chiba. The honest Chiba, who tried hard to push back her strained back, nursed her, forgetting he was a man that others considered suspicious. First, they just whispered softly and began to call her six-mat room the mistress' sickroom in a very filthy way. From now on, even the earlier events seemed to be suspicious: the compassion on a cold night

*and the haori. Gossip was rising, people made a mountain out to a molehill,
and the mistress' situation worsened.'*

Considering Omachi's reasons for breaking the norms, the one thing that forced her was that she lived incarcerated by contemporary customs. Her self-fulfilment is impossible within these norms. Therefore, she tries to break out, but since these attempts fail, her soul becomes ill. Her extravagance and seizures at first serve as a means of self-advocacy, but society does not tolerate breaking its rules for long and *fools* are sent away^{xvii}. In most norms, the husband gets justice (Kimoto, 1993), and the *fool* (Omachi) is locked away.

Fools always represent a dangerous discourse opposing the ruling one, as Foucault said among others. Fools had the right to speak the truth, but it has its price: they became outcasts. Omachi is closed from the world since she broke the taboo of telling the truth.

Although the topic of insanity came up also in Higuchi's *Utsusemi*^{xviii}, female desires as a forbidden, dangerous discourse are most prominently represented in this story.

Since the Heian period, no author could display women's feelings and represent their inner self more perfectly than Higuchi, which sensibility makes *Warekara* an outstanding piece of art.

The *warekara* is a beautiful metaphor of Omachi's life: the tiny sea creature is taken from the water together with the seaweed, and as it dries, it slowly dies, just like Omachi, who was struggling so hard, fighting with the world, her desires and life itself, before being locked away forever. Contrary to her mother, she is more like a victim who pays for her ancestors' sins^{xix}.

5. Hiatus and omission as narrative tools

As mentioned before, the story's fragmented composition is one of the author's tools to keep the reader's attention. Compared to Higuchi's other stories (maybe except for *Nigorie*), *Warekara* demands an unwavering, strong focus from the reader and constantly leaves possible interpretations open. She shows us only some episodes, images, feelings, and it is up to the reader to create the connection between them (Yamamoto, 2006). In this process, the concept of transgenerational trauma can serve as a natural organising force and explanation.

Since every chapter offers a different character's point of view, we can only get to know tiny shards of reality, and these shards usually come into opposition with the actual thought to be accurate by the people around Omachi, the protagonist (Shigematsu, 1992).

It is such an anxious situation that from all the people, we, the readers, are the only ones to get the closest to understand her feelings, and only for us is her fate, that she must suffer, unjust.

The flashing images and the omissions in the narration create a feeling of being observed only more intense. The people around Omachi, who are constantly watching her actions, also know only fragments of information. The reader can get some knowledge about the actual happenings of the story, often through gossip provided by servants or passers-by, who cannot be trusted. The reader does not get an omniscient narration, and there is no absolute truth (Shigematsu 1992), only the different viewpoints of the minor or major characters.

The third-person singular narrator sometimes gets very close to the heroines (Mio or Omachi)^{xx}, but sometimes observes the events from a distance, only describing the visible happenings.

Furthermore, in some chapters, the narrator pretends not to know the facts, only quoting the gossip. This three-faced narration needs intense attention from the reader^{xxi}.

The tool of omission and hiatus gives the text a particular rhythm: if we observe it, the hiatus of connections causes a more and more troubled fluctuation, paralleling the deteriorating mental state of Omachi. This growing tension abruptly ends when her husband announces the end of their marriage. In such a way, the structure of the short novel represents a perfect parallel to Omachi's troubled soul with enormous mood swings, where cataclysm comes so suddenly.

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Japanese summary:

本論文では、明治時代の代表的な女流作家、樋口一葉の作品、『われから』を研究している。話の分析で心理学に盛んになったトランスジェネレーション・トラウマの概念を使う。これで、主人公の「マチ」と母親の「ミオ」のつながり、マチの性格、行動と運命もより明確になると言える。マチの人生のすべての著しい出来事はミオが起こした罪に影響され、母親のせいで夫に世界から遠くしめられる。またはトランスジェネレーション・トラウマの概念はナレーション流れを決める因子にもなっているとわかる。話の途切れ途切れの後ろにもトランスジェネレーション・トラウマの概念が働いている。したがって、本当の原因があいまいなまま、読者がエピソードの間にあるつながりを作らないといけないということである。

Endnotes

- i *I crash from the pain of unrequited love as the warekara, caught by the fisherman.*
- ii *The clam on the seaweed the fisherman's gather is called warekara – it is all my fault, so I cry.*
- iii In Japanese poetry, the play with words (*kotobaasobi*) is a popular tool.
- iv A district of Tokyo, famous for hina-dolls.
- v Mio, like Oran in *Yamiyo* or Oriki in *Nigorie*, and Higuchi's other heroines usually attempt to manipulate men in a feminine way (through behaviours approved by society), which seems more successful than direct opposition (e.g. Okyo in *Wakaremichi*).
- vi In Confucianism, ' filial piety is the crucial virtue and primary duty of respect, obedience, and care for one's parents and elderly family members.
- vii For transgenerational traumas, my primary resource was ORVOS-TÓTH Noémi: *Örökölt sors*. Kulcslyuk Kiadó, 2018.
- viii Or it can also be translated as Buddhist religion had already dealt with the topic of transgenerational trauma centuries before psychology.
- ix In Hungarian - Freud, Sigmund: *Tanulmányok a hisztériáról*. Animula Kiadó. 2011.
- x In this sense, only *Uramurasaki* can be compared to it, although that is not so elaborate, owing to its shortness.
- xi The period between 794 and 1185. Higuchi was also considered the *modern Murasaki* by many of her contemporaries.
- xii For further about this, see *Barden, Doris. G: A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in the Tale of Genji*, University of Hawaii Press, 1997.
- xiii e.g. Higeкуро's wife, the lady Rokujo, Murasaki no ue etc.

- xiv Although this is questionable, as a small child not yet exposed to social norms, not necessarily consider it a deficiency.
- xv This desire is also unlikely to be realised, as Higuchi suggests: Omachi's husband does have a child but with another woman.
- xvi Maybe it was confirmed from the beginning, but Omachi did not realise it.
- xvii Foucault extensively discussed the topic of insanity and fools in his work *Madness and civilisation – History of insanity in the age of reason*.
- xviii Although in *Utsusemi*, insanity is more like a way of escaping.^{xviii}
- xix Furthermore, she does not use manipulation consciously, and her relationship with Chiba is more like that of a mother and child than that of lovers. That is why I consider its interpretation as adultery misleading (e.g. Tsukamoto, 2009)
- xx Some scholars discuss that the narrator has no compassion not only towards Mio but also towards Omachi (e.g. Oida, 1988), but if we compare the narrator's attitude towards them, we can see that the speaker shows us Omachi's feelings in a more vivid way, thus earning the reader's sympathy.
- xxi It is pretty similar to *Nigorie*.

BOOK REVIEW

Hirabayashi Hiroshi.

India: The Last Super Power (1st Edition). Aleph Book Company, 2021, 203 p.
₹- 699.

The book extensively gives the reader a panoramic view of India as a whole, where the author has touched upon aspects of Indian history, religion, caste, society, economy and diplomacy, and security, focusing on India-Japan relations. Further, Hiroshi Hirabayashi traces the entire relationship between India and Japan from ancient times to contemporary times, where India and Japan are considered all-weather friends due to their unique strategic global partnership’.

The author has spent over fifteen years in India as a Japanese Ambassador to India and the President of the Japan-India Association. So, he has had the opportunity to observe India closely and understand India deeply, which he wrote about in his first chapter, ‘The Key to understanding India’. The exciting part about this book is that the author has tried to consciously write on things that have not been mentioned earlier as these things were deliberately overlooked. Hirabayashi has also tried to remove some of the stereotypes that have been formed by the Japanese people over the years and hence, elaborated on the various facets of the Indian tradition to make it comprehensible for the Japanese.

Chapter two, ‘the Origins of Pro-Japan India’ very elaborately wrote about how ‘India and Japan are like siblings’ (p. 56) as it traced their relationship to the time of Buddhism, to Okakura, Okuma and Shibusawa (p.59) and Rabindranath Tagore’s visit to Tokyo. A significant highlight of this chapter was the establishment of the Japan-India Association in 1903. The author wrote about Japan’s influence, and contribution to India’s independence like India was exceptionally motivated to fight as Japan as a small country could win a war over a large country like the Soviet Union. Japan also supported India in the freedom

movement by helping the Indian National Army and giving asylum to freedom fighters like Rash Bihari Bose. Subhas Chandra Bose was also invited by Tokyo when he did not receive support from other countries for India's independence (p.68-69). The author wrote about the kindness shown by the people of the northeast when Japan had planned to invade Northeast India under the British and further mentioned the tombs and monuments in the memory of Japanese soldiers, and to date, Indians are pro-Japanese there. Justice Radha Binod Pal took a stance against the majority and gave a non-guilty dissenting judgement which has always gained respect from Japan. Hiroshi Hirabayashi mentioned that "the Indian Parliament offers silent prayer every year on Hiroshima was bombed". (p.82) This chapter highlighted the incident when India had tested nuclear bombs and how that incident halted the relations between India and Japan, but gradually both sides came to understand each other's stance and paved the way for stronger economic relations with Suzuki wanted to invest in India.

The author highlighted that since the 1990s, the objectives of India had drastically changed as it was elevated from a regional power to global power. India became a market-driven economy, and it swiftly changed relations with western nations and built relations with nations in the Asia-Pacific. All these are being depicted in the third chapter, 'The Metamorphosis of India'. India's move from breaking away from non-alignment to working toward the 'Act East Policy' to BRICS and G20. Interestingly, the author has focused his attention on the tension between India and China, where he emphasised how China has been displaying its hegemonic behaviour in the Indo-Pacific. He also mentioned how China used the 'string of pearls strategy' around India and the 'Diamond strategy'. Hirabayashi opined that China had become a significant cause of threat to Taiwan, India, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines, and thereby, there was a need to protect the South China Sea, The East China Sea and the Indian Ocean Region. It needs to be understood that authors like Shamshad Ahmed Khan¹ and Titli Basu² have spoken about the China threat theory have not been as explicit as the author has been.

¹ Khan, Shamshad. A. (2014). India-Japan Cooperation towards a Rule-Based Order in the Asia-Pacific: Mapping Indian and Japanese Strategic Thinking. Research Paper presented in The Japan Institute of International Affairs, 2014. pp.1-21.URL: https://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/fellow_report/151218_Shamshad_Khan_Jiia_paper_Final.pdf(Accessed on 11th August, 2021)

² Basu, Titli. (2014). "India-Japan Relations: An Enduring Partnership" in Indian Foreign Affairs Journal Vol. 9, No. 3, July–September 2014, 266-279.URL: <https://idsa.in/idsanews/india-japan-relations-an-enduring-partnership> (Accessed 13th August, 2021).

Chapter four focused on 'Economic and Business Cooperation' and explained in detail the efforts made by Japan to emphasise its presence in India and nation-building. There was a need for human resource development through ODA, like enhancing connectivity, strengthening industrial competitiveness, and supporting sustainable, inclusive growth. The author discussed the high speed rail project along with the Delhi metro project regarding transportation development and wanted to invest and develop Northeast India and Southeast Asia. The last and final chapter, 'How to live and work in India', was instead an interesting take as it spoke about how Japanese people needed to be mentally prepared to interact with Indians and focused on the greater need for people-to-people communication.

The positive aspect of this book is that it has covered all aspects of India-Japan relations, which previous scholars have mainly focused on literature studies that have not been done. Secondly, as a former diplomat, the author has incorporated anecdotes from his experiences and made the book come alive. Third, the author wrote a guidebook for the Japanese to understand Indians. The negative aspect about this book is that though it says India: The Last Super Power, the book only deals with some aspects of the title; instead, this book is based more on India-Japan relations, and it would have been better if the title of the book was different. The book lacks aspects of defence relations and the future recommendations between India and Japan relations. Overall, this book is a must-read for academics and policymakers.

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BOOK REVIEW

Akihiro Ogawa & Philip Seaton (Edited).

New Frontiers in Japanese Studies.

London and New York: Routledge, 2020. 258 pp. ISBN: 9780367406806 (hbk); ISBN: 9780367821494 (ebk) (hardcover, also available as e-book).
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367821494>

Revolving around the academics and students of Japanese Studies, this book purports to know about Japan from a modern perspective. In addition, this book will be helpful for students, multidisciplinary researchers, and scholars of social sciences and humanities who are interested in understanding Japan through a contemporary vision.

This book exposes the understanding of eastern and western scholars to minimize the gap of multiple perspectives on Japanese society that can simultaneously engender a comprehensive patch on Japanese Studies. Additionally, it aims to normalize Japan as a significant economic and cultural country instead of presenting it as a mysterious country with a fascinating culture. It also attempts to formulate a future-dynamics in addressing global challenges.

In the introductory chapter, there are 16 chapters divided into four sections. The first part describes the area studies by explaining Japanese Studies history. Chapter one focuses on the Maria Luz incident of 1872 and the court procedures and the significance of the incident for Japanese Studies formulation, termination of slavery, and the emancipation movement. Meiji Japan's formulation in Modern Japan, individual rights, authorized prostitutes' rules for service, laws, and government supports for indentured child servants are the central focus of this chapter. Chapter two focuses on Japanese higher education in the twentieth century. Japanese universities' ranking system, government intervention, and

investment in the higher education sector were discussed here. The concept of contents tourism is also explained. The third chapter delves into teaching practices examining the interrelationships between 'Japanese language' and 'Japanese Studies' to commend an innovative way in addressing contemporary universal concerns while demonstrating various ways of teaching Japanese language and Japanese Studies that maximize the benefits of intercultural learning. Chapter four gives an overview of the influence of the Sino-Japanese relation on research opportunities and the agenda of Chinese scholars over a period, moreover the adaptation of a global perspective in Chinese schools-appropriate contribution. Finally, the fifth chapter dictates the bilateral relations between Indonesia and Japan; Indonesian insights on Japanese Studies remain academic. As these chapters are the main radicles in formulating Japanese Studies as area studies, this part explains the theory of modernization, convergence, and methodological cosmopolitanism. The first chapter begins dramatically with the narrative of the Maria Luz incident but rapidly shifts into a pleasant background. Chapter three would be better if the capacity of international students to cope with the Japanese language were explained more precisely. Also, the contact zone needs to be discussed in greater depth.

The second section of the book focuses on ageing society and demographic change. Chapter six focuses on the Tokyo Olympics and their new slogan, "barrier-free," attempting to redesign Tokyo for its growing elderly population. The author provides a critical analysis and highlights vital aspects of the Japanese government's long-term plans for the Tokyo Olympics and some of the older adults' Olympic-related untold issues, lending the writing a solid moral foundation. Chapter seven explores the case of Filipino caregivers in long-term care homes for older people. Chapter eight focuses on religious organizations that provide fellow Filipino immigrants with financial and mental support. The enormous responsibilities and roles of migrant workers in Japan and some organizational activities that make life more accessible away from migrant people's families are critical to the narrative of contemporary Japanese Studies.

The third section is divided into six chapters, which analyses particular elements of Japanese migration and other immigrant situations from a Japanese and international viewpoint. Chapter nine provides background for Japanese migrant studies by exploring how other ethnic groups came to Japan and their positive and negative characteristics. It discusses the phases of expulsion that these immigrants faced and the aftermath for the Japanese people. Chapter ten discusses the topic of Japanese women migrating to Korea. This section discusses the experiences of Japanese women in post-war South Korea, intending to inform the audience about

how these women attempted to contribute and pave the way for the formation of Japanese identity in Korea and how they transitioned from deportees to returnees following the Korean War.

Furthermore, it examines how Japan's bilateral relationship with Korea influenced the return path for Japanese women and other problems. The following chapter discusses the (Japan Exchange and Teaching) JET Program's role in addressing growing diversity and offers a method to fill the gap by studying Anglophone narratives. Chapter twelve captures the attention of South Asian audiences, especially Bangladeshis, by including a short overview of the lives of Bangladeshi migrants, exchange students, and language students in Japan and their future expectations. It outlines career opportunities available to Bangladeshi students studying in Japan. In chapter thirteen, a survey is compiled with the assistance of Japanese judges at Melbourne Law School regarding their experience with overseas education expedition, training, and their opinions. Finally, the concluding chapter of Part III combines the perspectives of Japanese refugees in Europe and their experience in Japan to educate readers about their viewpoint on Japan. The author attempted to obtain a different perspective by exposing the experience of these Japanese immigrants, who appear to be quite content with their relocation to Europe. Following the completion of this section, it can be said that this part serves the interests of those who are particularly intrigued with area studies (Japanese Studies to be specific) and also serves as an excellent complement to those who are interested in migration studies and wish to develop a perspective on Japanese migrations and their consequences.

In the last part of the book, the authors express a comprehensive overview of the environment in Japan, its experiences throughout the rapid transformation process in the previous decades, and the resurgence of energy measures in Japan. During massive industrialization, Japan has chosen to recover from a highly polluted state to a clean and organized green country. This complete transformation of Japan can be an ideal lesson for the currently developing countries worldwide. Japan constantly uses technological advancement to maintain a balanced relationship between the environment and human civilization. Japan's unwavering endeavour for ensuring the mass use of green energy instead of fossil fuels for a sustainable future is a lesson for all countries. The authors emphasize this context to give a clear message to the world, upholding Japan as an example as the world is going through another industrial revolution. The last chapter provides a critical examination of the chemical disasters Japan had to endure in the past decades due to massive industrialization and the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. These dreadful experiences led Japan to adopt innovative measures such as using solar power and

other green energy sources, implementing environment-friendly industrial standards for all factories, and many more. It is expected that the other countries, most notably the developing ones, will take lessons from Japan and build a better world for future generations.

This book mainly focuses on current issues Japan has been facing and how these issues are relatable to other countries worldwide. It gives the readers an idea about other countries' perceptions of modern Japan from a theoretical point of view. The entire book poses new discussions, which serves as a starting point for discovering solutions to those problems, and is packed with numerous information related to the topics in each chapter. This book has also created several new questions that demand further research.

The book had many points where pictures, charts, and figures could be added. So, in that regard, the book lacked adornment and appealed slightly. Also, as the book is for international students, the thesaurus is slightly hard to understand.

Overall, the book is well written and very informative for the students, researchers, and scholars of contemporary Japanese Studies as area studies and Asian Studies. This book declaimed contemporary concerns with explanations that will be beneficial for other countries to understand and resolve their problems.

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Notes for Contributors

A. Publication

The **Journal of Japanese Studies: Exploring Multidisciplinarity** (JJSEM) is a bi-annual double-blind peer-reviewed International Journal. It publishes in January and July by the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. JJSEM publishes scholarly research materials on the multidimensional areas of Japanese Studies, including Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Natural Sciences. For more information, please follow this link <https://djs.du.ac.bd/news/jjsem-guideline/>

B. Materials for Publication

JJSEM publishes different research works – Articles, Notes and Commentary, Data and Perspectives, Archives, Book Reviews, Short Reviews, and Documents. The word counts for different types of works would be as follows: Articles, 4000 to 12000; Notes and Commentary, 3000- 6000; Data and Perspectives, 2000-3500; Archives, 2000-3000; Book review, 1000-1500; Short Review, 500-1500; and Documents, 500- 800 words (including Tables, Figures, Footnotes, Maps, Photographs, References). In exceptional cases, word counts may be relaxed.

C. Publication Policies

1. The publishable products shall have to be written in English. Use of other languages in the text and references- as appropriate- are encouraged.
2. Manuscripts previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere cannot be considered.
3. Issues related to copyright infringement, plagiarism, and other breaches of best practices are the sole responsibility of the contributors.
4. Initial screening will remain under the authority of the Editor. However, if necessary, the editor may seek assistance from other members of the Editorial Board. For necessary revision according to a fixed format, the initially short-listed articles will be sent to the authors at this stage.
5. The peer reviewers will be selected/ nominated by the Editorial Board. In this regard, all required assistance will be sought from the Editorial Advisory Board.

6. Only the articles cleared by the peer review process will be eligible for publication.
7. The articles submitted at any time can be published in the Journal subject to the approval of the Editorial Board (after passing through the peer-review process).
8. Many readers are not native speakers, so technical jargon should be avoided as far as possible.
9. The manuscripts in which the clarity of the English is insufficient to permit initial assessment or peer review will be returned to the authors with a request for relevant changes.
10. Copyright of materials published in the Journal is assigned to the publisher- the Department of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka.

D. Manuscript: Content and Formatting

1. British spellings are to be used throughout.
2. All articles must be accompanied by an abstract not exceeding 250 words, approximately five keywords, and full institutional affiliation, postal address, email, and telephone contact number of the contributor(also applicable for joint authors). The abstract shall contain a brief on the rationale, objectives, methodology, key messages and findings, and conclusions and suggestions/recommendations, as appropriate.
3. All address details with the product's title and the abstract must be specified on the title page.
4. The second page shall have the title and abstract only without the name and address of the author(s).
5. A self-explanatory title of a maximum of 50 characters should be provided for the page heading.
6. The texts should be organised under appropriate heading and sub-headings (having too many sub-headings are discouraged).
7. All materials should be typed on one side of the paper (preferably A4 size) and double-spaced throughout.
8. Abbreviations and acronyms should preferably be kept to a minimum. If unavoidable, abbreviations should be defined in the text at their first occurrence and used after that.
9. Notes should be numbered serially. Notes must contain more than a mere reference.

10. Use single quotes throughout. Use double quotes only within single quotes. Spellings of words in quotations should not be changed. Quotations of 45 or more words should be separated from the text and indented with one space with a line space above and below. When directly quoting from a work, include the page number in the citation.
11. When referring to a century, use '20th century', '1970s'. Spell out numbers from one to nine, 10 and above remain in figures. However, for exact measurements, use only figures (e.g., 3 km, 9 per cent, not 9%). Use thousands and millions, not lakhs and crores.
12. Tables and Figures to be indicated by number (e.g., see Table 1) with the heading, not by placement (e.g., see Table below). Complete sources should appear below the Table (and Figure) followed by notes in lower letters. Self-explanatory and short titles and headings in Tables and Figures are preferred. The units of measurement and the relevant time (year, duration, period) should be stated.
13. Figures should be planned to fit the proportions of the printed page. The same applies to Maps, Illustrations, Graphs, Charts.
14. In the case of multicolour Tables, Figures, Maps, Illustrations, Photographs and alike- the meaning of coloured areas or legends must be evident in the text.

E. Citations and Referencing

Citations in the text should follow the referencing style used by the American Psychological Association (APA). Contributors are referred to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 7th Edition (can be retrieved from: https://aut.ac.nz.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=49292669 (APA 7th brief guide & https://aut.ac.nz.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=47905766 (APA 7th brief guide for citing tables & figures).

References should be arranged first alphabetically and then further sorted chronologically if necessary. More than one reference from the same author (s) in the same year must be identified by the letters 'a', 'b', 'c', and alike, placed after the year of publication.

Examples:

Reference list	In-text citation
Book with one author	
Jones, R. (2007). <i>Nursing leadership and management: Theories, process and practice</i> . F. A. Davis.	Jones (2007) noted that <i>Or...</i> (Jones, 2007)
Book with two authors	
Claiborne, L., & Drewery, W. (2010). <i>Human development: Family, place, culture</i> . McGraw-Hill.	Claiborne and Drewery (2010) stated that..... <i>Or...</i> (Claiborne & Drewery, 2010)
Book with three or more authors, up to 20 authors	
Hubbard, J., Thomas, C., & Varnham, S. (2010). <i>Principles of law for New Zealand business students</i> . Pearson.	Hubbard et al. (2010) stated that... <i>Or ...</i> (Hubbard et al., 2010).
Author of a chapter in an edited book	
Hales, M. (2012). Community health nursing. In A. Berman, S. Snyder, T. Levett-Jones, T. Dwyer, M. Hales, N. Harvey, ...D. Stanley (Eds.), <i>Kozier and Erb's fundamentals of nursing</i> (pp. 127-141). Pearson.	Hales (2012) reported that... <i>Or</i> ... (Hales, 2012).
Journal article with one author	
Jackson, A. (2007). New approaches to drug therapy. <i>Psychology Today and Tomorrow</i> , 27(1), 54-59.	In an earlier article, it was proposed (Jackson, 2007) ... <i>or</i> Jackson (2007) proposed...
Journal article with two authors	
Kramer, E., & Bloggs, T. (2002). On quality in art and art therapy. <i>American Journal of Art Therapy</i> , 40(1), 218-231.	Kramer and Bloggs (2002) stipulated in their latest article... Alternatively, this article on art (Kramer & Bloggs, 2002) stipulated that...
Webpage, with a date	
Monaghan, E. (2019, December 10). <i>Five reasons modern slavery at sea is still possible in 2019</i> . Greenpeace. https://bit.ly/2PIXjqc	(Monaghan, 2019) <i>or</i> Monaghan (2019)

Examples:

Reference list	In-text citation
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Athletics New Zealand. (n.d.). <i>Form anewclub</i> . http://www.athletics.org.nz/Clubs/Starting-a-New-Club	(Athletics New Zealand, n.d.) or Athletics New Zealand (n.d.)
Newspaper article from a website	
Aw, J. (2012, June 12). Stopping the soda bulge: Why we need to consider restricting sugary beverages. <i>National Post</i> . https://nationalpost.com/health/stopping-the-soda-bulge-why-we-need-to-consider-restricting-sugary-beverages	Aw (2012)...or (Aw, 2012) stated that.....

F. Submission

The authors should submit their work in an electronic file- Microsoft Word and PDF file- as an email attachment to jjsem.djs@du.ac.bd. The cover letter, among others, shall mention that the subject material has not been published earlier or not submitted elsewhere for publication and declare that (to the best of his/her knowledge) did not resort to plagiarism and copyright infringements in any form. Author's institutional affiliation (with designation), full postal address, email, telephone contact numbers shall have to be in the letter of submission.

G. Post Acceptance

Online proof correction: To ensure a fast publication process, the editor might ask authors to provide their proof corrections within seven days.

Copy of the printed version, offprints and fast electronic publication:The corresponding author will get, at no cost, one copy of the printed version of the Journal and five (05) copies of the paper's offprint. Once the author has proofed the article, it will be published immediately on the Journal's 'Articles in Press' section online, thus making it available to subscribers to read and cite. For more information, visit DJS Website: www.djs.du.ac.bd

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