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COVID 19 ACTING AS A PROVOKE FOR DEGLOBLALIZATION-A REVIEW

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Abstract: *The word 'being global' was meant a whole lot till now to a large extent until the outbreak of COVID 19. Although de-globalization concept was heaped on geopolitical reasons with the Trump government but COVID19 has triggered the process. COVID19 has affected the economic growth of thousands of firms who rely on doing their business cross borders. It brought turbulence to all those firms whose operations are scattered over various countries. Effects on global economy, disturbed geopolitical relations and global supply chain messed up were some of the eruptions that came along with the pandemic. The present paper brings an insight into how the disease COVID19 has provoked the process of de-globalization and revived the nationalization issue all over the world.*

Keywords: *De globalization, COVID19, globalization, nationalization, turbulence, provoked*

1. INTRODUCTION TO DE GLOBALIZATION

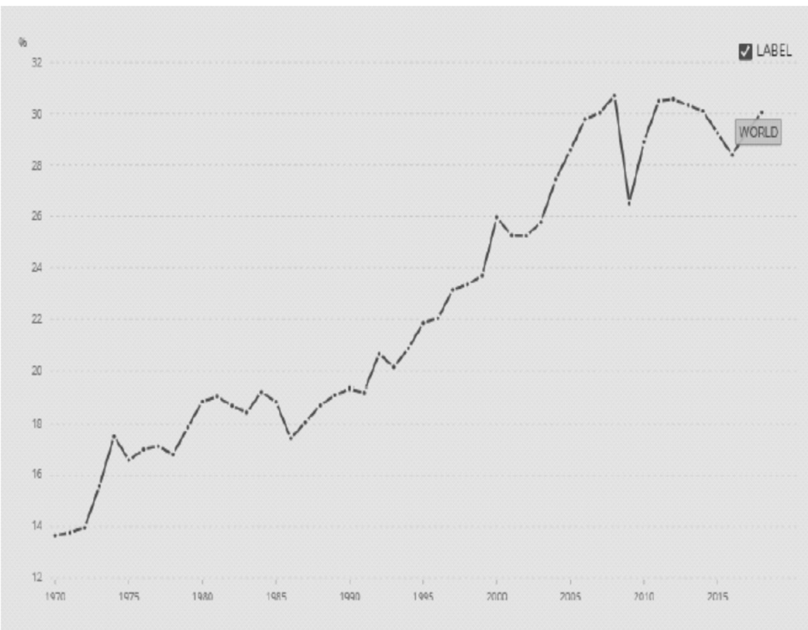
The term 'De-globalization' was coined for the first time by Walden Bello in the year 2001. According to Bello De-globalization is not just another word of taking a step back from the international economy. He defined it as a manner of re structuring the economy which was integrated to satisfy the needs of international corporations into the economy which concentrates more on its own people and communities (Walden Bello 2002).

De-globalization can be thought of as the reverse of Globalization which is all about bringing different nations closer to each other through various means such as exchange of goods and services, transport, currencies, technology, culture. It also means increasing interdependence among the countries through such means. It had always been thought of as an issue of developing countries but not of developed countries, as the developing countries rely more on the international trade to prosper their economy. Many multinational companies search for opportunities in countries to invest such as cheap labor and low tax which in turn can bring them good returns. Firms in developed nations usually set up their manufacturing plants in developing countries with cheap labor to get their work done in more than half the price in their parent countries. Such smart investment not only yields high ROI (returns on investment) but also help them gain competitive advantage. However the situation had not been the same with the outburst of the calamity COVID19.

1.1. Instigation of De-Globalization

There are many evidences in literature that de globalization has repeated itself in the up and down movement just like musical chairs from the beginning of nineteenth century. Before the disruption created by COVID19, the world trade had faced severe blows due to the financial crisis in the year 2008. The figure below shows the international trade as a percentage of global GDP, starting from the year 1970 to 2015 (Post-COVID Asia 2020)

Figure 1.1: Exports of goods and services worldwide as a percentage of GDP



Source: Post-COVID Asia, World Scientific 2020.

It can be observed from the above figure that until the economic crisis of 2008, the international trade was on its peak with the ratio of international exports to global GDP at 30.8 percent in the year 2008. But soon after the crisis, the ratio fell to 26.7 percent in the year 2009. The year hence named as the year of 'great recession'. It can also be seen from the figure that the rise and fall in the world trade was on regular basis from the year 1970 which means that de-globalization started spreading its wings long ago and it is not a new concept.

Even before the Trump government, the government of Obama made deductions in taxes so that the American companies can make a way back home (Post Covid Asia 2020). The Trump government had intensified the de-globalization issue by asking the American firms to bring their business back to their country. Even Japan joined hands with US and both of them promised to pay the firms for moving their plants out of China. It had been always believed by the West that the nationalization should be supported by the norms and policies of the government (CICIR 2020). While this had started creating a depression in the global world, the COVID 19 added more to it with its outburst. Bans on travels, decking of aircrafts, imports and exports restrictions made the firms which function in different countries suffer. A clear depression of thirteen percent to thirty two percent in global trade was pointed out by World Trade Organization (WTO) in the year 2020 (Prabir de, Suranjan Gupta 2020).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The paper is written based on the review of many journals, books, research reports and websites related to the topic of de-globalization and its connection with the pandemic COVID 19.

3. COVID19 AS AN ACCELERATOR OF DE-GLOBALIZATION

Catalin postelnicu et al (2015) explained that de-globalization cannot be measured only by observing macroeconomic components such as imports and exports of goods restrictions, expatriates money remittance and foreign direct investments. But other factors like tariff and non tariff barriers on trade, restrictions on free labor movement, transfer of technology dynamics, administrative actions taken to promote purchase of local goods, the amount of subsidies to shield the sector of agriculture should also be taken into account. In the period of De-globalization such factors get highly provoked which happened during the period of COVID19. It was predicted by Henry Kissinger, the United States former secretary of state that the COVID19 will change the globe forever while some other influential people assume that there will be an end of globalization (CICIR 2020).

Although De-globalization started its intensification even before the pandemic, it is obvious to be said that COVID19 has speed up the process of De-globalization in many ways which can explained as follows:

3.1. Impact of COVID19 on Geopolitical Relations

Pre Pandemic Relations: China made a secure entry into different countries of Europe, Asia and Africa through its 'Belt and Road Initiative' and increased its foreign direct investments in these countries. It was in the year 2016 that they invested thirty five billion Euros in Europe alone. But the circumstances took a new turn in the year 2017 when the United States named China 'a revisionist power' i.e., a country attempting to alter the global system. The country of China already had tensed relations with United States before the pandemic when the US government imposed tariffs on Chinese products in the year 2018. China also had weak relations with Europe even before the pandemic. Europe responded to China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' with its 'Connectivity Strategy' in the same year spotlighting on legality of the connection made through 'Belt and Road Initiative'. On the other hand, in 2018 Trump government had almost imposed high tariffs on European products too with a twenty five percent tariff on the import of steel and a tariff of ten percent on aluminum imports (European Parliament Think Tank).

Post Pandemic: The pre-existing tensions between the countries fired more with US blaming China for the origin of the virus. President Trump also blamed Europe for not being able to tackle the virus and for the new emerging cases of COVID19, thereby banning all the flights from Schengen zone to United States. As a result of which, the United States of America had been acutely hit by the virus. The GDP of the country fell by 9.5% and a thirty million insurance claims for unemployment were filled during the early six weeks of the pandemic. As a response to the ban imposed by America in March 2020, the European Union issued a list of countries to which travels were banned until July and which included United States of America (European Parliament Think Tank).

The US worse its relationship with Europe on various issues existing even before the pandemic during the summer of 2020. The situation became intense when Trump ordered the American Troops to be removed from Germany. Almost twelve hundred US military men who were serving Germany against Russia were removed which was another hit to the US- Europe relations. India also barred sixty applications of China as a consequence of the military conflict. Following the footsteps of India, US also did the same (European Parliament Think Tank).

The world heavily relies on the medical supplies of China to different countries of the world. According to CICIR 2020, the medical supplies of China were eighty percent to the countries in Asia and Europe. China supplies sixty percent of the paracetamol and ninety percent penicillin all over the world. This medical supply chain dependency added more to the tensed relations of US and Europe with the country (CICIR 2020).

However the geopolitical relations were thought to be taking a new direction with the president elections and with Mr. Trump bidding goodbye to American parliament. But the new president carried on the strict policy of Trump by declaring openly that China will have to face the results of violating the human rights in the country with Uighur. While in another declaration Mr. Joe Biden refused to involve in conversation with Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman and will involve with King Salman bin Abdul Aziz (The Times of India 2021).

3.2. Impact of COVID19 on World Economy

The economic depression that happened in 1930s was the most extreme depression that affected the world economy in the twentieth century. The world income had fallen by fifteen percent during the year 1929 and 1932. The world economic crisis of 2008-2009 had taken away one percent of the global income. It was predicted by Professor Nouriel Roubini that the global income will be even more badly affected by the pandemic COVID19 than the global depression of 1930s (Post- COVID Asia 2020).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in World Economic Outlook (WEO) published in April 2020 predicted that there will be a depression of three percent in the worldwide income. It also predicted that United States income will shrink by 5.9 percent, a shrink of 7.5 percent for Europe income and a shrink of 5.2% in the income of Japan. On the whole the developed economies were expected to contract by 6.1%. China which was all set to dominate the world trade was predicted to decline its growth from six percent to 1.2 percent. A slow growth rate of one percent in the economy of developing nations including China, South Asian Countries and India was predicted by IMF. The IMF also predicted a shrink of 4.9% in the overall universal growth rate, a shrink of eight percent in the growth rate of developed countries and the future growth of the developing nations was expected to shrink by three percent (Post- COVID Asia 2020).

The following table shows the effect that COVID19 had on the gross domestic product (GDP) and growth rates of different countries of the world:

Table 3.2.1
Effect of COVID19 on GDP and Growth Rates in 2020

S. No	*AREA*	*EFFECT OF COVID19 ON GDP AND GROWTH RATES(2020)*
1.	United States of America	GDP raised by 0.3 percent in the first quarter and 9.5 percent in the second quarter of the year 2020
2.	European Union	GDP fell by 2.5 percent in the first quarter and 14.2 percent in the second quarter
3.	Spain	Growth rates were -4.1 percent and -22.1 percent in the second quarter
4.	France	GDP contracted by 5.7 percent in the first quarter and nineteen percent in the second quarter
5.	Germany	GDP declined by 2.2 percent and 11.7 percent in the first and second quarters
6.	United Kingdom	Growth rate declined by 1.7 percent in the first quarter and 21.7 percent in the second quarter
8.	Japan	GDP declined by two percent and ten percent in the first and second quarter
9.	South Korea	GDP declined by 1.4 percent in the first quarter and by 2.9 percent in the second quarter
10.	Malaysia	GDP fell by 17.1 percent on an annual basis
11.	Philippines	GDP fell by 16.5 percent on an annual basis
12.	Singapore	GDP fell by 12.6 percent on an annual basis
13.	Indonesia	GDP fell by 5.3 percent on an annual basis
14.	India	A decline of five percent in the first quarter and -4.5 percent in the second quarter

Source: Post- COVID Asia, World Scientific 2020

3.3. Impact of COVID19 on Global Demand and Supply Chain

World Customs Organizations conducted a survey involving fifty six countries as participants. Fifteen separate agencies were involved in custom procedures in those countries passing through at least five custom regulatory bodies. It was observed from the findings that how the different regulations and difficult paper work can delay the financial affluence of a country. It was also found that more the tricky paper work of customs for the export and import of goods, the more it could even inhibit firms from playing a part on the global level. In order to ease the custom work, In 2000s The United Nations (UN) even launched a concept called 'Single Window' to reduce the documentation issues across various channels and required formalities to be done only at one single entry terminal (Globalization – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow 2013). But sadly to say such efforts had been battered again and again resulting towards creation of hindrances on the global supply chain.

Global demand and supply chain had already been affected by the US restrictions on non tariff barriers and increase of tariffs. The great pandemic has then laid panic on the consumer's mind to shop for their requirements. The economy has been badly affected by a depression in the consumer's demand of products. Unless the pandemic settles on its own or a vaccine which can give immunity even for the mutations of the virus is developed, the demand of the goods cannot be normal again. But it is not just that demand of the goods has declined, the global supply chain has been injured the most (Post-COVID Asia 2020).

The firms which operate its actions across various nations cannot manufacture the goods unless there are no bans on the transportation. Even for the firms which functions in a single country, the production process is in turbulence. The import and export of raw materials and products is hard to imagine.

For a global supply and demand chain to function properly, different countries in the world are to be linked through travel and transportation. A disorder in the production process of a firm in one country also disturbs production in other countries. With the pandemic first started in the country of China put major disruptions in the global supply chain. The country is known to be the workshop of the world assembling and producing products to other countries on one hand and producing parts to be assembled on the other. Majority of the multinational firms heavily rely on China for their production process. After China, firms look forward to Vietnam as their production ally. Disturbances created by COVID19 in the countries of Vietnam and Italy had a severe impact on the global demand and supply chain (Post- COVID Asia 2020).

With supply chains blocked and manufacturing unit shutdown, it is clear for the multinational companies to situate their factories closer. It is also predicted for some firms to move back their plants to their parent countries (CICIR 2020).

Sara Brown published an article on July 22, 2020 in which she explained in detail about the future of global supply chains. According to her restructuring of the supply chains has been provoked by the COVID19 pandemic but firms are less likely to fully dump China. She wrote that the idea behind restructuring is not new and has originated due to the increased tariffs of the trade war between US and China. According to her some companies may swing out some of the production units from China but at the same time also bringing their capacities nearer to the demand of the market by shifting to Mexico, Brazil and Eastern Europe. She also quoted Yassi Sheffi, an MIT professor, who said it will be around decades for firms to completely move their plants out of China, as the country had been an advanced developer of raw materials and intermediate goods. So it is difficult to imagine that complete restructuring could be a solution to the problems posed by the pandemic (Sara Brown 2020).

A rise in the trade protectionism will profound the global economic depression which in turn will increase the recession. During the Great Depression of 1930s countries imposed more tariffs and non tariff barriers in order to make their markets secure. The result of which was that the global trade system collapsed. It is predicted that there is a havoc of countries repeating the same thing in the post COVID era. There are also high chances that the foreign direct investments (FDIs) of developed nations in the developing nations will surely decline (Post- COVID Asia 2020).

Biswajit Nag (2020) in his article presented four scenarios for China's 2050 strategy which may be adopted by the country in the Post COVID world. He writes that it is predicted by some researchers that firms may now shift their manufacturing units to India, but it is not that easy process. He then presented four scenarios which be adopted by the multinational companies in the era of post COVID. In the first scenario he predicts that the firms might move their production houses out of China and shift it towards Southeast Asia and Eastern European countries. But according to him such a shift will result in dearth of goods and rose prices. In the second scenario he explained that it might happen that the Chinese firms and their partner firms may search for countries in order to escape the political conflicts. An example of this can be a firm of American or European origin will function from Vietnam where a subsidiary of partner Chinese firm is already present. Thereby the materials or goods won't be exported through a direct channel from China but the country will have a control over the earnings on export in different countries (COVID19 Challenges for the Indian Economy: Trade and Foreign Policy Effects).

Nag (2020) in his third scenario stated that the Chinese firms due to the increasing costs of the wages and also rising appreciation of Chinese Yuan occur since 2005, might decide to shift to other nations. The government of China also in order to maintain the upward pressure on the currency started investing in other nations like Asia, Europe, United States and Latin America since the year 2005. The more the investment in abroad countries the more control will be on the currency of China. In the fourth scenario Nag (2020) predicts that China might increase its dominance in other nations by facilitating them in different development processes and this will also make sure that the products of China will flourish in their markets. Thereby China might keep their meddling in the political affairs of these countries too and might create blockade in the trade with other countries and achieving a supreme position. The country has been already grounded in many developing countries through its production units and this could be the scenario post COVIID19 too (COVID19 Challenges for the Indian Economy: Trade and Foreign Policy Effects).

3.4. Impact of COVID19 on Nationalization of Workers in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Countries

The term 'Globalization' is also understood by one its factors: free movement of workers across the countries. It had become a trend to look out for jobs abroad including migrant workers and expatriates. Workers from different countries started migrating to countries in Gulf in the decade of seventies in twentieth century. These countries which were rich in oil treasures offered prosperity and economic development. These foreign workers were from countries such Yemen, Syria, Egypt, India, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Lebanon and Sudan. The attractiveness of the pay packages and the readiness to perform any odd job especially in case of blue collar jobs let the GCC citizens handle their own businesses or jobs without much turmoil (Arab reform initiative). Although the process had been slowed down after the economic recession of 2008-2009, it was hit hardly by the eruption of COVID19.

According to the report of International Labor Organization, published on 23rd September 2020 approximated labor income globally declined by 10.7 percent in the first three quarters of 2020 when compared to 5.5 percent in the first three quarters of 2019. Labor income losses reached 15.1 percent in low middle income countries, 11.4 percent in upper middle income countries and 10.1 percent in low income countries. Although the government in many countries declared remittance and fiscal packages to support the migrant workers and expatriates, these policies were not enough (ILO 2020).

Majority of the expatriates and migrant workers working abroad especially in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries which includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar suffered in turbulence during the pandemic. While majority of the migrant workers were treated unfairly by not getting paid for many months, others were forcibly deported to their nations. It was not just that the blue collar workers suffered from job insecurity and job losses, the white collar expatriates even suffered nearly the same resulting situation with many of them heading towards their parent countries.

The Quint in the first quarter of 2020 contacted Keralites who were living in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait to highlight the concerns they were tackling in those countries. To surprise it was found out that majority of them were dealing with problems such as layoffs, pay cuts and no pay. Many of them even wanted to return to India and appealed to the government of Kerala to make arrangements for bringing them back home. According to a statement given by the Chief Minister of Kerala on 29th April 2020, 3, 20,463 citizens of Kerala working abroad had enlisted themselves on the NORKA web portal to make a way back home and the number of such registrations keeps on increasing day by day. It was also reported that in Gulf countries the labor apartments or dormitories are owned by the companies where they work and where hundreds of laborers are forced to live in the same structure sharing the same roof. If workers leave the country for a short period, an enormous load will be lifted up from the government and assist sorting back things in order. The governments in such countries hence eased the relieving process of workers (The Quint).

Amnesty International reported on how the majority of the Gulf countries made abuse of the migrant workers who work for them during the COVID19 pandemic. It reported how the country of Saudi Arabia had deported hundreds of migrant workers from Ethiopia. The government in gulf countries deports the workers if their work permit even crosses the renew date. Sometimes even their sponsor's called 'kafala' fails to renew their permit. The deportation centers in such countries are dumped with illegal migrant workers where necessary sanitation and physical distancing are practically absent and the workers are mostly prone to catching infection. There are chances of more and more workers being sent to such centers. The domestic workers apart from migrant workers working in homes in Gulf also suffer the most, living under threats and abuse with no offs even during the weekends due to the pandemic situation (Amnesty International).

According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Co operation and Development) report of 2020, some GCC countries like Oman even allowed private sector firms to decrease the wages for the lower working hours, job rotation of workers and also allowed the consent to firms to repatriate their employees and cancel their job contracts. Whereas some GCC countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait provided full time unemployment benefits to cover the salaries of quarantined workers for their citizens only. It is only in the country of Qatar that the ministry of Labor, Social Welfare and Administrative Development which provided for three billion QAR by Qatar Development Bank as a remittance to make sure that the workers get their full payment. The scheme included not just the citizens of the country but also the expatriates and migrant workers (OECD).

Arab reform initiative- a think tank reported that COVID19, oil crisis and financial crisis has provoked the nationalization issue in GCC countries. These countries started intensifying their policies for nationalization of workers i.e., preferring locals over expats and migrants. It was reported by International Monetary Fund (IMF) that there will be a decline of 7.6 percent in the economy of GCC countries in 2020. The companies in these countries responded to such crisis by cutting the wages of workers and replacing the migrants and expats with the citizens of the country. Such an action was also based on the perception that the blue collar workers specially the migrants live in unhygienic and overcrowded areas and dormitories which was considered to be the major reason for the multiplication of the Corona virus. Some of such residing areas of migrant workers were declared to be the hotspots of the virus. The result of which was that the workers specially blue collar workers lost their jobs and are repatriated to their countries without being paid their legitimate wages, benefits and remuneration (Arab reform initiative).

The idea of nationalization of the workforce is not new and which had started taking its roots since the early twenty first century. During this decade the government in many GCC countries had vowed not to rely on the overseas personnel. The country of Oman termed it as 'Omanization' to replace the workers in delivery services, healthcare, technical fields with their nationals and planned to give vocational training to locals. The companies hiring expatriates were obliged to pay seven percent of the employee's salary to the government for getting the locals trained in Oman. The country of Saudi Arabia also did a kind of same thing by introducing 'Nitaqat' system to ensure that the firms attract more and more Saudi citizens. This concept was related to all firms in private sector and thorough which 6.3 million expats and national workers were touched. The aim was to promote 'Saudization' of employees in the country. The firms were then classified into bands called red, yellow, green and platinum based on the rate at which they were Saudizing (employing Saudi citizens) the employees (Arab reform initiative 2020).

The ministry of Kuwait planned not to issue job permit to personnel above the age of sixty and to deduce the jobs given to migrant workers from seventy to thirty percent which is predicted to half the population of Egyptians and Indians living in the country and which constitute the major part of the expatriates. Similar actions were taken Ministry of Human Resources in United Arab Emirates by a lapse of the job contracts of expatriates. On the other hand the petroleum company of Bahrain also ceased the work permits of expatriates in hundreds and initiated steps to increase 'Bahranization'- hiring only citizens of Bahrain (Arab reform initiative 2020).

Many GCC countries had used the pandemic for further intensifying their endeavors to nationalize their jobs by blaming the foreign workers responsible for the spread of the pandemic starting a new phase of de globalization of the workforce. However it is believed that the situation won't be permanent and tend to be dynamic over the coming years.

4. CONCLUSION

With having severe consequences on the economy, global demand and supply chain of import and export, geopolitical relations between the countries and nationalization of workforce in different countries, de-globalization is predicted to be the new trend for the decade 2020-2030. Fu Mengzi in his report of CICIR (China Institutes of Contemporary Industrial Relations 2020) stated that the pandemic could not hinder China from taking part in global trade. Even though the global trade declined due the pandemic, it will take longer duration to build the global chain of demand and supply chain again but it will not be halted forever (CICIR 2020).

While Adi Gaskell in his article "how the corona virus is transforming innovation" in Forbes wrote that the pandemic has escorted to new attempts of innovation. He gave examples of grocery stores using the shielding for staff, the pivots being used in restaurants, online education, digital healthcare and Amazon's latest Just walk out technology which does not require a customer to go through a checkout service and pay easily.

However situations remain uncertain until a safe environment is guaranteed. Until then technology remains the only medium of exchanges between the different countries.

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