

# INDIA FOUNDATION JOURNAL



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- Potential and Challenges for the Proposed India- Middle East- Europe Corridor (IMEC) - P. R. Shankar
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- Women's Leadership in Counter-Terrorism- A Catalyst for Global Security Transformation - Aakansha Bhawsar

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# India Foundation Journal

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*With a team of dedicated professionals based at its office in New Delhi, the Foundation works with partners and associates both in India and overseas to further its stated objectives.*

## About India Foundation Journal

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## G 20 Summit: Moving towards a Multi-polar World: Implications and Opportunities for Bharat

Bhaswati Mukherjee\*

*‘Ayang nijang paro vati, Ganana laghu chetasam,  
Udarcharitana tu, vasudaiva kutumbakam’,  
(‘This is mine, this is yours, This thinking is for the narrow minded.  
It is only for the generous hearted that the earth is one family’.)*

India that is Bharat’s G 20 message, flowing from the Maha Upanishads, resonates in today’s conflicted and divided world: Coinciding with the beginning of ‘Amritkaal’ or the next 25 years after the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India’s independence, the motto underlined that the presidency would be both futuristic and inclusive.

The G 20 represents an emerging order far more representative than a bitterly divided Security Council. It brings the G7 together with other major economies as equal partners. The G20 has evolved over time into one of the most powerful economic and financial groupings. At present, it comprises 85% of global GDP, 75% of international trade and two-thirds of the global population.

India hosted the G 20 Summit on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in New Delhi. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 23, India will formally hand over the presidency to Brazil. A virtual Summit is planned under India’s Presidency on November 23 to review the resolutions and recommendations from the Summit.

Our Presidency ensured that India’s

perspective on issues of vital national importance was duly incorporated in the global financial narrative. At the same time, under PM Modi’s inspiring leadership, India became the voice of the Global South within the G 20. It was our consistent position that the core mandate of the G 20 was to promote economic growth and development. Therefore, the crucial concerns of the Global South needed to be addressed. There was a strong compulsion to create more resilient and reliable supply chains.

As the G 20 President, India identified, highlighted, developed and strengthened international support for priorities of vital importance for the Global South in diverse social and economic sectors, ranging from energy, agriculture, trade, digital economy, health and environment, to employment, tourism, anti-corruption and women’s empowerment. In the discussions among G 20 partners leading up to the Summit, India thus represented the voice of the Global South. India argued that a more just, equitable and participative global order can only be achieved with investment, trade and technology

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decisions directed at the Global South. India ensured that the African Union would have a permanent seat at the table at the Summit.

It is clear that India was not just at the High Table but actually shaping concerns of the Global South and finding ways to address them in specific ways, not in opposition to the West but in conjunction with the West. This was also in line with EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar making a strong pitch at the B-20 Summit, organised by the CII, preceding the G 20 Summit for “a more diversified and more democratic” re-globalisation.

We took over the Presidency at a challenging and watershed moment coinciding with a period of flux internationally. The Russia Ukraine conflict vitiated relations between Russia and the industrialised West, most of which are members of the G 20. The conflict and the resulting unilateral sanctions imposed by the West upset the post pandemic global recovery and raised oil and gas prices as well as food availability. As always, the impact has been felt by the Global South, traditionally the most vulnerable.

Soon after the Summit, the international scenario became more complicated. Canadian PM Justin Trudeau’s ridiculous allegations against India in the Canadian Parliament, followed by efforts to persuade friendly Western Governments and India’s strategic partners, notably the USA, to take positions, resulted in Indian diplomacy confronting its most serious challenge in recent times. India not only clarified its stance in public, but also found a ‘modus vivendi’ around the issue with American policy makers in public.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 23, Hamas carried out a surprise attack on Israel on an unprecedented scale, firing thousands of rockets, infiltrating militants into

Israeli territory and taking an unknown number of hostages. It was almost 50 years to the day after the surprise Arab attack on Israel that launched the so called Yom Kippur War in 1973. Israel’s PM Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel was “at war”. It dealt a huge blow to the on-going process of the Arab world coming to terms with Israel including a possible peace deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

It also cast a long shadow on the much-hyped India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor announced on the last day of the G 20 Summit. The corridor would promote economic development and inter-regional connectivity and would become a viable American counter to the failed Chinese BRI. The MOU has mapped out the potential geography of the corridor from India to Europe, through UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Greece. Clearly, there are some countries who wish to sabotage the corridor.

Before and during the Summit, India sought to find pragmatic global solutions for these challenges. In doing so, India utilised its soft power in good measure. Her soft power, as disseminated through her inclusive cultural and civilisation heritage across millennia, has demonstrated that her values of tolerance, inclusiveness and cross fertilisation of cultures are more important than ever before in today’s troubled world. India used the G 20 Presidency to make culture the force to connect, to build relations and to heal the ruptures created by history and politics.

In the weeks leading up to the Summit, and despite meticulous preparation, India’s main challenge was the Ukraine-Russia conflict being a possible spoiler. How big a challenge was the elusive consensus on the Russia Ukraine conflict?

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President Putin personally informed PM Modi that he would be represented by his Foreign Minister Lavrov. The other important leaders, including President Biden, confirmed their participation. China's Xi Jinping did not attend and was represented by the Foreign Minister. The absence of consensus on a paragraph in the Summit document on the seemingly intractable Russia Ukraine conflict remained a real concern in the run-up to the Summit.

Against all odds, the presidency succeeded in obtaining agreement on an issue which has till today eluded consensus in the Security Council. The success of the Summit and the adoption of the New Delhi Declaration by consensus confirmed, if such confirmation was required, of India's emergence as a major player on the global stage, with the ability to adjust and reconcile seemingly intractable issues, being acceptable as a negotiator to all sides.

India's Sherpa Amitabh Kant said: "When we started the Presidency, the PM said that India's Presidency should be inclusive, decisive and action-oriented. The Declaration has 83 paragraphs, and all have 100% consensus". On the Ukraine issue, the Indian Presidency, in a balancing act, interwoven with remarkable drafting and negotiating skills, demonstrated that the Indian Foreign Service had come of age.

The section on geopolitics has 8 paras, compared to 2 on 'Ukraine' in Bali, and is titled 'For the planet, peace and prosperity'. It begins by recognising the 'immense human suffering and the adverse impact of wars and conflicts around the world'. It then specifically mentions Ukraine, recalls the Bali discussions, and refers to the UN resolutions on the issue. It stresses that all States

must abide by the UN Charter and adds 'All States must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any State'. This is an important face saver but is balanced by the next line which speaks of the unacceptability of the use or threat of nuclear weapons. India then brought in the Black Sea Grain Initiative which accommodates both the Russian and Ukrainian perspectives on the issue.

The text goes on to say that the G 20 is a forum to discuss international economic cooperation but also recognises that 'geopolitical and security issues' can have 'significant consequences for the global economy'. Its immediate adoption marked the high point of the Presidency. Immediately after the successful adoption of the New Delhi Declaration by consensus, Sherpa Amitabh Kant in 'Times of India' noted: "Modi envisages India as an impassioned interlocutor between the developed world and the Global South and we have delivered on this". He added: "The rich democratic ideals and cultural elements of India infused life into the Presidency, across 220 meetings held in 60 cities covering every State and UT. With over 100,000 delegates and participants across these meetings, this truly became a Presidency representative of diversity".

In his book 'The India Way' EAM pointed out: "This is a time for India to engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play, draw neighbours in, expand the neighbourhood, and expand traditional constituencies of support". As G 20 President, India succeeded on all these fronts. India's Presidency came at a watershed moment

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coinciding with a period of flux internationally. The global community was facing multiple challenges, politically and economically. At a time of conflict and uncertainty, India under PM Modi gave a unique perspective for the strengthening of international peace and security.

Despite the new challenges highlighted earlier, there are several international trends which favour India's approach to a multi-polar world, balanced by a network of conflicting or congruent interests. The world is exhausted by the Russia/Ukraine conflict. As of end September 23, US have sent \$76 billion to Kiev since January 22, with over US\$ 46 billion in military aid. It is clear that this seemingly limitless flow of aid cannot continue. There are troubling reports of corruption at high levels in Ukraine and resale of these high-grade weapons to third parties, similar to the manner in which American weapons left behind in Afghanistan are presently being used by Hamas to attack Israel.

The world is also concerned about sustainable development goals, climate finance and preparing for the future. Climate finance discussions are getting tied with the reform of multilateral development banks. The UN is very keen to partner with India in pushing this forward. India is reportedly planning to push forward its plan of 'reformed multilateralism', and bypass the existing impasse created by China in the inter-governmental process on Security Council reform. The UNSG is keen to organise a 'Summit of the future' before leaving office in 2024. This may be an opportune moment to push through Security Council reform, particularly in the UNGA.

There are also indications that the 'India Way' is winning globally. Leaders from Samoa, Guyana,

Mauritius, Maldives, Bhutan, Dominica, Jamaica and St. Lucia recently thanked India for the following:

- For timely delivery of Covid 19 vaccines, when developed countries had refused.
- For providing a platform for the Global South during its G 20 presidency,
- For articulating issues concerning the wider Global South despite its own challenges of development.

There would appear to be a positive movement towards multi-polarity after the New Delhi Summit. This has huge implications as well as opportunities for Bharat. India is evolving as a unique bridge between different worlds. As EAM noted in 'The India Way' that an India: "not driven by victimhood...has the potential to serve as a bridge between the established and emerging orders".

India is a bridging power, based on a confident nationalism, with the aspiration to become a full-fledged pole in the international system. This multi-polar vision will lead to a multi-polar world. Indian multi-alignment will take it toward diverse partners in its quest to expand its national power. Clearly, the West remains a pivotal buttress for India. Western economic and technological supremacy alone, of which the United States is the singular paragon, ensures its priority in India's grand strategy going forward.

The bitter legacy of colonialism and the antagonisms of the Cold War have left India with lingering ambiguities and an inner ambivalence about its Western strategic partners. The current and prospective threats from China, however, ensure that New Delhi's hesitations not-



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withstanding, the gravitation toward the strategic West will only intensify.

In my book ‘India and the EU: an Insider View’ I have pointed out that India needs to address the issue of its great power deficit which appears to be less one of ability than of political will. India remains wary of assuming global responsibilities that might impose limitations on the options available for pursuing its own immediate national interest. While India is becoming comfortable with its new weight as an emerged power, it does not appear quite ready yet to step up to the plate as a co-manager of the global order.

PM Modi’s foreign policy has already confirmed this direction. Nevertheless, India’s sense of self, its colonial past, its substantial natural endowments, and its strategic potentialities all combine to strengthen its determination to protect its freedom of action. India’s moment has come. The day will surely come when Bharat will ascend to the pinnacle of the global system as an

independent great power. This vision enjoys substantial support across the political spectrum in India that is Bharat.

As the natural leader of the global South and an emerged pole, Bharat that is India’s greatest asset is its history, culture and civilisation. As Swami Vivekananda said:

*“India for thousands of years peacefully existed.*

*Even earlier, when history had no record,  
And tradition dared not peer into the gloom of  
that intense past,*

*Even from then until now,*

*Ideas after ideas have marched out from her,  
But every word has been spoken with a blessing  
behind it and peace before it.*

*We, of all nations of the world, have never been  
a conquering race,*

*And that blessing is on our head,*

*And therefore we live”.*



## Potential and Challenges for the Proposed India- Middle East- Europe Corridor (IMEC)

P. R. Shankar\*

On 09 Sep 2023, the leaders of the United States, India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union entered into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to work together to develop a new India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor<sup>1</sup>. This was announced at the G20 Leaders' event on the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment in Delhi. As per the MOU<sup>2</sup>, the corridor is expected to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration across two continents. It aims to

achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the region. In this context, it is relevant to carry out an examination of the geo-economic and geopolitical potential of this project, what it means to participating nations and the challenges it faces.

### Potential of The Corridor

The IMEC has two components. The East Corridor connects India to the Middle-East and Gulf countries. The Northern Corridor connects the Middle-East to Europe<sup>3</sup>. It is an extensive network which integrates a railway corridor, a hydrogen pipeline, and high-density optical fibre



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cables. The corridor is expected to facilitate the development and export of clean energy; lay undersea cables and link energy grids and telecommunication lines to expand reliable access to electricity; enable innovation of advanced clean energy technology; and connect communities with secure and stable Internet. The corridor, envisions driving existing trade and manufacturing, strengthening food security and integrating supply chains. The participating nations aim to unlock new investments, including from the private sector, and spur the creation of employment through enhanced business opportunities. From an Indian point of view there will be a seamless logistical corridor linking India to southern Europe. The corridor has the potential to ramp up the economies of the nations and have great geo-economic and geopolitical consequences.

The corridor is being envisaged by nations who have the ability to invest based on a felt need. Very importantly, most of the nations are allied <sup>4</sup> to each other or are in a strategic partnership<sup>5,6</sup>. This must be seen against the fact that it is exactly the opposite of CPEC/BRI where China has been the dominant partner as a lender with a weaker nation as a borrower entity. Very often, the BRI has been synonymous with the Debt Trap diplomacy of China<sup>7</sup>. 'Mutual benefit' of the participating nations is an important driver of the IMEC. As an extension, another important aspect of IMEC is that all participating nations are in it for diversification or expansion of their geo-economic interests. A major fallout of IMEC will be that the CPEC/BRI has a competing alternative. Other nations can choose from the available alternatives for their development.

## Strategic Factors

The Iran-Saudi peace deal was seen as a major victory for China<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, it was also being seen that the Chinese influence in the region had increased to the detriment of USA and India. It is a considered opinion that, IMEC will largely neutralise China's undue influence in the region when it is established.

The second aspect which merits consideration is that the security of the corridor will be the responsibility of the participating nations. As a result, the security of the maritime segment between India and the Gulf will devolve largely on the USA and India. Resultantly, it will be a major counter to the increasing Chinese maritime presence in the Arabian Sea. It will also prevent the China-Pakistan combine from militarising Gwadar beyond a point. In fact, the participation of the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia in this project completely outflanks Pakistan and becomes a dampener on its hybrid activities. This will benefit India immensely.

The third aspect of the corridor is that it by passes the troubled regions of West Asia, namely Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. The fourth aspect is that the corridor avoids the congested Suez Canal and is expected to reduce the transit time between India and Europe by 40 per cent and transportation costs by 30 per cent<sup>9</sup>. Overall, there is optimism that IMEC will result in enhanced logistical efficiency, lowering business costs, promoting economic unity, create jobs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The hope and expectation is that it will lead to an integrative transformation across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

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## Indian Perspective

The IMEC opens up many vistas for India. Its soft power and large diaspora in the Middle-East can be leveraged to accrue great all-round advantage. The corridor holds promise of cementing India's energy security and serving as a market for Indian goods. India gains strategically since its presence will exert greater influence over the Indian Ocean and potentially expand its reach into the Mediterranean Sea.

Traditionally, it was always thought that India's interests were from the Gulf of Aden to The Malacca Straits<sup>10</sup>. IMEC will expand India's sphere of influence. It will hereafter extend far beyond the horn of Africa. Resultantly, India will become a significant player in the Middle East geopolitics. India's influence in North Africa is also bound to increase. It also brings Israel and the eastern Mediterranean into India's neighbourhood<sup>11</sup>. As India's strategic foot print increases, its economic presence will grow.

The IMEC will provide plenty of opportunity for infrastructure construction and development. There will be new rail lines, gas pipelines, energy grids and data links/cables which will flow along the corridor. Indian expertise in establishing, constructing, running and maintaining such infrastructure will be critical to the success of the project. India's experience in infrastructure development at affordable and reasonable costs will ensure that Indian firms are continually engaged in this area.

The corridor provides a viable alternative to International North-South Transport Corridor through Iran and Russia that was conceived at the turn of the century but has not made progress for one reason or the other. In fact it has not even got

off the ground<sup>12</sup>. It will give India an alternate route to trade with Europe.

While IMEC will boost trade between EU and India significantly, trade with the Gulf countries is set to boom. Trade between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - comprising Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain - has already surged, reaching US\$154.7 billion in the 2021-22 financial year. This is a 77 per cent year-on-year increment<sup>13</sup>. Overall, IMEC is a good trade proposition for India even if it is implemented partially.

India's relations with the Kingdom of Saudi have expanded exponentially in the recent past. The recently concluded state visit by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Muhammad bin Salman (MBS)<sup>14, 15</sup> when seen in conjunction with the recently concluded G20 Summit in India and the MOU on IMEC underscores this aspect. A joint working group (JWG)<sup>16</sup> is expected to be set up to handle the US\$100 billion investments promised by Saudi Arabia in 2019. This was halted due to the pandemic and is likely to be revived now. IMEC and this deal will feed off each other to get due momentum. This will be a game changer in many ways. It also signals a change to people in Kashmir which will quieten down once Saudi investments are grounded in India.

The IMEC will provide a secure flank to India in the Arabian Sea. The enhanced importance and geopolitical implications of IMEC being a multilateral effort will provide inherent security to India in this area. It virtually rules out interruption of energy supplies and trade activity to the West. It will reduce the chances of any misadventure by either Pakistan or China. They will have to think twice before any maverick activity.

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## Gulf and Saudi Interests

It is widely being recognised that availability of fossil fuels is finite and one day they will no more be available. If the oil producing countries do not diversify, one day they will wake up to find that their economies have no tomorrow. In this milieu, the countries of the Middle East have a great opportunity to diversify from their fossil fuel-based economies. IMEC provides them adequate scope for transforming from being primarily oil exporters to becoming global hubs for tourism, investment and logistics. These commodity-based economies have been trying to diversify into 'alternate economy' channels and increase their share in the service sectors of global economy. IMEC gives them a great opportunity to embark on such new paths.

Hitherto-fore, the Gulf has seen global trade flow past it in the South through the Suez Canal or in the North through Turkey. The IMEC gives a golden chance for the Gulf Countries to be the hub and transit link between Asian and European economies for the first time in their history. Such corridors invariably also provide inherent opportunity for the diversification they seek. They are unlikely to let go of this chance.

The cash rich Gulf countries need avenues for investment in the global arena and specially in India which is a growing market with tremendous economic potential. Additionally, most of these nations have deep and traditional links with India. More importantly they are food deficient. They need the huge bread basket of India to resolve their food security issues which will be endemic. This factor alone will drive up the chances of the IMEC coming into being.

The IMEC and its attendant geopolitics gives

them a major alternative from being enmeshed and entrapped in the 'secretive' Chinese global development and security initiatives. From a very fundamental point of view, the Gulf Sheikhdoms will not give up on their monarchist capitalist model of rule. Too close an association with China brings in danger of communist thinking. Further they will not like to be seen in one camp or the other. When seen from this perspective, IMEC gives them a great opportunity to hedge between big powers and blaze their own diplomatic trail.

The IMEC also carries the promise, even if it is faint, of peace in the Arab world. If IMEC must succeed, Israel has to be part of the deal. Hence, there has to be a climate of peace even if it is grudgingly accepted. However, in the larger sense, the Gulf nations seem to be realising that they have to move towards peaceful co-existence if they are to progress, even if some indications are to the contrary<sup>17</sup>.

## The US Angle

In May 2023, during the summit in Hiroshima, Japan, G7 leaders affirmed their commitment to identify new opportunities to scale the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII). This US initiative aims to mobilise US\$ 600 billion over the next five years in global infrastructure investments to make a difference in people's lives around the world, strengthen and diversify supply chains, and advance shared national security interests<sup>18</sup>.

IMEC is the first major project under the US PGII umbrella. It is also a direct counter to China's BRI in the region<sup>19</sup>. Inroads made by China through the BRI were starting to adversely affect US influence in the region. The IMEC serves to regain

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the Middle East/Gulf for the USA and reaffirm its global dominance. This is specially important since the USA was seen to be losing ground to China after the Iran–Saudi peace deal.

A major factor in the IMEC is that it opens a gateway to Europe. It was widely believed that the EU nations suffered due to the Ukraine war as their energy and trade links with Russia were broken at the behest of USA. This has been an underlying irritant in US -EU relations. This gateway compensates EU for the rupture in its linkages with Russia. If this corridor is successful, the US cause and influence as a leader gets a major boost.

The IMEC serves another major purpose of security. Inevitably, this corridor will bring relative stability and peace in the region. It will also result in a new and shared security architecture in this region. The evolving architecture will necessarily be multi-lateral in which all participating nations will contribute. A new rules-based order will be implemented in the region to promote stability. This will serve to free up US forces for the Western Pacific in its effort to contain China. IMEC serves the larger Indo-Pacific cause and increases US global influence.

### **EU Interests**

The EU has backed the IMEC plan which links Europe with the Middle East and India via rail and sea<sup>20</sup>. It has been described as much more than just a railway or a cable. It is well known that EU has over-invested in China. However, the EU-China relations are fraying<sup>21</sup>. EU has increased its efforts to de-risk and pivot away from China. It sees India as the global alternative to China. This corridor could speed up and enhance trade

as well as investment between India and Europe.

The corridor also has the potential to offset the dependence of EU nations on Russia for their energy needs. It provides EU with energy security and alters European geopolitical dynamics. The IMEC also provides a direct connect to the Gulf and India without intermediaries like Turkey or Egypt which have held them hostage for many reasons.

### **Israeli Interests**

Many in Israel see the IMEC as a path towards normalisation of its relations with Saudi Arabia and the larger Arab world <sup>22</sup>. This diplomacy is a keystone of the US strategy to bring lasting peace in the Middle East. Despite reluctance to make peace with Israel officially, the Saudis have already signalled that they are amenable to peace with it. In fact, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has gone to the extent of saying that the IMEC is a “cooperation project that is the greatest in our history ... [and which] takes us to a new era of regional and global integration and cooperation, unprecedented and unique in its scope”. The next major dividend for Israel will be that it gets an opportunity to monetise its technological prowess specially in the food and communication sector. Last but not the least, they will get direct economic benefit due to a jump in Haifa Port volumes.

### **Turkish Viewpoint**

Turkey sees the IMEC as bypassing it completely. Turkey stands to lose its status as the primary link between the east and west and the silk pathways.<sup>23</sup> Turkey wants to maintain its long-standing position as a major transit hub for

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commodities moving from Asia to Europe. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has gone as far as to declare that “there can be no corridor without Turkey” and that “the most appropriate route for trade from east to west must pass through Turkey”. Turkey not only sees itself losing economically but also sees its strategic value in the Islamic world going down. However, given the current financial condition<sup>24</sup>, Turkey cannot contribute to any financial stake into the IMEC and will count on the Gulf nations to come to its rescue. That does not seem to be happening.

### **Food security and India-Middle East Food Corridor**

The onset of climate change, realignment of global politics and Ukraine war has brought forth the stark fact that food security is essential for national and human security. Nations have been taking steps to ensure their food security for an uncertain future. In this context, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Israel, and India are creating an India-Middle East Food Corridor<sup>25</sup>. This initiative is part of the larger I2U2 formulation. This will inevitably be subsumed into the IMEC and will form an important constituent of the project.

The Food Corridor is a resilient value chain already developing quietly under the radar. It envisages synergising commercial and technological strengths of India, Israel and UAE to create a food exporting powerhouse. The technologies used are visualised to be innovative and climate adaptive. The food corridor is being developed organically between the three nations. The initiative is based on investments through the private sector or through bilateral public-private partnerships / joint ventures

The fundamental facts driving the Food Corridor are three faceted. The first is that the Arab and Gulf states need to enhance their food security. It is a strategic need for them which will only become more acute with the onset of climate change. India's strategic imperative is to increase the value of its food production. The second facet is that India is a net food exporter whose value is under par. Despite being the world's second-largest food producer when measured<sup>26</sup> by calorie content, it ranks fourth when measured by the total value of agricultural production. Further, India processes less than 10% of its agricultural output<sup>27</sup>. In a situation of high production levels and low processing rates, the food corridor presents huge opportunities for India. It is worth noting that more than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of India's workforce is employed in the food-processing sector. India's strategic priority includes developing higher value-added secondary food processing as well as logistics that prevent distribution loss through efficient integration from farm to retail outlets. Thirdly, Israel's contribution to the food corridor also derives from Israeli-Indian cooperation in innovative technologies and promotion of start-ups. Significantly on 14 July 2022, during the first “I2U2” heads of government summit, the food corridor featured prominently.

### **Energy Security**

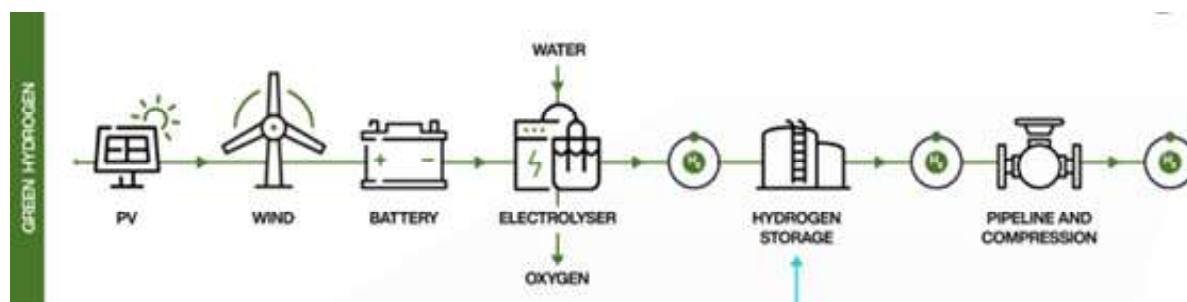
As sources and reserves of energy dwindle, the requirement of energy for sustenance as also development of all economies will increase. Hence there is a need to find new sources of clean energy. Simultaneously there is also a need to redistribute, optimise and use existing sources of energy. This is especially important in energy deficient large economies of Europe and India. In this context,

the Middle East becomes very crucial in future from two viewpoints. In the current environment, it will continue to be one of the main sources of fossil fuel energy. Accordingly, transportation of fossil fuel and gas energy to Europe and India through an integrated pipeline/tanker transportation system is envisaged in IMEC in the current times. This will give relief to EU nations, in the short term, which have suffered dearth of energy due to Ukraine war. In the long term the IMEC is betting on Green Hydrogen, which is expected to be a game changer.

technologies being currently developed. Most countries which have a high demand of energy are increasingly looking at Green Hydrogen. India is betting big on it with its national hydrogen mission<sup>29</sup>. For countries in the temperate belt, Green Hydrogen produced in the tropics will be invaluable. At that time, the IMEC will come into its own.

### The Shape of IMEC

As IMEC unfolds, the following will be prominently visible



Green hydrogen is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen by electrolysis<sup>28</sup>. The hydrogen so produced is completely carbon free. The oxygen is vented into the atmosphere with no negative impact. However, to achieve electrolysis, electricity is needed. This process to make Green Hydrogen needs to be powered by renewable energy sources, such as wind or solar. It then makes Green Hydrogen the cleanest option since it is generated from renewable energy sources without any trace of Carbon in the process. The Hydrogen so produced can be compressed and transported through pipelines as shown in the picture above. The Middle East which is a rich source of renewable and untapped solar energy will be utilised for generating Green Hydrogen through

- Digital connectivity through a transcontinental fibre-optic network between the regions involved. This will usher in a new era of digitalised interoperability.
- Transmission cables and pipelines which run alongside the proposed port, rail and road corridor.
- Supply chain integration through joint manufacturing ventures between public and private sector partners. These could be intra-national or international in nature.
- Food production, processing and supply chains.
- Increased mutual dependence on the nations of IMEC.



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- A new security architecture in the region.

## Prospects of the IMEC

The IMEC could well succeed where earlier corridors including the BRI could not. There are many reasons for this. At the outset the I2U2 coalition of India–UAE–Israel–US has been making steady progress. It provides a basic sheet anchor for the IMEC to build upon. The IMEC and I2U2 would be complimentary to each other. This is a corridor of willing nations in which each brings a niche speciality to the table for mutually benefitting outcomes. Further all of them have the capability to invest into the venture. Everyone will have skin in the game. They also in strategic partnerships or are allies with experience of working with each other. It appears that some ground work is being laid by a consortium of Emirati firms, who have already begun work on developing a US\$7 billion logistics and distribution network for the envisaged India-Middle East food corridor. Most importantly, there is an existing infrastructure frame work which can be built upon. The overall emphasis is not on the basics but in looking ahead for the future.

## Macro Comparison with BRI

Already there are comparisons being made between the IMEC and BRI. That is to be expected and natural. The essence of the IMEC tends to get lost sight of in doing so. Some issues have been highlighted earlier and are not being repeated. However, a macro comparison is of value. In terms of scope, the BRI is vast and global with a predominantly China centric orientation. As it has panned out, the benefits of BRI, if any, have accrued to China only. Very few projects have

benefitted host countries, which are invariably poor with weak economies. In fact, most host countries are being left with unviable projects and heavy debts which they have to repay China through geopolitical equity. On the other hand, the IMEC seems to be grounded on better diligence taking into consideration the issues pertinent to all participating countries. Further, the BRI is largely a bilateral arrangement with a host nation and China, despite being global in scale. On the other hand, IMEC is a multinational arrangement with far greater transparency based on felt needs of all participating nations. Conceptually, it is futuristic in orientation since it aims to address issues pertaining to energy and food security as climate change is making its presence felt. Overall, there is a lot more value in the IMEC as one looks into the future.

## Challenges

Like with all other multinational enterprises, there is a lot of scepticism<sup>30</sup>. There are questions on the economic viability of IMEC<sup>31</sup>. Some views suggest that the benefits of this project are more political than economic. To that extent, there is always the possibility of a geopolitical event putting a spanner in the works and derailing the project. Internal differences between nations like the lack of official diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel and traditional West Asian politics can undermine the project. Further, such projects make great optics in conferences but have a tendency to fizzle out in the long run. The sheer number of countries and the complexity of unravelling international and internal politics, policies and cultures will remain a challenge for IMEC to constantly overcome.

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## Conclusion

There is no doubt that the IMEC has tremendous geo-economic and geopolitical potential from any perspective. There is everything to gain for participating countries. It appears there has been a lot of ground work already laid out by I2U2 and the India-Israel-UAE food corridor. Hence the platform exists. Therefore, there is

every reason to be optimistic. At the same time the project like all other mega projects has too many cooks who can spoil the broth. It provides a tremendous opportunity for India to become a global player in its own right. It has great potential to ramp up our economy. Most importantly, the project will benefit India even if it is partially successful. As for the rest, one has to wait and watch.

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## **Implications of the African Union as the 21st Member of the G20: Opportunities for India**

Sagar K. Chourasia\*

### **Abstract**

**T**his paper focuses on the geo-economic transition of the most relevant plurilateral grouping of ‘Group of 20 nations’ (G20) to G21 through the addition of the African Union (AU). The paper analyses key economic aspects of Africa, the structure of the AU and identifies the frameworks that may need to be introduced in the upcoming G21 Presidencies. Further, it illustrates the need for the member countries to revisit the foundation of the forum and re-position themselves on the overall agenda to accommodate the voices from the global South. Based on these analyses, the paper seeks to identify opportunities for India and economic growth avenues for the G21, in addressing the newly added member, the AU.

### **Introduction**

The G20 countries comprised 19 nations and the European Union with a combined 85% of the world’s GDP and representing 5% of global trade along with 60% of the world population. Among the G20 member countries, four out of six countries of the Global South will hold the Presidency of the G20 in the two consecutive Troikas of G20 Presidencies: ‘Indonesia-India-Brazil’ & ‘India-Brazil-South Africa’. Despite geo-political polarisation among G-20 members, countries in the global South such as India took the responsibility

for a macro view of contemporary global challenges. This has allowed the G20 leadership to empower the Global South by integrating the AU as the newest permanent member. Over the past few years, numerous crises have significantly impacted the global South, leading to low growth, higher global oil and gas prices, reduced remittances, and lower demand for products and services. Despite these challenges, global South countries are quickly ascending as key players on the international scene, with their demographic dividends contributing to providing a skilled workforce. Given these factors, the G20 promises to provide an ideal platform to bridge the voices of the global South at the plurilateral level. Although the mandate of the G20 is to foster economic growth and development, Is the G20 tilting towards a geo-political gathering as AU lacks a coherent economic consortium?

The structural efficacy of an organisation depends on the capacity of its members to come together and engage over a wide agenda. The current geopolitical tensions are hindering international negotiations on major issues such as indebtedness with global financial institutions and the inability to access more blended financing or climate financing for developing countries. The shifting balance of power has eroded the credibility and legitimacy of the Bretton Woods institutions, leading to mounting pressure on the G20 to deliver

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much-needed reforms. Before the G20 Bali's leader declaration, a brief negotiation was underway to have the AU as the permanent member, which was also promoted by US President Biden during the Africa-US Summit 2022. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has suggested a "human-centric" approach, referring to the G20's partnership in the areas of vaccine or pharmaceutical supply chain during a conflict, pandemic, or economic crisis.<sup>1</sup> Some initiatives like India's G20 global partnership for financial inclusion for development in the digital economy covered 40 countries and the UN agencies, thus confirming the transformative potential of the G20 towards G21. The Global South's consultations gained unprecedented leverage through the "Voice of Global South Summit" initiative under India's G20 Presidency, which prioritised sustainable and inclusive global growth. Thus, G20 seemed to be one of the most relevant platforms to accommodate the voices of all global South players in stirring this plurilateral system and further creating a systemic intervention in international negotiations for the future of development. By engaging in such initiatives, the G20 global South troikas can develop a roadmap to enhance its capabilities with the AU and its regional governing institutions. This will enable the G20 to address contemporary challenges of the economic integration of AU and will be able to table potential impactful reforms that may include sustainable financing and the provision of digital public goods.

### **Addressing Africa: Impact assessment on G20 countries**

The World Bank report of 2020 suggested that the African economy will grow to \$4 trillion in 2027

with 1.7% population growth annually in the sub-Saharan African region.<sup>22</sup>

However, the collective identity of the African continent has been heavily debated, which was first constituted at the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) where Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah's speech quoted an iconic word for the continent, "**We must unite now or perish.**" In September 1999, the Sirte Declaration by the head of states of OAU called for the formation of the AU. Later, in 2002, the AU was launched as the successor of the OAU, with the vision: "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." The key fundamental ideas of the AU included 'strengthening the lack of collective Idea of Africa', promoting democratic governance, preventing internal continental security spills out and free movement of people through a single African Passport, which is now set in the 'Agenda 2063'.

**One of the most important G20 alignments with AU would come from the institutional reform proposed by the AU in transforming the continent to deliver on the 'Agenda 2063'.** The 'Agenda 2063' is a strategic masterplan to transform Africa with seven aspirations in the blueprint and with several flagship programs that are bound to get a push in the integration with the G20 countries. The opportunities that prevail for the G20 countries in Africa should also align with these major flagship programs of the AU, including the African Free Trade Agreement (AfFTA), Single African Air Transport Market, African Financial Institutions, Africa Outer Space Strategy, Integrated high-speed train network, Free Movement of people in

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Africa and Africa Passport. Some other flagship projects include the Comprehensive Agricultural Development Program, the program of infrastructural development in Africa, the African Mining Mission, and the Science and Technology Strategy for Africa. It is evident that the young AU has the fundamental structures to take the policy directives from the G20 as the G21st member. The need for the AU to align as the permanent member of the G20 plurilateral forum, resonates at both sides equally, from the African continent and the G20 member countries pavilion.

**What are the priorities for the African Union with the G20 members?** The foremost priority for the AU will be in the domain of trade-related issues and with its several functioning institutions, it should be able to table G20 reforms most effectively. The AU should encourage value-added trade and investment in Africa, which would take the manufacturing bases closer to the continent. Consequently, this advocacy would also break the vicious cycle of the mineral extraction from Africa and balance ‘resource nationalism’ which is prevailing in the region,<sup>3</sup> further enabling investment in local labourers through skill development and capacity building. The existing supply chains are no longer a cost-effective means of moving goods for the industrial process, it is now increasingly considered part of a comprehensive national security strategy for nations. Further, the AU will try to negotiate for redesigning value chains through new production units which can then be exported to another country, further creating jobs and value for products through nurturing local skill development. Along with this, an additional challenge for the global South is to overcome the Western narrative of the ‘Green

Transition’ on industrialization. Africa has been arguing for ‘Blended Development’ in their green transition efforts, as they still need coal and other traditional resources to power their industrialization. In addition, another big negotiating point would be debt financing, which may require the alignment of AfDB in financing infrastructure projects and building Africa Export-Import Bank (EXIM) capacity.

**What will be the avenues for the old G20 members to expand their economic horizons with the AU’s inclusion?** The contours of economic partnerships in Africa have been limited to specific countries like China, France and the USA among G20 members.<sup>4</sup> Other countries like Japan and Germany can contribute to the economic growth story in Africa by exploring opportunities through preferential trade agreements with various other countries of Africa through this membership. In more technical terms, G20 countries can look for phasing out of agricultural subsidies, extending tax benefits, and duty-free access to LDC (like India’s arrangement with the LDC). The G20 members can dissect and navigate further into the regional division of Africa and coordinate accordingly with the AU. East Africa and Southern Africa are relatively stable in terms of peace and security, while East Africa is economically well integrated with its own customs union.<sup>5</sup> Further, some regions are more integrated in terms of the ‘movement of people’, which is important for regional trade, as the free or easier passage of working professionals can enhance the productivity of development projects. These variabilities of the African economic regions would prompt the G20 countries to take a hybrid approach in navigating negotiations with the AU.

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## Will AU inclusion into G20 be able to re-ignite Pan-Africanism?

The AU consisting of 55 member countries possess a diversified portfolio of economies. These economies vary in economic sizes, economic stability, socio-economic and cultural diversity with 2000+ languages, and variable regional integration levels with other member countries. A big challenge to regional economic integration is the current intra-African trade which is the lowest at 18 per cent as compared to any region globally with Intra-Europe at 50 per cent and Intra-Asia trade at 69 per cent.<sup>6</sup> The major cause of delays in intra-trade is the lack of common standards within the African countries. There have been initiatives by the AU to tackle this challenge through the AfCFTA marketplace to promote intra-Africa trade.<sup>7</sup> Through G20 participation, the AU can craft its intra-regional value chains, which can help the region in tackling critical global challenges like climate change, food security, etc. **This G20-led economic integration** of the continent may further harmonize the trade restrictions including non-tariff barriers, and customs and may further reignite Pan-Africanism. Further, the economic integration would also provide the required strategic neutrality for the African countries against the unilateral debt traps of any specific country.

What are some other factors that hinder the development of Pan-Africanism? Is it the politics, internal regional security architecture, lack of international standards for corporate governance, or a lack of cultural binding with a sense of unity in the continent? To achieve real cohesion across the AU members, periodic and participative exchanges are needed within the African Union. Some key initiatives by the AU to create a collective

identity include the Single Payment System, Single Transport Air System and Great Green Wall Initiative, which could also further align with the G20 working frameworks. In the executive council of the AU, the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) is responsible for trade, multilateral cooperation, and structural reforms of the AU, which may convene to align itself with the following working groups of the G20 to pacify further integration. The Congruence of the African Union Summit with the G20 summits is another synchronisation of their key structures, functions, powers, and regulations, that the countries will look to achieve in the G21 and the AU Presidencies.

## Frameworks for the G21 countries: Opportunities for India

India through leading the global South has a huge opportunity to access the AU market of \$ 3 trillion and tap into the next decade of a billion working class population. India can provide various capacity-building measures and knowledge-sharing ecosystems to train the younger generation and provide the opportunity for a demographic dividend in Africa. In such initiatives, India can lead and put the resources into the unaddressed development agenda with the other G20 economies. The G20's various channels would provide 'periodic conferences' to secure the momentum of the transformation and the value of consulting each other to discuss matters of interest, which would pave the way for the inclusion of the AU. Apart from this, India can also seek to have a collective pitch with the AU to the other G21 members for a more concrete development agenda in which preferential treatment will be given to the Global South countries if they are

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disproportionately affected by global crises. This partnership of India with the AU as the G21st member would enhance the bargaining power with the global North bloc, which other forums like the G77 lack. This would urgently address the need for critical supplies and support during climate change, health pandemics or armed conflicts. Consequently, building a mechanism to raise funds for development projects collectively and support during critical junctures of global crises of climate change, health pandemics or even armed conflicts. Under the G21 Brazil Presidency, the AU shall look to incorporate its agenda at various levels including G21 leaders' level, track 1 ministerial level, and track 2 diplomatic meetings along with various engagement groups of the G20 to draw on the successes of the restructured G20 forum. Alternatively, the G20 countries would also promise aspirations for the young African Union to gain Africa's trust in this plurilateral system. **The framework below explores the integration level of the AU through a breakdown analysis of the G20 structure into G20 leaders' level, G20 Track 1 & Track 2 level and G20 engagement groups.**

The G21 leaders track will need to embrace participative diplomacy to mobilise momentum in the negotiations and make sure the changes they champion are more representative of the international community through an inclusive approach for the global South countries. The recent global crises have pivoted the merging of critical socio-economic issues with national security concerns of the major powers and emerging economies, as observed in sectors like supply chains, energy transition, climate change, health and food security. The stride to involve more

stakeholders will help increase the legitimacy of the plurilateral reform process and allow every country to provide input and steer institutional changes.

**Will AU's inclusion of the G20 rescue the African countries from debt distress? Can India play a role in the debt restructuring of African countries with the World Bank and IMF?** In track 1 and track 2 alignments, the Sherpa track can sync with the African Peer Review Mechanism used by the African States to monitor their governance performance into four themes: political governance, economic governance, cooperate governance and socio-economic development. Other development meetings at the ministerial levels like the trade ministerial and finance ministerial track shall also be moderated by additional agencies like the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), which was observed at G20 meetings. AUDA-NEPAD is responsible for regional integration African trade, and natural resource governance (energy security and food security). The G20 Finance track has also parallel initiatives that include International Financial Architecture (IFA), Infrastructure Working Group, and Sustainable Finance Working Group. Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, and International Taxation Agenda that will require synchronisation with the following AU financial institutions:

- The African Central Bank (ACB) is focussed on African economic integration building a common monetary policy, promoting exchange rates stability, foreign exchange restrictions and single African currency. Whereas the African Investment Bank promotes economic growth and integration by mobilising resources from the private and public sectors towards the



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development of the African continent. The G20 can foster more stable frameworks for mobilising resources in and out of the capital market of the African continent. Further, G20 can provide technical assistance to AU countries to bolster the execution of their investment.

- African Monetary Fund provides greater monetary integration by eliminating trade restrictions and coordinating monetary policies for member countries which should integrate with the financial track of the G20 countries.
- **What kind of capital infusion can happen within the AfDB?** The African Development Bank (AfDB) is a part of the AU that is trying to scale up the investment uniformly across Africa. The AfDB has mobilised \$5 billion in trade in 2021 and focuses on infrastructure development, enhancing its intra-regional trade. AfDB is focusing on achieving a single market in Africa that would offer a huge customer base market and opportunities for companies allowing economies of scale. It also forms agreements with other countries and receives funding from its partnered organizations. **The IMF-World Bank's first annual meeting in over 50 years has helped raise the debt ceiling for African countries.<sup>8</sup> Within the G21 forum, the AfDB countries and the African Investment Bank would get an avenue with these global financial institutions to work on HIPC initiatives<sup>9</sup> to further present a strong case and negotiate debt relief in the African region.**
- African Security Exchange Association can help navigate through integrating financial markets of the African countries. The six major countries

of the region control \$ 1 trillion in assets that majorly including Nigeria, South Africa, Morocco, and Kenya. Africa's deeper capital markets will help the region to mobilize the capital to support infrastructure development, which can be partially achieved by syncing with the finance track of the G20 countries. There are multiple interventions needed to work in a consolidated framework for the cross-border payment systems which will benefit from the G20 finance track.

To get a comprehensive socio-cultural integration of the AU, the official G20 Engagement Group including the Business20, Think20, Women20, and Civil20 can further align the resonating institutions which deal with the judicial, human rights and social organs of the AU. In this, some of the main bodies include the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL) and others. The work of these treaties is guided by the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the African Charter on the Rights Welfare of the Child. Other institutional initiatives like the 'Affirmative Financial Action for Women' by AfDB can align with the Women20 engagement group to blend with the G20 platform. The Startup20 engagement group was introduced under India's G20 Presidency, which will be carried forward during the Brazil G20 Presidency. The three major challenges that are barriers to entry for businesses in Africa are access to finance, access to energy/power, regional political stability, and lack of big data centres which results lack of a conducive environment for digital businesses to build their ecosystems, which now can be advocated by other G21 members through the Startup20.

**Table 1: Analysing the Impact of the AU as the G21st member.**

India's G20 Presidency in 2023 has been a pivot point in integrating the global South in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic through the AU permanent membership, with the added benefit of steering the process for two consecutive Global South troikas.

Africa's and AU's Challenge	G20 integration level	India's Opportunity	Specific recommendations
<b>1. Structural alignment</b> For plurilateral changes to be acceptable, it has become clear to all G20 countries that breaking the status quo will be more beneficial to them than maintaining it. For these changes to become acceptable to all G21 members, major economies need to share their economic prowess with the new members.	<b>G20 Leaders level</b>	India as a champion of global South causes can lead the structural alignment of the AU and help the global South leaders maintain their interest in plurilateral solutions.	Establishing G20-led channels inside the AU for managing aspirations among African states, with a focus on the Global South. This can further coordinate with the G20-G7 leader level to combine efforts.
<b>2. Development Agenda</b> <u>Periodic conferences for the AU with the global North:</u> Under the aegis of Brazil's G20 presidency, regular meetings with Track 1 and Track 2 will align interests and reaffirm the trust in the plurilateral forums for the global South.	<b>G20 Sherpa Track and Ministerial Track: Finance and Trade Ministers</b>	More global-aligned financing for development. Addressing the lack of integration of global South issues in the development agenda during a global crisis.	A more binding and formal participation would establish the idea of facilitating a shared understanding among G20 and Global South countries and providing a platform for promoting a shared development agenda.
<b>3. Socio-cultural Integration</b> <u>Participative conferences and meetings</u> do not leave anyone, nor any issues, behind. Addressing various issues including water security, gender equality, food security, and support for emerging start-ups.	<b>G20' official Engagement Groups [B20, T20, C20, W20, Y20, S20, Startup20]</b>	India can act as an enabler for the socio-cultural integration of the Global South to access critical economic solutions as they are most vulnerable during a crisis.	This would be a more informal participation where various groupings will be informing the leadership about the suggested mechanism.

## Conclusion

The G20 India in consultation with the Global South countries provided the perfect platform to generate a permanent presence of AU, which allows G20 to be more representative of the

international community. In the contemporary G20 and AU systems, some concrete mechanisms for the G20 can shape and support a **reformed and more representative** plurilateral arena for accommodating the voices of the global South can

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create opportunities for India. The AU can integrate G21 reforms and implement the binding resolutions taken in future G21 summits. The G21 will now provide the platform to meet global South countries regularly to prevent negotiations from stalling. If these meetings are scheduled regularly, country leaders will be able to build trust and relationships with one another, in turn incentivising them to embrace the AU processes rather than relying on backdoor covert diplomacy or avoiding negotiations altogether. This will help the G20 forum to maintain a functional relationship between the G20-Global South members, which then can act during targeted economic sanctions, recommend the inclusion of non-traditional security issues of the Global South, and even negotiate for financial aid during humanitarian crises for LDCs.

The G20 needs the AU as much as the AU needs the G20. This movement of integrating AU within G20 could end perpetual warfare in Africa,

as well as give birth to a new era of development and cooperation through participating in the plurilateral forum. For African leaders, this could be the time for embracing references to a moral equilibrium which repelled hegemonic and revisionist ambitions, as this plurilateral platform would have a succession of meetings, congresses, and informal talks, where leaders are consulting each other in their common endeavour to build a system of tranquillity.

Similarly, G20 leaders, together with countries of the Global South, will be able to align their respective agendas on a reform of the plurilateral system if they all achieve and promote a common understanding among countries. These foundations of several innovations and learning processes through the integration today can serve as the basis for the global South reforms for International Organisations such as the United Nations in the future.

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## Maintaining the River of Global Economic Resilience: The Great Clean-up via Energy Transitions

Chisom L. Ubabukoh\*

### Abstract:

**T**his piece aims to articulate the need for future-proofed economic systems in nations around the world rooted in the prospects of an inevitable net-zero future. To describe these, I would like to use the analogy of a river to represent the global economy. For this river to be of use to the industries, homes, and lives of those who live around it and depend on it for their sustenance, it would have to have sufficient volume, not too full and not too low; reasonably easy, non-turbulent flow; and it should be easy to access. Suppose, in the grand scheme of our economic landscape, energy sources represent the speed of flow and ease of use of this mighty river. These sources would be the driving force behind a thriving ecosystem and would ensure our economic river remains dynamic and vital. Using our analogy, as the economic river flows, suppose some troubles arise — murky waters of pollution, unforeseen obstacles of resource scarcity, and potential turbulences of climate change. In order to keep our economic river flowing smoothly and to protect the users from these turbulent waters, some action must be taken, and the users of the river must embark on a great clean-up: a journey of energy transitions.

### The murky waters: Pollution and resource scarcity

Our economic river faces two significant challenges: the murky waters of pollution and the unforeseen hidden obstacles of resource scarcity, both eventually leading to severe potential turbulence in the global economy if uncorrected. Pollution, primarily driven by the combustion of fossil fuels, has been the primary source of environmental degradation in the last 150 years (Perera, 2017). The rise in carbon emissions pollutes the waters of our economic river and exacerbates climate change, leading to turbulent times ahead. Severe weather events like hurricanes, floods, droughts, rising temperatures, food shortages and wildfires can wreak havoc on infrastructure and supply chains, leading to significant economic disruptions. Research has shown that a 1% increase in global temperatures could lead to a 3-6% decrease in crop production (Zhou et al., 2017) and a 9.7% decrease in livestock production (Emediegwu & Ubabukoh, 2023).

Climate change presents new challenges, including increased demand for cooling (powered by increased energy requirements) and the need for pure water sources (desalinated water). Although some might see cooling as a luxury, sustainable cooling is essential for survival in many

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developing countries. It ensures food security, supports economic growth and improves resilience by underpinning the ability of hundreds of millions of people to realise the Sustainable Development Goals. This highlights the need for sustainable energy sources that can efficiently cater to these growing demands while mitigating the environmental impact. We must ensure our sustainable energy sources are water-efficient and eco-friendly to meet these needs. These changes would be vital to maintaining a vibrant and resilient economic river landscape.

On the other hand, many developing countries do not yet have sufficient energy supplies. This energy starvation adds another layer of complexity. As fossil fuel reserves dwindle, nations relying on these finite resources risk running dry. This is akin to our economic river starting to run shallow, opening up previously submerged obstacles and making navigation hazardous, potentially leading to stalled economic activities. According to the 2022 “Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report”, 759 million people still lack access to electricity, with around 90% of those living in sub-Saharan Africa. The implication of this is that any policy that seeks to stop new oil exploration or limit the supply of fossil fuels may also have the consequential effect of exacerbating energy inequality and starvation since many of these countries do not have the resources to upgrade all production and consumption infrastructure to be suitable for green power. From the foregoing, a key challenge in the green transition lies in the balance between energy transition and energy starvation because a sudden, radical shift from the production of fossil fuels to the production of green

energy may cause immediate spikes in oil prices due to the supply shock, making energy unaffordable for many. This price volatility, driven by sudden changes in supply and demand, is a risk that must be carefully managed.

Particularly for oil-producing countries with large populations and low financial reserves, the possibility of global energy transitions emerges as more relevant than ever because they must consider whether to prioritise expanding their share in a future shrinking oil market or embrace a structural shift in their economic base to bolster financial resource resilience.

### **A Pledge to Net-Zero: The Great Clean-up**

Approximately 70% of the global community has pledged to embark on an environmental expedition, aiming for a “net-zero” economic river by 2050. While transitioning, the journey may experience turbulence, but the long-term goal must be a structural shift toward a resilient and cleaner economic river. The net-zero pledge is not without its challenges. It requires a fundamental shift in how we produce and consume energy, demanding innovation, investment, and behavioural change. However, the long-term benefits are undeniable – a healthier planet, a more resilient economy, and a sustainable future for future generations.

Several countries are already taking substantial steps towards fulfilling their net-zero pledges. The United Kingdom, for instance, has set a legally binding target to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This commitment has led to comprehensive policy changes, including investments in renewable energy sources, the

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promotion of electric vehicles, and stricter emissions standards. Another example of effective government policy is Norway's approach to electric vehicles, which, by offering substantial incentives and a robust charging infrastructure, has become a global leader in electric vehicle adoption. As of the end of 2022, 20% of all vehicles in Norway were BEV (battery electric), and the parliament has set a target of 100% zero-emission (electric or hydrogen) vehicles by 2025. These policies have reduced emissions and stimulated economic growth and job creation in the electric vehicle industry. The result is a roadmap for a more sustainable energy future, aligning with global net-zero objectives. These discrete efforts notwithstanding, the reality of the global challenge means that the actions of a single country, no matter how ambitious, cannot single-handedly reverse the environmental damage inflicted over decades. Borders do not confine climate change, and its effects are felt worldwide because the greenhouse gas emissions of one nation affect the entire planet.

### **An Oar in Every Hand: International Dialogue**

Assuming the users of the great global economic river intend to embark upon "the Great Clean-up" with net-zero ambitions. It would immediately be obvious that this would not be a solo endeavour; it would require a massive, coordinated team effort. Everyone must be on board in this enterprise, including oil producers, fossil fuel consumers, countries from the global north and south, developed and developing alike, and key intergovernmental organisations. Picture a massive raft navigating the rapids of the energy

transitions, with every nation and stakeholder holding an oar, working in unison towards this shared goal. A key element of the energy transition is the imperative for dialogue. These inclusive conversations would ensure the global energy transition is fair, equitable, and well-coordinated. It acknowledges that energy transitions impact economies globally and thus necessitate international cooperation to facilitate a smoother and more balanced process. Nations must work together, sharing best practices and supporting less economically privileged nations in their transition efforts.

The Paris Agreement, signed by 196 countries, is a testament to this collective commitment. It underscores nations' shared responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our planet regardless of economic status or development stage. While emphasizing a shared responsibility for climate action, the agreement does recognise that nations have varying capacities and circumstances.

This principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" ensures that all countries contribute to climate action in a way that aligns with their unique national contexts. This flexible approach allows countries to set ambitious yet achievable goals. Some nations have pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, while others have set different targets based on their development stage and capabilities.

Further, international organisations like the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Conference of the Parties (COP), organised annually by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),

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provide crucial platforms for international cooperation. Governments, businesses, and civil society are brought together to negotiate climate action plans, share knowledge, and mobilise resources. Regional initiatives, such as the African Climate Agreement, can complement global efforts by addressing specific regional challenges and opportunities. These agreements can tailor climate action plans to different regions' unique needs and contexts.

One further significant platform for global dialogue on this issue is the G20.

### **The G20 and energy transitions**

The Group of 20 (G20) is an association of the world's largest economies, and its members account for over 80% of global GDP and 75% of global energy consumption. Thus, the G20 is critical in advancing the global energy transition. In recent years, significant progress has been made on that front. In 2017, G20 leaders agreed to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and support developing and deploying renewable energy technologies. In 2021, G20 leaders committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century, and in 2023, under India's historic leadership, the importance of a just, sustainable transition was emphasised.

However, more work is needed to translate these commitments into concrete actions. G20 countries must implement ambitious policies to support energy transitions and economic resilience. Some key policy measures that could be taken include scaling up investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, putting a price on carbon, thereby

sending clear price signals to businesses and consumers to reduce their carbon emissions, supporting research and development of new energy technologies and ensuring a just transition by providing support to workers and communities that are affected by the transition away from fossil fuels and ensuring that they are treated fairly and equitably.

Policies from both governments and private industries are expected to play a pivotal role in driving the decline in the demand for oil and gas in the coming years. This decline would open doors for alternative energy sources such as hydrogen and solar. Solar energy has emerged as a promising contender with its cost-effectiveness and scalability. Reports by the International Energy Agency (IEA) indicate that around 90% of new energy plants are solar energy plants, solidifying solar's status as the 'new king' in the energy landscape.

Moreover, identifying and addressing bottlenecks in the renewable energy sector is imperative. Removing obstacles to the growth of sustainable energy sources ensures a smoother and more efficient transition, benefitting economic resilience. On the side of governments, policy decisions, incentives, and regulations must align with the goal of a sustainable and resilient economic river. Policies promoting clean energy adoption, tax incentives for renewable energy investments, and stringent emission standards are essential components. Governments can also encourage research and development in green technologies and fund infrastructure projects that support the transition.

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## India's leading role in ensuring just energy transitions.

India, with its vibrant and dynamic economy, is like a mighty tributary flowing into the global economic river. However, India's energy landscape is also facing the challenges of rapid urbanisation, growing energy demand, and the need for sustainable development. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, India's energy consumption is expected to double by 2040 (Bilgen et al., 2004). It is also a major emitter of greenhouse gases and is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. India has also made significant progress on energy transitions in recent years. It aims to achieve 40% of its energy capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. It has set ambitious targets to deploy renewable energy and reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. From the twelfth five-year plan, it aimed to have 60GW of installed capacity of wind power by 2022 and a 20GW (revised to 100GW) target for installed solar capacity by 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic put a roadblock to achieving these targets, but the country has gone a long way in achieving its goals. Several policy initiatives to support these energy transitions have begun to be implemented, such as the National Solar Mission and the National Wind Mission.

India's strong economic growth, technological advancements, and growing focus on sustainability provide a solid foundation for navigating the turbulent waters of climate change. However, India's energy transition journey is not without its challenges. More work is needed to accelerate its energy transition. The country must address grid integration, energy storage, and financing for

renewable energy projects. It must also scale up investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and price carbon appropriately. India also needs to ensure that the energy transition is fair and equitable and that workers and communities affected by the transition are supported.

As the leader of the G20 in 2023, India has taken a leadership role in a world increasingly focused on sustainable energy transition and it can continue to play a leadership role in this area going forward by implementing ambitious policies to support its own energy transition and by working with the other G20 members to push for a just green transition. It is notable that the 2023 presidency was tagged "*One earth, one family, one future*", expressing the importance of the environmental agenda. When the energy ministers of the G20 met in Goa in the summer of 2023, the emphasis was on the need for technology sharing and low-cost financing, especially for developing countries. Since the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy sources will depend on critical minerals, such as copper, lithium, nickel and cobalt, and the consumption of these minerals could increase six-fold by 2050, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), it was deemed necessary to highlight that these resources would have to be maintained responsibly. Furthermore, sustainable supply chains for those minerals must be ensured as they represent our collective future. Therefore, the just transition would need to include ensuring the welfare and livelihoods of the miners of these resources. It is not surprising that India, once again, was the catalyst of these very progressive ideas.



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## Two Essential Tributaries of Financial Support: Financing “The Great Clean-up”

Much like a great river relies on various tributaries to sustain its flow and maintain freshness, the clean-up of the murky waters of the global economic river would require two fundamental forms of financial flow: significant capital investments and concessional transfers or grants. These two financial tributaries, while distinct, would work in tandem to facilitate the smooth energy transition and, thus, the clean-up of the economic river.

Capital investments serve as robust financial currents flowing from private financial institutions and markets. This powerful current can drive the energy transition if supported by well-designed real economy policies that encourage investments. Effective policies could encompass ambitious targets for renewable energy generation by 2030 and implementing carbon pricing mechanisms. The energy transition would need an annual average investment of approximately \$3.5 trillion until 2050, a significant increase from the current \$1 trillion annually.

A portion of these investments could be offset by the diminishing investments in fossil fuels, reducing the annual requirement from \$3.5 trillion to around a net of \$3 trillion. In the grand scheme of global economics, this turns out to be approximately 1.3% of the projected average annual global GDP over the next three decades. Therefore, the true incremental cost of the required investment is lower than the gross investment needed. Nonetheless, large-scale mobilisation and reallocation of capital will only occur with the firm support of the effective real economy worldwide.

Government mandates may be ineffective in mustering the needed finance, but assuming sound policies are in place; green capital investments guarantee favourable returns to investors.

More international assistance would be required for developing nations, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, since they make up only a fraction of global greenhouse gas emissions, contributing merely about 3% to the world’s carbon footprint. However, paradoxically, these nations bear the brunt of the most severe consequences of climate change. The stark reality is that the impacts of climate change are disproportionately felt in regions with the least historical responsibility for emissions. Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly vulnerable due to its heavy reliance on agriculture, limited access to advanced technologies for climate adaptation, and often fragile socio-economic systems. As the world grapples with the repercussions of climate change, it is essential to recognise the glaring inequality in how the burdens of a warming planet are distributed, emphasising the urgent need for global cooperation and assistance to support the more vulnerable nations in their quest for climate resilience and sustainable development.

In these cases, because the economic costs involved in a green transition, especially in phasing out coal, halting deforestation, and scaling up carbon dioxide removals, would be enormous, concessional loans and grants could be the key. This financial support would help counteract the economic costs incurred in middle- and low-income countries striving to meet the world’s climate objectives. By 2030, the need for these payments could amount to approximately \$0.3 trillion annually.

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The sources for this financial assistance could theoretically come from international climate funds, corporations participating in voluntary carbon markets, philanthropic contributions, contributions from high-income countries, and different fora for south-south cooperation, with India taking the lead. Green bonds, specifically earmarked for environmentally friendly projects, can attract investors seeking sustainable investment opportunities.

Just as tributaries nourish a river, these concessional transfers would provide financial sustenance to nations navigating the challenges of the energy transition, ensuring that no one is left behind on the path to a sustainable future.

### **The importance of economic resilience**

Economic resilience is the ability of an economy to withstand and recover from shocks, disruptions, and long-term stresses, such as natural disasters, financial crises, and pandemics. A resilient economy is less vulnerable to disruptions and can quickly bounce back from setbacks. It encompasses the capacity to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from economic challenges while maintaining stable growth and employment opportunities. Using our river analogy, economic resilience is akin to reinforcing the riverbanks to withstand sudden surges and unexpected obstructions while ensuring a consistent flow to serve the needs of the communities along its banks.

In the face of ever-increasing global challenges, economic resilience is no longer simply a desirable attribute but a vital necessity. As the economic landscape evolves rapidly, driven by a

shift towards sustainable and environmentally responsible practices, the push towards a net-zero future is becoming unavoidable. Like a river adapting to changing terrain, our global economy must adapt to a rapidly changing energy landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic is an illustrative example of what could happen when the demand for oil swiftly collapses, highlighting the vulnerability of economies heavily reliant on the murky old waters of traditional energy sources, and exposing our economic river's vulnerability.

Energy transitions can significantly strengthen economic resilience because diversifying energy sources and reducing reliance on fossil fuels can make economies less vulnerable to energy price volatility and supply disruptions. Additionally, energy transitions can create new jobs and industries, boost economic growth, and reduce poverty.

Here are a few final thoughts summarising policy possibilities to ensure economic resilience. I group them into two categories: domestic and external factors.

The policy frameworks of countries regarding energy transition can be expanded and strengthened. This is akin to the economic riverbanks being broadened. It will enable the river's flow to accommodate external energy transition shocks. This would involve adopting fiscal and monetary measures that allow the economy to swiftly respond to such shocks, much like adjusting its width and depth. There should also be improved coordination among countries, without neglecting the global south.

Domestically, countries must invest in renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, and green technologies. These domestic investments

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are like nourishing the river's feeder streams, contributing to a resilient economic recovery from energy transition shocks, as they add to the overall volume and vitality of the river. Price stability should be maintained as much as possible to avoid sending confusing signals to investors. Also, at the corporate and individual citizen level, ownership must be taken of the net-zero agenda for there to be reasonable progress. It will spark innovation and home-grown mitigating strategies.

Finally, on the external side, countries must diversify their economies wherever possible. From the production side, countries heavily dependent on fossil fuel exports need to start thinking about how they can diversify their revenue streams

before the demand and supply shocks actually arrive. Also, from the consumer side, countries heavily dependent on the import of fossil fuels need to watch out. If many oil-producing countries stop exploring new oil, it may be challenging to keep oil prices down, and if adequate preparation is not made, it could result in severe energy starvation. This is like diversifying the economic river's pathways and creating multiple channels to avoid disruptions when one path is obstructed. Like a dam or an aquifer, some form of water reserve will always help when there is low water flow. Similarly, a positive trade balance and foreign exchange reserves also serve as buffers when things get tough economically.

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## **Siddhis in the Patanjali Yogasutra from the Perspective of Current Scientific Research**

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### **Introduction**

**T**he *patanjaliyogasutra* (PYS), a seminal text of Samkhya philosophy and yoga theory and practice is widely recognised as a matter-of-factly description of a psycho-physical discipline and of its effects on the bodies and minds of its adepts. Although scientific biomedical and neurological research has recently validated the beneficial and healing effects of yoga on practitioners, in the third section (*vibhutipada*) of the sutra, the ‘supernatural’ or ‘paranormal’ powers (*siddhis*) that may be attained by the advanced initiate in *ashtangayoga* are still regarded as fictitious from the standpoint of modern science.

This discrepancy enshrines a paradox: how can a manual found to be accurate in its methodology to optimise mind and body states be so removed from reality or even apparent reason with regard to the superhuman attributes and abilities it claims to confer?

This paper briefly recapitulates the various siddhis alluded to in the sutra’s third section and also the further attainment it advocates as a goal of the practice in the beginning of the fourth section, the *kaivalyapada*. It attempts to draw certain parallels and correspondences with current developments and recent revelations in areas of

scientific research that may contribute to support the validity or at least the plausibility of the claims made in PYS.

### **The Vibhutipada**

This section, as earlier indicated, alludes to the side effects of the yoga practice in its higher three stages: *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* which are described as more ‘internal’ than the prior five *angas* (cf. sutras 5 and 6). The three first sutras define *dhyana* as the complete absorption into the subject of attention, which leads in *Samadhi*, without any influence from the mind of the meditator who is, therefore, to be distinguished from the scientific observer. The latter according to the interpretation of subatomic data by quantum theory, modifies or disturbs reality by the very act of observing. On the other hand *samyama* (meditation), a combination of the three aforesaid *angas* is said to surmount that obstacle, given that it uses no instrument and is purely mental or rather ‘supra-mental’. Since the two previous sections of the PYS have described in detail the psychological and philosophical premises and the method to be followed, the conditions created by the practice and attainment of the aforesaid last three of the *ashtangas* are only concisely stated.

In sutra 5, it is said that the result of *samyama*

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is universal knowledge (*prajnaloka*). Sutras 8, 9 and 10 refer to *nirbija samadhi*, the deeper stage of contemplation which manifests in *nirodhaparinama* or supreme quietude (*prasanta*). The higher echelons cited in sutras 11 and 12 are *samadhi parinama* and *ekagrata parinama*: utmost concentration on one point, described as akin to mystical stasis by analogy to biological homeostasis. That condition leads to *dharmaparinama*, *laksanaparigraha* and *avasthaparigraha*: liberation from the world of objects, time and states of being (sutra 13) that opens the door to superhuman or paranormal abilities. Sutras 14, 15 and 16 affirm that the yogi at that point is cognisant of the past and the future through *parinamatraya* (release from the subjective separations between the three categories of time which are simultaneous in the higher impersonal consciousness).

Among the many endeavours pursued in the study of consciousness as it relates to time, the work pursued at the Stanford Research Institute since the 1970s in the USA under the direction of Dr Harold Puthoff and Dr Russell Targ is noteworthy. It led to the development of a remote viewing programme (Stargate) under the auspices of various military and Intelligence agencies, particularly the CIA. A related research paper, no. 9 on a U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency list of classified Intelligence Reference documents to which we will come back repeatedly in this paper is entitled *High Frequency Gravitational Wave Communications* and is authored by Dr R Baker from GravWav.

Sutra 17 mentions *sarvabhutarutajnana*: knowledge of the ways (and languages) of all creatures and hence the ability to communicate

with them; a faculty that has been celebrated in many ancient traditions, on all continents. For instance, some medieval European esoteric poets such as the German minnesingers claimed to speak the language of birds and progress has been made in recent decades in developing sign and vocal interaction with a variety of animal species and even with plants. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Dr J C Bose in Calcutta did pioneering scientific work to demonstrate the sentience and inter-species communicative abilities (a language of sorts) of plants.

Sutra 18 is about *purvajati jananam*, the knowledge of past lives through the investigation of the causes of *sanskaras*. Today past-life regression is a widespread form of therapy although not recognised by academic psychiatry psychology and medicine.<sup>1</sup>

Sutras 19 and 20 evoke the power of mind reading (*paracittajnanam*). In our days this is a topic of widespread investigation within the realms of transpersonal psychology<sup>2</sup> and parapsychology<sup>3</sup> but also for technological applications such as building computer softwares that can directly transcribe thoughts into written words<sup>4</sup>. A machine to read thoughts through decoding of EEG was reportedly built as early as the seventies under the auspices of the SRI by two scientists, Pinneo and Wolf so the research has many years behind it. US Military research has made vast and mostly unacknowledged progress in the area of neural-electronic interface to enable pilots and others to control their machines by thought and mental command<sup>5</sup>.

Sutra 21 mentions the intriguing power of invisibility, poetically evoked in ancient greek myths by Gyges's ring and repeatedly portrayed in science

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fiction literature and films. *Kayarupasamyama* (meditation on the physical body) is the key to *aparantajnanam* when it enables the adept to modify the interaction (*samprayoga*) between light and the eye.

Methods to gain invisibility have been studied in various scientific and military research centres and in particular a recent restricted release of the aforesaid list of Defense Intelligence Reference Documents (DIRD) was carried out by the DIA out of the AATIP (Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Programme) contracted out through the Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS), with the collaboration of Earthtech International of Austin, Texas, also founded by Dr Puthoff. Paper 7 in the list is entitled *Invisibility Cloaking* and was authored by Dr Ulf Leonhardt at the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

Sutra 23 concisely refers to the immense mental/physical strength: *maitryadisū balani* which may be translated either as the effect of meditation about universal love or as the prodigious capabilities aroused by passion and empathy. The following sutra further evokes the ‘elephantine’ strength generated by the practice. Empirically it is undeniable that both love and hate, as two sides of a single emotion, endow human beings with a physical power and resilience that far exceeds their habitual capacities.

There are various well documented instances of women and men performing virtual miracles to save a child or another loved one by removing an obstacle, lifting an extremely heavy weight or successfully fighting a much larger human being or animal. The mentally generated power in people is cultivated by the martial arts and convincing demonstrations are regularly provided, for example

by the academy of kung fu of the Shao Lin monastery in China. It is also well known that far-eastern martial arts are historically related to yoga whose methods and techniques were reportedly taken to China by the Indian monk Bodhidharma.

Sutra 25 brings up the subject of *suksmaviprahitaviprakstajnanam*, interpreted by Ronald Steiner in his translation of the PYS as the perception of subtle, concealed and remote (higher) beings, gained through *pravrittyakasanyasat*: a meditation on the ether, superficially known as the vacuum.

This brings us to the vast field of exobiology and exo-consciousness, involving contacts with alien lifeforms, superior non-human civilisations and parallel worlds within a multiverse. Readers are referred to the researches undertaken by the Edgar Mitchell Foundation<sup>6</sup> (*Project Free Experienter*) and earlier at Stanford Research Institute, at the CIA and US National Security Agency, under the code names MK ULTRA and GRILL FLAME and at the Monroe Institute in the USA.<sup>7</sup> as well as by various scientific bodies in the USSR in connection with the ‘cosmist’ school of thought and the noospheric theories of Vernadsky and his colleagues<sup>8</sup>.

In sutra 30, a method to gain freedom from hunger and thirst is indicated by meditating on the pit of the throat (*kanthakupa*). There are allusions to this technique being taught to certain elite corps in the US armed forces under the protocol introduced by Colonel Jim Channel in the 1970s, in his *First Earth Battalion Field Manual* in order to train a new type of ‘shamanic/yogic warrior’ endowed with paranormal powers. Sutra 32 addresses *siddhadarsanam*, the ability to see and interact with realized transcendent beings through *murdhajyotis*.

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As strange as it may seem, there is a tradition of esoteric exercises to expand consciousness beyond the physical realm since the origins of the US space programme. The founder of the Jet propulsion Lab of Caltech, Jack Parsons practiced various forms of occultism and magic and was for a period a friend and associate of L Ron Hubbard who set up the church of scientology. A book called *Dark Mission: The Secret History of NASA* by former Science Adviser to CBS for the Apollo Programme Richard Hoagland and BOEING engineer Mike Bara presents a lot of information about alleged secret rituals and esoteric activities in the American space agency.

Sutra 33 refers to *pratibha* (illumination or intuition) as the source of omniscience and in sutra 36 it is said that this opens the door to extra-sensorial or intuitive perception beyond the reach of the five physical senses and solely through the mind, an ability that has been tested and proven repeatedly through various experiments in various parts of the world, particularly in the USSR. That leads us to sutra 38 describing the power for the consciousness of the yogi to enter another body and dwell in it by detaching from one's own biological vehicle.

We should note that many if not most traditional civilisations that have kept alive major features of the Paleolithic and Neolithic past, in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania hold the belief in the possibility of psychically inhabiting other bodies and taking control of them. Various anthropologists have documented the secret rituals still practiced in 'Black' Africa by shamans who claim to transform themselves into lions, leopards, hyenas and other animals (cf among many)<sup>9</sup>.

Although it may all be accounted for as

'primitive' superstition, in the line of Levy-Bruhl's theory, the near universality and antiquity of such 'magical' thinking gives cause to pause and if we accept that consciousness has primacy or is the sole reality, we may also have to keep our minds open to its power of modifying perceptions or appearances, as the effects of hypnosis demonstrate.

Sutra 39 is about levitation which is the result of using the *udana* or upward rising breath. Conversely sutra 40 talks about the faculty of *samana* (the stabilizing or peaceful breath) to stir the inner fire within us in order to become impervious to the cold.

The often-demonstrated technique of psyching heating, known as *tummo* in tibetan has been systematically investigated by physiologists in various countries, such as the USA, the USSR and China and a recent vindication has come from Wayne State University in a scientific article published in the *NeuroImage* journal by Dr Otto Musik on the basis of the study of a meditation and breathing method practiced by the famous athlete Wim Hof.<sup>10</sup>

Sutra 42 again alludes to the power of weightlessness and to moving in space instantaneously (*akasagamanam*) and 43 evokes the 'subtle light body' (*parakasavarana ksayah*) in which the true self dwells. These prodigious abilities have been studied from a technological perspective as documented in various research papers last year by the aforesaid US DIA AATIP programme. The papers dedicated to those processes are numbered 5 (*Advanced Space Propulsion Based on Vacuum (Spacetime Metric) Engineering* by Dr Hal Puthoff), 8 (*Traversable Wormholes, Stargates and*

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*negative Energy* by Dr Eric Davis, Earthtech), 11 (*Antigravity for Aerospace Applications* by Dr Eric Davis), and 36 (*Negative Mass Propulsion* by Dr I Winterberg, University of Reno, Nevada) in the list while the mastery over the physical elements and beings (*bhutamayah*) referred to in sutra 44 is analysed in the paper no. 25 (*Space Communication Implications of Quantum Entanglement and Non-Locality* by Dr J Cromer, University of Washington).

Sutra 45 too brings to mind several science-fiction moves as it is about *minadi pradurbhava kayasampat dharanabligatsca* or shrinking the body to a minuscule size. In this regard, the paper no. 23 (*Aerospace Applications of Programmable Matter* by Dr W McCarthy, Programmable Matter Corp.) in the AATIP list evinces the research done with a view to reaching that objective among others.

Sutra 46 makes a reference to the familiar ‘diamond body’ so often alluded to in Buddhist sutras, the *balavajra* which is so hard as to be almost indestructible. Whereas certain yogis have demonstrated extraordinary physical resistance in public tests, martial arts in China and Japan allow some advanced practitioners to display similar, seemingly superhuman immunity to powerful blows and crushing weight. In the west, famous magicians such as Houdini and his imitators have also evinced uncanny abilities of the same order.

More convincing and scientifically proven performances are regularly observed from champion deep sea divers in apnea who descend without equipment several hundred feet below the surface and withstand enormous pressures and suspension of breath during very long periods.<sup>11</sup>

Sutra 48 again alludes to the power to master

matter: *pradhanajaya* which in theory would allow the initiate to create and modify natural elements and objects by the force of his or her mind. Apart from mastering telekinesis: one could bend spoons like Uri Geller allegedly did or materialise objects and go through walls as General Albert Stubblebine, CO of the US Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) from 1981 to 1984 avowedly sought to.

In the AATIP list papers 14 (*Concepts for Extracting Energy from the Quantum Vacuum* by Dr Eric Davis), 19 (*Warp Drive, Dark Energy and the Manipulations of Extra-Dimensions* by Dr R Obousy of Obousy Consultants) and 20 (*Technological Approaches to Controlling External devices in the Absence of Limb Operated Interfaces* by Dr R Genik of Wayne State University) have relevance to this subject.

Sutra 50 warns, after this metaphorical slideshow of magical fireworks that the yogi must not become attached to these powers which are meaningfully described as allurements and distractions provided by ‘celestial or invisible beings’ (*sthanyupanimantrane sangasmaya akaranam punaranistaprasangat*), in order to stop the initiate in his upward journey. Accordingly, sutra 52 recalls that true knowledge must be rooted in discernment or discrimination: *vivekajam jnanam*. Vairagya we are told is also to be applied to the achievements pertaining to *Samadhi*.

The same sutra points out that the ultimate goal is *kaivalya*: detachment or sovereignty of the true self, liberated from passions and fancies, whether material or psychic, natural or supernatural. *Sattwa purusayah suddhisamyakaivalyam*: *kaivalya* achieves complete balance (or synthesis) between the world



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of matter and the cosmic ‘Oversoul’ or Divine.

The following and last section of Patanjali’s memoir is indeed an exposition of the nature and effects of the kaivalya state towards which the yogi’s progress should be unerringly directed. It is rather evident that supernatural or at least exceptional powers, while fascinating to observe and investigate, do not give their possessors any higher degree of happiness, wisdom and peace than ordinary mortals and can even be sources of distress, frustration, social alienation and physical suffering. However, we are no longer able to deny their existence from a scientific standpoint, even though the approach taken to investigate and attain such powers nowadays is mostly technological and relies on engineering applications of relativistic and quantum concepts and mechanics.

Yet science today acknowledges the central and paramount place of consciousness and admits

that no sharp boundaries but rather differences in the degree of subjective perception stand between the ‘physical’ and psychic realities which are substantially not separable. Indeed, material tools, including sophisticated instruments are mere crutches for our perceptive and operative abilities which yoga teaches to do without. In essence, the powers are within us and not in the tools we fashion to deploy them. Machines (yantras) are technical projections of the psychic aptitudes manifested through mantras and tantras. Patanjali points to that when he defines yoga as the exercise of samyama which combines citta and purusa by separating (viyoga) the true Self from the vrittis of Prakriti. The conclusion is that in order to manifest super-human abilities, the yogi has to identify fully with the limitless purusa in which everything is possible and ‘demystify’ the seemingly material mind-body complex.

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## **Buddhist thought and Culture in Korea- with Special Reference to Gaya Buddhism**

S. R. Bhatt\*

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**T**he introduction, assimilation, absorption and trans-creation of Buddhism in Asia in general and in Korea in particular have been remarkable and notable events in the world history which require serious cultural study with regard to cultural encounters and confluences between India and Korea. In the past the two countries traded not only in material goods as they do now but also shared **Dharma** for human and universal wellness. It will definitely be useful and interesting to review in depth, the cultural ties between the two countries and foment them further. The cultural interface between India and Korea has been ancient and significant but unfortunately, we do not have much recorded evidence for the earliest contacts. There are traces of early knowledge of Buddhism but they need to be investigated. (Kim, Young-tae, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, p. 38, Dongguk University Press) History writing was not in fashion earlier. Oral traditions were in vogue which crystallised into myths and legends.

Some of them may be half- truths but they should not be dismissed as unreliable. In the want of reliable evidences which need to be discovered why to doubt or deny the veracity of the legends. The mode and time of introduction of Buddhism in

Korea is shrouded in mystery and there are no definite historical records available in this respect but according to one tradition it reached there by sea route around first century B.C. Whatever be the case it is significant that Buddhism reached Korea much earlier than its official recognition. Prof. En –su Cho writes, “As the originating location of Buddhist teachings, India, as seen through the Korean Buddhist tradition, is a timeless place that transcends history, a symbol of truth itself.” (P. 42).

This apart, in the process of acceptance, appropriation, advancement and propagation of Buddhism, the contribution of Korea has been significant but again there has not been much recognition of that. There has been remarkable welding together of the teachings of the Buddha with indigenous culture giving rise to new form of Buddhism.

It is significant to note that while entering Korea, Buddhism was willingly accepted by the rulers and the masses, not compulsively but willingly. It was not a coercive imposition. Prof. Yong –kil Cho in his paper “Exchange of Buddhist Thought and Culture between India and Korea” writes, “The assimilation of indigenous religion and its gods into Buddhism was advanced not

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compulsively but peacefully. It was not coercive subjugation by a foreign religion but the logical necessity of the universality of Buddhist teachings.” He further writes, “Owing to its comprehensive culture –rich characteristics, Buddhism in Korea played an important role not only as a religion but also as an embryo of the Korean cultural phenomenon.” (p. 34, Buddhist Thought and Culture in India and Korea, Ed. S.R.Bhatt)

Korea has been an important Buddhist country practicing Mahayana form of Buddhism but having Hinayana elements interspersed in it. It has reformulated Zen, Lamaism of Tibet and Mongolia, Tantrayana (Vajrayana) etc. to suit Korean indigenous culture. Introduced first from India by sea route and thereafter influenced by Chinese form of Buddhism, there has been tremendous impact of Buddhism on the Korean national life and culture for about 2000 years. Prof. Suh yoon-kil, Director of the Korean Buddhist Research Institute, in his preface to the book “Buddhist Thought in Korea” writes, “So great has been the influence of Buddhism on Korea that it is impossible to speak of Korean culture without considering Buddhism. In spite of this, the history of the development of Korean Buddhist thought is little known and the materials that are available are poorly organised.” Undoubtedly, Buddhism became the ideological foundation and cultural backdrop of the Korean people influencing every stage of history and every aspect of culture.

In ancient times, Korea was divided among several small kingdoms. There was a kingdom by the name Gaya (or Karak/Garak) existing before Christian era which embraced Buddhism. Prof.

Yong-kil Cho in his paper “Exchange of Buddhist Thought and Culture between India and Korea” (p.39,) alludes to “Samgookyusa’/ Samkuksaki (Records of Three kingdoms, Book 3, Chapter 4) written by Master Ilyeon of Goryeo dynasty wherein it is recorded that an Indian princess from Ayodhya, then a Buddhist stronghold in India, was married to King Suro (42-199) of Korea in the year 48 CE. She was given the name “Queen Heohwangok’. She went to Korea by sea and took with her, the statue of the Buddha and materials to build a stone pagoda which was constructed in Hogyesa Temple in Kimhae/ Gimhae, then the capital of Gaya kingdom. Later on, this temple was renovated by King Chilji in 452 CE. The princess also took Buddhist literature along with her. This information is of vital significance so far as cultural contacts between India and Korea are concerned.

The marriage of an Indian bride to a Korean bridegroom definitely implies a close and well-developed socio-cultural linkage between India and Korea. No Indian king will marry his daughter to an unknown and unfamiliar king at a faraway place unless there existed close contacts, personal acquaintances and intimate social relations. Such an event must have been preceded by socio-cultural interface of quite a few centuries between the people of the two countries. In ancient times such marriages among ruling classes in particular have not been uncommon in India and Indian epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata are evidence of this, but they were never among the strangers unless they were forced ones. There are legends and dream stories about the marriage and they may be half- truths. But efforts should be made to get archeological and historical evidences. Folk tales,

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folk songs and other literary evidences can be collected as part of cultural heritage. These can be supplemented by genetic affinity and other facts discovered through modern scientific techniques and tools. There is a story that General Kim Yoo-shin, a famous descendent of Queen Heo, unified the Korean kingdom. Twin fish symbol is another evidence as it was adopted both by Garak state and Ayodhya state. We are told that there are seven million descendants of Queen Heo in Korea who fondly remember their great grandmother. Kimhae Kims, Kimhae Huhs and Incheon Lees are the clans in Korea who are descendants of King and Queen. Thus, many people of India and Korea are cultural cousins with kinship relationship having the same blood in their veins. We are told that. There is a tomb in Hogye-sa in Kimhae and a stone pagoda in front of the temple where the King Suro and Princess Heo met. We are further told that near the tomb there is a house of brother of the Queen and the pagoda seems to be a replica of Ashokan pillar.

In recent times people and scholars of South Korea have taken interest in discovering old ties and this is an appreciable effort. In the year 1954 Mr. Hyeon Dong Hwa came to India for this purpose and he became the pioneer of Indo-Korean relations. In the year President Kim Dae Jung and Prime Minister Jong Pil Kim who belong to Kimhae Kim clan came to India and suggested construction of a memorial. In the year 2000, a memorial in honour of Queen Heo was erected in Ayodhya in Korean style, with a huge stone specially shipped from South Korea. It has become a place of pilgrimage for Korean people. In the year 2001, Chancellor Kim Jong June visited as President of

Central Karak Clan Society. Since then, many people have visited Ayodhya from South Korea and also some from India to South Korea. There is a need to promote cultural tourism. In this context the significant contribution of Princess of Ayodhya in fomenting Indo-Korean cultural ties needs to be emphasised.

Unfortunately, very few historical documents and evidences on Buddhism in Gaya are available and there is a need to discover them. Much of the evidences are lost and archeological remains are yet to be fully explored. Referring to Santosh Kumar's "A Bridge between Indian and Korea" Prof. Sankaranarayan writes that King Suro founded Kaya (Gaya) dynasty in the first century CE. She gives a symbolic interpretation of the marriage of King Suro with princess Ho. She also refers to recent genetic discovery by Korean scientists of relationship of India and Korea further corroborated by DNA matching.

Prof. Eun-su Cho writes, "A long history of cultural connectedness surrounds the two nations of Korea and India. Regardless of the veracity of the legend that the founder of the Gaya nation of Korea Kim Suro, took as his bride a princess of Ayuta Kingdom in India, it is nevertheless a symbol of the first encounter between India and Korea. Whether this connection persisted, or perhaps were variations in frequency and intensity of this connection, the motive of the encounter has been rehashed again and again through history in Korean literature and art. Recently, the tale of the princess of Ayuta has surpassed the boundaries of mere myth into a cultural icon and the theme that has taken concrete form in local festivals and even an envoy from Korea to visit India." Cultural Interflow

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between Indian and Korea, Seoul National University, 2006.)

The pertinent point is, Buddhism reached Korea directly through sea route around first century B.C.E or a little earlier. Prof. Young-tae Kim refers to it but regards it as legendary. (The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea, p.38, published by The Korean Buddhist Research Institute). He also talks of traces of earlier knowledge of Buddhism in Koguryo before Christian era (p.40). There is a need to explore further, and archeological remains need to be attended to.

There are also some evidences of Indian settlements in Korea practicing the Vedic faith. It is reported by Prof. Cho (p. 43, fn.1) that in ancient Korea worship of Hwanin or Cheonie has something to do with the Vedic god Indra. Prof. Cho points out etymological affinity of Sanskrit word 'Agni' with Korean word 'Agungi' both representing the god of fire. The mode of fire worship was also similar in both the countries. He also hints at the influence of caste system of India on Korean society. He points out the inflow of Indian music and influence of Bharata's Natya Sastra venturing a suggestion of common origin of 'Natya Sastra' and Korean 'Youngsanhoesang'. Prof. Seo Yoon-gil (in the same book edited by me) reports about popularity of Indra belief in the paper entitled "Characteristics of Indra belief in Koryo Dynasty". Prof. Rhi Ki-Yong an eminent scholar in his paper entitled "Buddhism and National culture in Korea" writes that the word 'Seoul' has come from the Pali word 'Savatthi (Skt. Sravasti) through its changed form 'So-Ra-Bo'. Unfortunately, Indo-Korean scholars have not paid

needed attention to these records which would definitely change our understanding of the dating and nature of Indo-Korean interface. There is a dire need to have a re-look at ancient Indo-Korean history taking help of different literary, artistic, archaeological and cultural resources which have remained untapped. If this is done, it will surely open up new vistas in Indo-Korean cultural relationship.

Though Buddhism and prior to that Vedic dharma existed in Korea before Christian era, it is generally believed that Buddhism was *officially* introduced in Korea in the year 372 CE, Shilla Kingdom adopted it as official religion in 527 CE. This need not dispute the record that unofficially Buddhism was introduced in Korea much earlier, and royal acceptance is not the same as peoples' acceptance. In the propagation of Buddhism in Korea, China and later on Japan, played an important role but initially there was direct exchange between India and Korea. For example, Master Gyeomic came to India by sea in 526 CE, studied Sanskrit for five years and went back with an Indian monk. There were several other monks who visited India to learn Buddhism. In 6th century Buddha's statues and monasteries were constructed in Korea with steel and other material taken from India, particularly during the reign of Asoka.

The influence of Buddhism on Korean life has been tremendous and unmitigated, in so far as it provided ideological foundation, cultural backup and socio-political solidarity and integration. In the words of Prof. Cho, "The influence of Buddhism on Korean thought and culture was so extensive that it can be said that we cannot think of Korean

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thought without a reference to Buddhism, which is in reality the very foundation of Korean thought and culture. “In addition to this, Buddhism in the early days in Korea provided a socio-political ideology for national integration, and inspired intellectual quests, academic activities, and creative arts of various genres. The aesthetic and spiritual values inspired by Buddhism predominated in the fine arts, artistic creations and the intellectual works in the kingdoms of those times” (p.35). It also provided the needed socio-political ideology for national integration.”

The Korean contribution to propagation and reformulation of Buddhism has been quite significant. Once receptive of Buddhist thought, Korea became its innovator and exporter. It will be very apt and appropriate to mention here as to how Buddhism got an entry into Japan from Korea. In 522 CE, Buddhism was officially introduced to Japan from Korea at the behest of the King of Paekche, a former kingdom in South-West Korea, who sent a mission to the emperor of Japan which is as follows:

“The religion (Ho, Skt. dharma) is the most excellent of all teachings, though difficult to master and hard to comprehend, even the sages of China would not have found it easy to grasp. It brings endless and immeasurable blessings and fruits (to its believers) even the attainment of supreme enlightenment (bodhi). Just as the Cintamani Jewel is said to fulfil every need according to desire, so the treasures of this glorious religion will never cease to respond in full to those who seek for it. *Moreover, this religion has come to Korea from India and the people of the two countries are now ardent followers of its teachings and none*

*are outside its pale*” (Masaharu Anesaki, History of Japanese Religion P. 53, italics mine). This passage is significant in so far as it points out that Buddhism reached Korea from India and that it was held high in great reverence in Korea.

Though the fundamental teachings of the Buddha remained the same, there are certain salient characteristics of Korean Buddhism which make it uniquely Korean. In fact this is so in all Asian countries which have adopted Buddhism, as the local culture and traditions transformed it. The reciprocal relationship between Buddhism and indigenous culture and faith has been of peaceful mutual adjustment of tolerance and assimilation. That is why Buddhism could make immense contribution to Korean national development and harmony. It has been regarded as ‘Nation-protecting’ religion in Korea. It received loyal patronage in all kingdoms and provided a socio-political framework to Korean rulers. The concepts of ‘*cakravartin*’ and ‘*Buddha-ksetra*’ were handy to them for national unification and solidarity. It was recognised as state religion by many rulers. They firmly believed that their country was the land of the Buddha. The pursuit of harmony and unification were constant focal points of Korean Buddhism and therefore it was referred to as ‘*Tong bulkyo*’. The Buddhist influence in general and the Bodhisattva ideal in particular, motivated Korean youths to patriotic and altruistic service. There were groups of young elites known as *Hwarang* (Flower Boys) who were builders of a new nation inspired by the Bodhisattva ideal. They helped in bringing about unification of the three kingdoms into one nation. Won-Kwang, a pioneer of Buddhist philosophy and an advocate of

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Saddharmapundarīka's *Ekayana*, was their guide.

The doctrines of *dukkha*, *karma*, *samsara*, *nirvana*, *karuna* etc. attracted the Korean mind and appealed to the literati and illiterates alike. The hope of freedom from suffering and enjoyment of eternal bliss of *nirvana* was quite fascinating. The Korean mind appreciated the Buddhist conception of universal benevolence as distinguished from the Confucian conceptions of filial piety and propriety. The Buddhist ideals of eradication of egocentricity and cultivation of existential openness based on the principle of interdependence and interconnectedness of all phenomena (*pratityasamutpada*) as enunciated in the Flower Ornament sutra with the analogy of Indra's jewel-net, the doctrine of universality of Dharmakaya, the emphasis on realising the Buddhist truths within the concrete human nexus by establishing unity with the ultimate truth in daily life etc. are of great interest to Korean mind and they are of great relevance and significance to the whole world in contemporary times and in the new millennium to bring about universal peace, prosperity and well-being.

Among several Buddhist thinkers of Korea Won-Hyo and Ji-nul deserve special mention. Won-Hyo was a great Buddhist Korean thinker who advocated holistic, integral and harmonised approach to reality and life. He was also inspired by Won-Kwang's writings and his advocacy of 'Secular Pancasila'. Won-hyo was revered nationwide as a spiritual figure. He wrote 82 books, most of which were commentaries on Mahayana scriptures. He was a proponent of peace and unity. He propounded the famous principle of '*Hua-jaeng*' i.e. peaceful integration through harmonisation of disputes. He regarded

*pratityasamutpada* as the basic principle of cosmic process. He believed that *Dharmadhatu* is one, and all dharmas are its manifestations within it. There is harmonious integration everywhere. For this view he relied upon the Avatamsaka Sutra according to which "one is all, all is one; one is in all, all is in one." His exposition of the term '*Atman*' one of the four *gunas* of *Mahaparinirvana* (the other three are *nitya*, *sukha*, *vimala*), is really wonderful. Atman is Mahesvara which is the nature of ultimate Reality as "Great self-existence". It is 'Hana' which means 'one unitary whole'. He emphasised meditation to experience oneness and altruistic service as its expression.

The goal of life is establishment of such a society or *samgha* where there is harmonious integration without any conflict or disorder, where nobody is deprived or alienated. This is *Mahaprajna* and *Mahakaruna*. This is overcoming of the feeling of narrow selfish ego. This is *anatmavada*. Won-Hyo cherished great faith in Bodhisattva Maitreya and Amitabha Buddha residing in Tusita. But these are all symbolic for him and not ontological. Expressing deep appreciation for Won-Hyo Prof. Rhi ki- Yong writes, "He was really a wonderful fruit that was grown on the Korean soil after the dissemination of the Indian grain. I personally hope as one of his unfitting disciples that once again this fruit grain could grow and flourish in order to illuminate this dark age of selfish materialism." (p.55). The same sanguine hope is voiced by Prof. Cho who wishes that the religious tradition of India and Korea may be a major force in the future world playing an important part in furthering happiness of the human race with the spirit of non-violence. (p43).

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While concluding it must be pointed out that such an interface like the present one and a research study of this sort is highly useful. For Indians it is interesting and significant to know as to how and why Buddhism could get such a strong foothold in Korea with notable impact on Korean thought and culture. For the Koreans it is instructive to be aware of the Indian roots of their Buddhist view and way of life. In the present times our traditional cultures are facing the danger of extinction under the impact of western materialism and consumerism and we do not care to share a common platform to meet the challenge.

Strengthening of cross-cultural interactions will help build up mutual understanding, mutual empathy and mutual enrichment. It is hoped that this conference will help cross-cultural interactions resulting in mutual affinity and understanding involving large number of scholars of the two countries to interact with one another more closely, to discover our commonalities and to learn from each other's experiences. Apart from mutual material advancement it will also consolidate common spiritual roots and resources so that we may march together into the future as partners in universal well-being, as intimate cultural cousins.





# Women's Leadership in Counter-Terrorism- A Catalyst for Global Security Transformation

Aakansha Bhawsar\*

## Abstract

The 21st century's counter-terrorism landscape is marked by a constantly shifting terrain of threats, necessitating innovative and adaptable strategies. This comprehensive research article delves into the strategic impact of women's leadership in counter-terrorism, emphasizing the urgent need for a fresh perspective to effectively navigate these intricate challenges. As conventional counter-terrorism tactics increasingly appear misaligned with the dynamism of contemporary terrorism, women leaders introduce diverse insights, integrated strategies, and community-driven solutions that revolutionize prevailing paradigms. Incorporating detailed case studies, analytical evaluations, and actionable policy recommendations, this article not only elevates the essential role of women in reshaping counter-terrorism initiatives but also promotes a transformative pivot with the potential to redefine global security paradigms. The established counter-terrorism playbook is progressively challenged in our era of heightened global interconnectivity, rapid technological evolution, and emerging terrorist threats. With terrorist entities swiftly adapting and leveraging vulnerabilities, there's an urgent call for a shift in both strategic and leadership approaches. Women leaders, with their unique qualities and viewpoints,

are enriching the counter-terrorism narrative. They present all-encompassing strategies that transcend mere security reactions and deeply probe into the intricate origins of extremism. Their innate ability to foster community trust, contest extremist ideologies, and empower subsequent generations introduces an invaluable dimension to counter-terrorism efforts.

## I) Introduction

This article is a detailed expedition into the diverse roles women play in counter-terrorism, encompassing the hurdles they encounter, the inertia within entrenched institutions, and the policy shifts required to unleash their fullest potential. By spotlighting accomplished women leaders in the domain, the article illuminates their transformative impacts, the ripple effects of their leadership, and the wisdom that can be extracted from their journeys. In our rapidly transforming security dynamics, acknowledging the strategic essence of women's leadership in counter-terrorism is not solely an equality agenda but a decisive move towards a more secure global horizon. Embarking on this exploration, readers are guided through the evolving contours of terrorism, women's instrumental role in innovating counter-terrorism endeavors, and the roadmap ahead. The article provides an exhaustive examination of challenges

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that stand in the way of maximizing the potential of women in leadership, complemented by practical policy suggestions fostering a more inclusive counter-terrorism approach. As the global stage contends with 21st-century security intricacies, this composition makes a persuasive argument for an avant-garde approach—one that champions the strategic prowess of women's leadership in our collective pursuit of global stability and safety.

### **Background and Significance**

In the 21st century, the specter of terrorism looms large, challenging global security and propelling a relentless pursuit of innovative and adaptable countermeasures. As we navigate this research article, a deep understanding of terrorism's evolution becomes pivotal, laying the groundwork for assessing the transformative power of women's leadership amidst these shifting sands.

### **The Changing Face of Terrorism**

Historically delineated by specific regions or ideological groups, the nature of terrorism has profoundly transformed in recent decades. The traditional terrorist model—marked by clear hierarchies, discernible leadership, and territorial ambitions—has diversified. Contemporary terrorism defies borders, ideologies, and affiliations, leveraging digital realms to disseminate extremist views and inspire solitary actors to mount attacks. This change encompasses the ascendancy of non-state entities, solitary attackers, and extensive networks, challenging the effectiveness of standard counter-terrorism measures. Additionally, the entanglement of terrorism with socio-economic disparities, political turbulence, and cultural identity nuances further muddies the waters<sup>1</sup>. To be truly

effective, counter-terrorism methodologies must mirror the adaptability of the threats they face.

### **The Imperative for Change**

Given this intricate backdrop, the call for a counter-terrorism paradigm shift is undeniable. While military and intelligence-driven strategies remain indispensable, they can sometimes skirt the underpinnings of extremism—factors like poverty, discrimination, and inequality. Addressing these root determinants, which serve as hotbeds for recruitment and radicalization, calls for a more comprehensive, community-aligned approach.

### **Embracing the Gender Lens**

In this evolving milieu, championing women's leadership roles within the counter-terrorism sphere becomes a paramount strategic move. Despite possessing distinct insights and strengths, women have traditionally been sidelined in security and counter-terrorism forums.

### **The Significance of Women at the Helm**

Women leaders consistently demonstrate an ability to view counter-terrorism through a more encompassing lens. They grasp the necessity of addressing core drivers of extremism like economic disparities and societal inequalities to inhibit radicalization. Often, women stand uniquely poised to foster community trust, bridging crucial gaps between governing bodies and their constituents. This collaborative, empathy-driven stance enhances intelligence gathering and disrupts potential threats. Additionally, women in leadership not only challenge prevailing stereotypes but also inspire succeeding generations, especially other women, to actively participate in anti-terrorism

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efforts. Their active involvement signals a profound shift towards gender-inclusive counter-terrorism strategies, and, more broadly, a more secure global paradigm<sup>2</sup>.

As the article delves deeper into the study, it will dissect the myriad facets of this strategic evolution, offering an exhaustive insight into the potential of women in these roles, the obstacles they navigate, and the policy shifts needed to amplify their impact. Through the prism of women's leadership in counter-terrorism, it charts a course towards a safer, more harmonious world.

## II) Aims and Objectives

The following outlines the major aims and objectives of this study-

**1. Analyzing the evolving nature of terrorism in the 21st century-** This study aims to delve into the intricacies of modern terrorism, seeking to understand its evolving dynamics.

**2. Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles in Counter-Terrorism Based on Feminine and Masculine Traits-** Drawing from historical and contemporary leaders, this study aims to understand the effectiveness of each style and compares them for a balanced approach in counter-terrorism efforts.

**3. Analyzing Women's Role in Counter-Terrorism-** This study aims to explore the multifaceted roles women play in counter-terrorism, highlighting their contributions in strategy, intelligence, community engagement, policy innovation and politics.

**4. Analyzing the Unique Perspectives and Approaches of Women Leaders in Counter-Terrorism-** This study aims to emphasize the invaluable and innovative

perspectives women leaders introduce to counter-terrorism.

**5. Navigating Challenges and Barriers-** This study aims to understand that transformative endeavors often meet resistance, probing into the myriad challenges women face when aspiring to leadership positions within counter-terrorism.

**6. Strategies for Integrating Women's Leadership in Counter-Terrorism Dynamics-** This study aims to discern and outline the methods and avenues through which women's leadership can be seamlessly woven into the fabric of counter-terrorism initiatives and global security efforts.

**7. Fostering the Next Generation-** This study aims to nurture upcoming generations, especially young women, to explore careers within counter-terrorism.

**8. Augmenting Global Security Efforts-** This study aims to enhance global security paradigms by championing a more encompassing, avant-garde approach to counter-terrorism.

By encapsulating these objectives, this research article aims to be a voice, offering not just insights but also actionable pathways in counter-terrorism, all in pursuit of a more secure global environment.

## III) Analysis and Discussion

Objective 1- Analyzing the Evolving Nature of Terrorism in the 21st Century

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and geopolitical shifts, our understanding of threats and security paradigms is constantly being tested. With state and non-state actors leveraging every available tool in this interconnected world, the nature of terrorism has become more sophisticated, decentralized, and

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harder to predict. Against this backdrop, it becomes crucial for us to recalibrate our perspectives and strategies to stay ahead of these emerging challenges. The evolving landscape includes:

**Unfolding Tapestry of Terrorism-** The modern age has unveiled a terrorism landscape that's constantly in flux. Beyond established groups, terrorism now adopts varied forms, demanding a holistic and multidimensional counter-strategy.

**The Global Network-** In today's interconnected world, terrorist networks exploit global channels, bypassing national limitations. Originating often from unstable regions, their operations blur conventional demarcations, necessitating international cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts.

**Rise of the Unpredictable Lone Actors-** The emergence of "lone-wolf" attackers, radicalized in digital seclusion, represents a unique challenge. Their actions, rooted in autonomy and unpredictability, necessitate innovative intelligence tactics.

**Digital Domain- A Double-Edged Sword-** While digital platforms act as conduits for extremist ideologies, they also offer counter-terrorism forces invaluable tools for surveillance, intelligence gathering, and narrative counteraction. Harnessing the digital realm's potential while mitigating its risks becomes paramount.

**Terrorist Strategy-A Chameleon in Play-** Terrorist factions showcase agility, swiftly adjusting tactics in response to countermeasures. As defenses evolve, so do their strategies, underscoring the need for adaptable and anticipatory counter-strategies.

**Digging to the Core- Root Catalysts-** Beyond immediate threats, underlying issues like

socio-economic disparities, governance deficiencies, and exploitation of cultural or religious sentiments fuel extremism. Comprehensive interventions must address these root causes to deter radicalization effectively.

**Community Empowerment- The First Line of Defense-** Empowering local communities, providing them with resources, and building trust can transform them into invaluable allies, offering on-ground intelligence and acting as effective deterrents to radical influences.

**The Shield of Societal Resilience-** An empowered and informed society acts as a bulwark against extremism. Prioritizing education, fostering unity, and promoting open dialogues can fortify societies against divisive extremist narratives.

**Gender Insights- Beyond Tokenism-** Incorporating gender perspectives, especially women's insights, into counter-terrorism is not mere inclusivity—it's strategic. Women bring forth nuanced understandings, unparalleled community liaisons, and a holistic confrontation of extremism.

**Eco-terrorism- The Emerging Threat-** With growing global concerns about environmental degradation, a new form of terrorism anchored in ecological motives is emerging. Recognizing and addressing this form of extremism requires an understanding of environmental grievances and a commitment to sustainable solutions.

**Financial Networks- The Lifeblood of Terrorism-** Terrorist operations often rely on intricate financial networks for funding. Identifying, monitoring, and severing these financial lifelines can critically impair their operational capacities.

**Concluding Reflections-** Modern terrorism, with its multifaceted challenges, demands an equally multifaceted response. By incorporating

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diverse perspectives, understanding evolving threats<sup>3</sup>, and fostering international cooperation, we can craft a counter-terrorism approach that's not only robust but also resonant with the values of inclusivity and unity.

**Objective 2-** Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles in Counter-Terrorism Based on Feminine and Masculine Traits

This evaluation correlates leadership styles with traditionally recognized feminine or masculine attributes. It's important to note that leaders of any gender can manifest any of these characteristics. The efficiency of a leadership style frequently hinges on contextual factors.

**Web-Weaver vs. Chess Master Leadership**

Web-Weaver Leadership (Commonly linked with feminine traits)

Example- **Marie Curie** intricately connected diverse scientific disciplines, weaving them into groundbreaking discoveries.

Counter-terrorism Application- Interlink agencies, communities, and intelligence, creating a responsive and cohesive web of defense.

Chess Master Leadership (Commonly linked with masculine traits)

Example- **Steve Jobs** masterfully orchestrated Apple's moves, foreseeing market trends like a grand chessboard.

Counter-terrorism Application- Strategize moves ahead of time, anticipating and checkmating extremist plots.

Soulful Navigators vs. Trailblazing Pioneers

**Soulful Navigators (Commonly associated with feminine traits)**

Example- **Maya Angelou**, through her poetic voice, moved hearts and changed perspectives, leading with soulful grace.

Counter-terrorism Application- Engage deeply with emotional and cultural narratives of communities, healing wounds and preventing radicalization.

Trailblazing Pioneers (Commonly linked with masculine traits)

Example- **Neil Armstrong's** audacious step on the moon epitomized bold leadership. Counter-terrorism Application- Venture into uncharted territories of counter-terrorism, pioneering new methodologies.

**Heart-led Healers vs. Steel-clad Warriors**

**Heart-led Healers (Commonly associated with feminine traits)**

Example- **Princess Diana** radiated empathy, reaching out to the ostracized, showcasing heart-led leadership.

Counter-terrorism Application- Mend societal fissures and address root causes, ensuring communities are immune to extremist ideologies.

Steel-clad Warriors (Commonly linked with masculine traits)

Example- **King Leonidas of Sparta** defended his nation with unwavering valor against the Persian horde.

Counter-terrorism Application- Display uncompromising strength, ensuring that defensive lines against terrorism remain unbreached.

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## Harmonious Maestros vs. Lone Rangers

Harmonious Maestros (Associated with feminine traits)

Example- **Beyoncé**, through her music, creates harmonious symphonies that resonate globally.

Counter-terrorism Application- Synchronize multifaceted counter-terrorism efforts, ensuring all stakeholders work in harmony.

## Lone Rangers (Linked with masculine traits)

Example- **Indiana Jones**' daring adventures often saw him making pivotal decisions alone.

Counter-terrorism Application- Be prepared for autonomous actions when swift, individual decisions are paramount against terrorist threats.

## Transformational Leadership vs. Transactional Leadership

### Transformational Leadership (Commonly linked with feminine traits)

Example- **Nelson Mandela** exemplified inspirational leadership, motivating people toward a common vision of a united, non-racial South Africa.

Counter-terrorism Application- Motivate communities to unite against extremism by fostering hope and shared values.

### Transactional Leadership (Commonly linked with masculine traits)

Example- **Margaret Thatcher**, known as the "Iron Lady", often relied on clear-cut, quid-pro-quo agreements to achieve her objectives.

Counter-terrorism Application- Utilize structured rewards and punitive measures to enforce adherence to counter-terrorism protocols.

## Visionary Leadership vs. Operational Leadership

### Visionary Leadership (Commonly linked with feminine traits)

Example- **Martin Luther King Jr.** painted a vision of a society where all individuals are judged by their character, not color.

Counter-terrorism Application- Craft an inspiring vision of peace and unity, discouraging radical ideologies.

### Operational Leadership (Commonly linked with masculine traits)

Example- **Tim Cook**, CEO of Apple, focuses on the precise details of operations to ensure efficiency and performance.

Counter-terrorism Application- Focus on the specifics of counter-terrorism operations, ensuring that each action and measure is efficiently executed.

## Moral Leadership vs. Realpolitik Leadership

### Moral Leadership (Commonly linked with feminine traits)

Example- **Mahatma Gandhi** embodied ethical leadership, prioritizing moral principles over political gains.

Counter-terrorism Application- Uphold ethical standards in counter-terrorism, emphasizing human rights and justice.

### Realpolitik Leadership (Commonly linked with masculine traits)

Example- **Otto von Bismarck** pursued strategies based on practical considerations, rather than ideological or moral ones.

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Counter-terrorism Application- Make decisions based on strategic interests, even if they diverge from established norms or ethics.

### **Luminous Beacons vs. Resolute Mountain Climbers**

Luminous Beacons (Often associated with feminine traits)

Example- **Oprah Winfrey**, with her radiant positivity, lights up millions of minds, leading with heart and soul.

Counter-terrorism Application- Illuminate dark corners of misinformation, casting rays of hope and unity in affected communities.

### **Resolute Mountain Climbers (Typically linked with masculine traits)**

Example- **Sir Edmund Hillary's** unwavering ascent to Everest's peak embodies the spirit of conquering the unconquerable.

Counter-terrorism Application- Tackle extremist threats head-on, surmounting every challenge with determination.

### **Stellar Nurturers vs. Galactic Voyagers**

Stellar Nurturers (Associated with feminine traits)

Example- **Mother Teresa** nurtured the ailing and marginalized, creating constellations of care.

Counter-terrorism Application- Heal societal divides and fractures, ensuring a community's cohesiveness against radical influences.

Galactic Voyagers (Tied with masculine traits)

Example- **Elon Musk's** SpaceX ambitions represent the spirit of venturing into the cosmic unknown.

Counter-terrorism Application- Launch bold and unconventional initiatives, venturing into unexplored avenues of counter-terrorism.

In essence, Leadership transcends the confines of traditional gender-based attributes. Both 'feminine' and 'masculine' traits are threads in a rich leadership tapestry. **Web-Weavers** master the art of connectivity, while **Chess Masters** strategize with foresight. The heart and emotion of the **Soulful Navigators** find balance with the daring spirit of **Trailblazing Pioneers**. While **Heart-led Healers** bridge societal gaps, **Steel-clad Warriors** stand as resilient defenders. **Harmonious Maestros** unite diverse efforts, and **Lone Rangers** exemplify the power of independent decision-making. In the vast landscape of counter-terrorism, **Luminous Beacons** guide with hope, and **Resolute Mountain Climbers** showcase determination. **Stellar Nurturers** provide a healing touch, contrasting with the bold ambitions of **Galactic Voyagers**. The dance of leadership in counter-terrorism requires both grace and strength. Embracing the full spectrum of leadership styles, rooted in both traditionally feminine and masculine traits, is essential in forging a resilient and united stand against extremism.

### **Objective 3- Illuminating Women's Profound Impact in Counter-Terrorism**

As the sands of time shift, it's evident that women are not just emerging as influencers but are increasingly taking charge, orchestrating changes in the highly complex world of counter-terrorism.

**The Ascendant Age of Female Brilliance in Counter-Terrorism** Historically, the corridors of global security echoed with male-dominated

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voices. Today, however, women are not only part of these critical conversations but are also leading them. Their profound influence is being felt as they bring a fresh perspective, challenging established norms and practices.

Example- **Nada Bakos**, a former CIA analyst, wasn't just another operative. She is known for her meticulous tracking of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, orchestrating the capture of the brain behind Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Her persistence and nuanced understanding of terrorist networks were unparalleled.

Example- **Farah Pandith** wasn't just a diplomatic envoy. As the first-ever Special Representative to Muslim Communities, appointed by the US State Department, she traversed various nations, building bridges and facilitating meaningful dialogues with Muslim communities.

### **Breaking Boundaries, Shaping Narratives**

Women in counter-terrorism are revolutionizing the way narratives are framed, emphasizing a balance between stringent actions and empathetic dialogues.

Example- **Jessica Stern** isn't just a researcher. Her deep dives into the psyche of radicals have humanized the field of counter-terrorism. Instead of painting a monochromatic picture of terrorists, she offers colors of complexity that lead to constructive engagements.

Example- **Anne Speckhard** has been pivotal in understanding the internal dynamics of extremist groups. Her intimate interviews with terrorists shed light on their motivations, thus providing vital clues to counter radicalization.

## **Crafting 360° Solutions**

To tackle the hydra of terrorism, women have exhibited an all-encompassing approach, understanding the links between varied global issues.

Example- **Dr. Louise Shelley** intricately weaves the narrative connecting terrorism, organized crime, and economic corruption. Her emphasis on following the money trail in terrorist networks has led to groundbreaking revelations. Example- **Valerie Plame's** exposure of nuclear arms proliferation isn't just about international intrigue; it underlines the potential nexus between rogue states, terrorists, and nuclear arms, signaling a clear and present danger.

## **Diving Deep into Women's Roles in Counter-Terrorism**

**Strategy Formulation-** Beyond boots on the ground, women like **Kimberly Kagan** advocate for an all-encompassing approach. Kagan's strategy in Afghanistan was far from linear - it integrated military muscle with grassroots mobilization and socio-political recalibration. Similarly, **Joana Cook's** detailed research emphasizes the diverse roles women assume, from operatives to policy makers.

## **Intelligence Pioneering**

The field of intelligence, often shrouded in mystery, has witnessed female luminaries like **Gina Haspel** and **Sue Gordon**. Their contributions aren't just about gathering secrets but revolve around reshaping the very dynamics of international espionage, prioritizing certain threats and channels over others.



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## Community Diplomacy

Counter-terrorism isn't merely about offense and defense; it's also about building bridges. Women like **Fatima Zaman** and **Edit Schlaffer** have transformed grassroots movements into powerful tools against extremism, using dialogue and education as potent weapons.

## Policy Innovators

In the labyrinth of policies, voices like **Mariam Safi** and **Sanam Naraghi Anderlini** echo the loudest. Their advocacy for gender inclusivity isn't just a feminist stance; it's about recognizing the different threats and challenges faced by diverse demographic groups.

## Digital Terrorism Countermeasures & Eco-Terrorism

From the virtual realms where experts like **Tara Wheeler** combat digital terrorism threats to environmental frontiers where stalwarts like **Wangari Maathai** demonstrate the environmental peace nexus, women are pioneering multi-dimensional counter-terrorism measures.

## Political Vanguard

**Jacinda Ardern's** response to the Christchurch mosque shootings wasn't just about leadership; it was about a global call for unity, demonstrating that leadership could be both strong and empathetic. **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, the iron lady of Liberia, steered a war-torn nation towards peace, underlining the power of female leadership during the crisis. **Helle Thorning-Schmidt** amplified Denmark's emphasis on collective security, underscoring the importance of regional collaborations in the European theatre.

## Spotlight Case Study- Torchbearers of Counter-Terrorism Evolution

This arena is further enriched with the political prowess of leaders like:

**Atifete Jahjaga** of Kosovo, who championed international counter-terrorism collaborations, reminding us of the power of global unity. **Sheikh Hasina**, steering Bangladesh, has been unyielding in her combat against extremism, showcasing the interplay between governance and security.

**Sirimavo Bandaranaike** grappled with insurgencies during the nascent stages of her leadership, setting a template for navigating a nation through tumultuous times.

The intricate mosaic of counter-terrorism, with its patterns and nuances, is being redefined by these women. Their stories serve as a testament to the indomitable spirit of women in ensuring a safer global present and tomorrow.

## Objective 4- Analyzing the Unique Perspectives and Approaches of Women Leaders in Counter-Terrorism

While counter-terrorism efforts are universal in their objective of safeguarding nations and their citizens, the methods adopted by female leaders often exhibit a nuanced difference. This isn't to suggest that male leaders overlook facets like education, diplomacy, or holistic frameworks, but female leaders, informed by unique life experiences and societal expectations, often bring to the table an approach that intertwines protective measures with nurturing, restoration, and healing. They display an innate ability to harmonize assertive strategies with a broader vision of societal cohesion and global collaboration. This blend, arguably born from centuries of women playing the role of

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caregivers, protectors, and harmonizers, often sees them venturing beyond conventional measures, diving deeper into the root causes and taking paths less traversed<sup>4</sup>. As we delve deeper into specific examples, this inherent holistic and integrative perspective becomes more evident.

### **A Holistic Counter-Terrorism Framework**

Leaders such as President **Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović** of Croatia and Norway's Prime Minister **Erna Solberg** underscore the synthesis of societal reforms and defense protocols, emphasizing the value of both in creating a secure and harmonious society.

### **Digital Defense Dynamics**

The likes of Taiwan's President **Tsai Ing-wen** and Estonia's President **Kersti Kaljulaid** emphasize the modern challenges of cyber threats, pioneering in the realms of cybersecurity and digital defense.

### **The Power of Peaceful Dialogue**

Diplomacy over confrontation is a trademark for many female leaders. Former Prime Minister **Gro Harlem Brundtland** of Norway and **Sushma Swaraj** of India have often leaned into peaceful dialogues, even in the most tense international scenarios.

### **Embracing Inclusivity as a Fortification**

Leaders like President **Halimah Yacob** of Singapore and **Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir** of Iceland see the strength in diversity and emphasize its role in national defense strategies.

### **Transnational Collaborative Measures**

While many leaders champion collaboration, the likes of Germany's Chancellor **Angela Merkel** and **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf** of Liberia have notably leaned into international partnerships as a potent tool against terror.

### **Education as an Antidote**

Emphasizing the role of education in counter-terrorism, leaders like President **Dalia Grybauskaitė** of Lithuania and **Michelle Bachelet** of Chile have underscored its importance in shaping minds resistant to extremist ideologies.

### **Gender Parity in Security Strategies**

The narrative of female participation in peacekeeping and security roles has been amplified by leaders such as **Roza Otunbayeva** of Kyrgyzstan and **Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka** of the UN.

### **Navigating Diplomatic Corridors for Peace**

Leaders such as **Federica Mogherini**, former High Representative of the EU, and **Aisha Yesufu**, a Nigerian socio-political activist, have notably employed dialogues and negotiations as potent tools in their leadership arsenal.

In the realm of counter-terrorism, the strategies carved out by women leaders reflect a profound understanding of human complexities. Their approaches, while assertive, don't merely target surface symptoms but delve deeper into addressing foundational issues that breed extremism. These strategies, informed by their unique perspectives as women and the multiplicity

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of roles they've historically undertaken, fuse the immediate with the long-term, the national with the global. It's a testament to the need for diverse leadership in our quest to sculpt a secure and harmonious global tapestry.

### **Objective 5- Navigating Challenges and Barriers**

Before delving deep into the maze of challenges women face in counter-terrorism, it's important to emphasize why this discourse matters. It isn't just about elevating women but enriching counter-terrorism strategies with nuanced perspectives. The interplay of cultural, systemic, and institutional barriers paints a compelling tapestry of resilience, innovation, and determination exhibited by these women leaders<sup>5</sup>.

### **The Labyrinth of Institutions**

**Historical Gender Frames-** Venturing into the counter-terrorism arena, women often find themselves up against the towering walls of traditions. Organizations like Mossad, MI6, and the FBI (with figures such as **Susan M. Gordon** in key roles) have illustrious histories but have been largely male-dominated. Bringing down such barriers isn't about dismantling legacies but embracing evolution.

**The Mirage of Representation-** Despite significant strides, women like **Gina Haspel** (CIA's first female director) and **Kirstjen Nielsen** (former Secretary of Homeland Security) remain exceptions rather than norms. For them, ascending the ranks felt like walking a tightrope – balancing the weight of legacy, expectation, and groundbreaking leadership. This isn't just a hiring conundrum but affects the breadth of insights and

policy directions.

**Institutional Rigidity-** Imagine trying to introduce AI in an agency still stuck with typewriters. This challenge mirrors **Rosalind Franklin's** struggles in the mid-20th century scientific community. While she made crucial contributions to understanding the structure of DNA, her work was often overshadowed in the male-dominated field. Just as Franklin grappled with the lack of recognition and collaboration dynamics skewed by gender norms, today's women leaders in counter-terrorism face entrenched institutional mindsets resistant to change.

### **Society's Magnifying Lens**

**The Competence Quagmire-** Women leaders, like **Sushma Swaraj** who steered India's diplomatic maneuvers, and **Christine Lagarde**, at the helm of the IMF, constantly found their decisions under microscopic scrutiny. It's less about the leader and more about societal predispositions.

**The Delicate Balance-** Consider the balance beam in gymnastics, where one must align strength and poise perfectly. **Margaret Thatcher**, with her firm decisions, showcased strength. On the other hand, **Jacinda Ardern's** compassionate response after the Christchurch attacks embodied poise. Both leaders, though different in approach, navigated the challenge of balancing empathy and assertiveness in a world with pre-defined molds for women's leadership.

**Dual-Hat Dilemma-** A woman's role in society is multi-faceted. While someone like **Benazir Bhutto** led Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts, figures like **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf** of Liberia also played the roles of a mother and

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grandmother, juggling personal commitments and state affairs.

## Resisting Wholistic Solutions

**Clash with Tradition-** Traditional counter-terrorism blueprints may not always align with the wholistic approaches that women leaders often advocated for, as seen in the community-based strategies proposed by **Ilwad Elman in Somalia**.

**The Allure of Immediate Results-** Think of a chef trying to perfect a complex dish but feeling the pressure to serve it quickly. Leaders like Norway's **Gro Harlem Brundtland** and Colombia's **Clara Lopez Obregon** experienced similar pressures. While they championed long-term peace and reconciliation, they often grappled with the challenge of addressing urgent crises while staying committed to their broader visionary solutions.

## The Shadow of Risks

**Targeted Vulnerabilities-** Prominent figures like **Malala Yousafzai**, advocating for education amidst extremist threats, can inadvertently draw the ire of extremist factions. Their visibility, coupled with gender biases within extremist groups, can amplify risks.

**Mental Battles-** Managing security crises is taxing, more so when gender dynamics add layers of complexity. **Rigoberta Menchú's** experiences in Guatemala highlight the importance of resources that address the mental toll, such as counseling and mentorship.

## Policy Landmines

**Gender Dynamics in Policy Making-** Policies fostering gender equality, at times, can be

seen as biases. Leaders like Canada's **Chrystia Freeland** have emphasized gender-focused approaches in policy, underscoring the broader benefits.

**Resistance to Structural Evolution-** Advocating reforms, such as promoting women to pivotal roles in agencies like the FSB in Russia or the Shin Bet in Israel, might encounter resistance from traditionalists, reminiscent of the challenges faced by **Nada Al-Ahdal** in Yemen.

As we navigate the labyrinth of challenges and barriers within the realm of counter-terrorism, it's clear that the value of diverse leadership extends beyond mere representation. It's about weaving together the myriad strategies, insights, and experiences that women leaders bring forth. For a counter-terrorism strategy that's not just robust, but also visionary, understanding and addressing these challenges isn't just essential – it's imperative. Only through such clarity can we pave the way for a more inclusive and innovative approach to global security.

## Objective 6- Strategies for Integrating Women's Leadership in Counter-Terrorism Dynamics

In the ever-evolving milieu of global security, counter-terrorism stands as one of the pillars that demand continuous innovation and adaptability. Much like the vast ecosystems of our planet, where every species has a role to play, counter-terrorism too needs the harmonious integration of varied perspectives. This study asserts the necessity to usher in a fresh approach for strategizing how to integrate the women's leadership in counter-terrorism dynamics<sup>6</sup>.

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## Promoting Inclusivity

**Objective Recruitment and Advancement-** Imagine an orchestra where every instrument is the same. The resultant sound, while harmonious, lacks depth and diversity. Similarly, by championing gender-neutral recruitment, security agencies can ensure a rich tapestry of perspectives that mirrors the multifaceted challenges of terrorism.

**Mentorship and Role Models-** The trail blazed by figures like **Lynne Owens** stands as a testament to the heights women can achieve. These pioneers not only serve as inspiration but also as mentors, ensuring that the flame they ignited continues to burn brightly.

**Broad-based Diversity Efforts-** Diversity is not just a buzzword; it's the backbone of innovation. Embracing an all-encompassing approach to diversity ensures that strategies are robust, holistic, and representative of the world we inhabit.

## Evolving Institutional Dynamics

**Inclusive Leadership Education-** Cultural transformation is not an overnight endeavor. It requires consistent effort, top-down commitment, and grassroots enthusiasm. As ancient mariners used the stars to navigate, today's leadership programs can act as guiding constellations, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and diversity.

**Clear Pathways to Advancement-** Every professional journey requires a roadmap. By elucidating clear, unbiased criteria for career progression, institutions can ensure that everyone, irrespective of gender, knows the terrain and destination.

**Adaptable Work Models-** Flexibility in the workplace is not just a perk but a necessity. These models, especially in the digital age, ensure that work-life balance is not a tightrope walk but a harmonious dance.

## Endorsing Comprehensive Strategies

**Policy Lobbying-** Reactive measures in counter-terrorism are like applying band-aids on deep wounds. A proactive, policy-driven approach ensures that the root causes are addressed, leading to long-term solutions.

**Grassroots Involvement-** The strength of a structure lies in its foundation. By integrating local communities and ensuring women are at the forefront, strategies are grounded, relatable, and effective.

**Educational Drives-** The seeds of peace are sown in the minds of the young. Women leaders, with their nurturing instincts, can emphasize the role of education in cultivating a future devoid of extremist ideologies.

## Prioritizing Well-being and Safety

**Security Protocols-** The cornerstone of any strategy lies in its safeguarding measures. Women in counter-terrorism often find themselves under unique threats. Instituting rigorous security protocols ensures that these leaders can function without looming threats, much like the fortified walls of a citadel protecting its inhabitants.

**Emotional and Psychological Support-** The world of counter-terrorism is strewn with challenges that test one's emotional and mental mettle. Offering avenues for mental health and emotional well-being is akin to providing safety nets in treacherous terrains.

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## Evaluation and Responsibility

**Gender-Specific Analytics-** Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms act as the lifeblood of any evolving system. By diving deep into gender-specific data, organizations can continually refine their strategies, much like a gardener pruning and nurturing plants for optimal growth.

**Objective Supervision-** An unbiased, external oversight mechanism serves as the conscience of an organization, ensuring that the path towards gender equity remains clear, accountable, and illuminated.

## Collaborations and Global Synergy

**International Women's Networks-** By forging global partnerships, women leaders can pool resources, share experiences, and craft collective strategies. These networks act as global think tanks, amplifying the influence and reach of each member.

**Upholding Global Pledges-** Resolutions like those of the UN stand as guiding stars. Adhering to these global commitments not only amplifies credibility but also ensures alignment with the best global practices.

## Elevating Public Consciousness and Advocacy

**Media Depiction-** The media wields the power to shape perceptions. By showcasing the successes and contributions of women in counter-terrorism, they can rewrite narratives, dispelling myths, and solidifying realities.

**Awareness Drives-** Knowledge is the catalyst for change. Awareness campaigns can act as beacons, enlightening societies about the

monumental impact of women's leadership in counter-terrorism.

## In-depth Analysis and Reflection-

**Continuous Research-** As counter-terrorism efforts evolve, the incorporation of women in leadership roles must be regularly assessed. Constant research ensures strategies effectively integrate gender perspectives and remain in line with changing realities.

**Knowledge Sharing-** Sharing research insights about the successes and challenges of women's integration in counter-terrorism paves the way for broader understanding and best practice adoption, encouraging a more inclusive global approach.

In essence, integrating women's leadership into counter-terrorism is not just an additive measure but a fundamental transformation. From inclusivity in recruitment to global collaborations and continuous research, each strategy the study outlined reinforces the imperative of a gender-balanced approach<sup>7</sup>. As we move forward, it's clear that women's perspectives are not merely supplementary; they are central to crafting a more resilient and comprehensive counter-terrorism framework.

## Objective 7- Fostering the Next Generation

### Nurturing Future Pioneers in Counter-terrorism

## Adapting to the Nuances of the Modern World

While the evolution of terror tactics in the 21st century has been formidable, traditional male-dominated strategies have occasionally shown blind

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spots. The rise of digital arenas for recruitment, the emboldening of non-state entities, and endemic issues like poverty and inequality have transformed the battlefield. Women, with their unique experiences and vantage points, offer solutions that move beyond just military or intelligence interventions. They bring a rich understanding of the societal, cultural, and psychological drivers behind radicalism, making their involvement not just beneficial, but essential.

### **Strategizing Across Multiple Fronts**

Harnessing the capabilities of women in counter-terrorism demands a multifaceted approach-

**Reimagining Training Protocols-** Beyond the traditional boot camps, there's a need for curricula emphasizing emotional intelligence, cultural understanding, and community building – areas where women have historically shown prowess.

**Local Community Engagement-** Women often possess intrinsic ties to their communities, allowing them to gather grassroots-level intelligence, detect early signs of radicalization, and foster trust more effectively.

**Cyber Domains-** With the internet being a significant tool for radicalization, women, especially those with tech acumen, can play a pivotal role in digital surveillance, cyber forensics, and online counter-propaganda.

**Psychological Warfare-** Women's often innate empathy and communication skills can be instrumental in deradicalization programs, hostage negotiations, and rehabilitating former extremists.

Global Integration and Collaborative Diplomacy

The challenge of terrorism is global, and solutions need international cohesion. Women can be pivotal diplomats, weaving together international alliances and fostering collaboration. Their often collaborative nature can bridge divides, ensuring that nations work cohesively rather than in silos.

### **Crafting a Legacy for Tomorrow**

It's essential to recognize that our actions today shape the legacy we leave for future generations. By empowering women in counter-terrorism roles, we're sending a powerful message about inclusivity, resilience, and adaptability. Such endeavors can inspire young girls worldwide, assuring them that they, too, can be leaders and changemakers in even the most challenging domains. This, in essence, lays the foundation for a more balanced, fortified, and hopeful future<sup>8</sup>.

### **Objective 8- Augmenting Global Security Efforts**

#### **Pioneering Counter-Terrorism**

**Bridging Tradition with Tomorrow-** The contemporary world sits at an intersection of age-old wisdom and emerging paradigms. As such, our approach to global security efforts requires a fresh, hybrid perspective, knitting the past's insights with future-forward strategies.

**The Quantum Leap in Security-** Beyond just the digital realm, the potential implications of quantum computing on security are profound. Tapping into quantum-resistant cryptographic measures can transform the landscape of data protection, preventing extremist digital breaches.

**Narrative Warfare-** Countering extremist narratives isn't solely about dismantling them; it's

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about crafting compelling counter-narratives. Harnessing the power of storytelling, both in traditional and new media, can subtly reshape perceptions and challenge extremist views.

**Nature as a Diplomat-** Eco-diplomacy, the use of shared environmental concerns to bridge divides, can be a potent tool against extremism. Collaborative efforts to combat environmental challenges can unify diverse groups, reducing grounds for radical ideologies.

**Space-Age Surveillance-** With advancements in satellite technology, real-time global surveillance is no longer the stuff of fiction. Utilizing space-based assets can provide unparalleled intelligence, making our world a more transparent and safer place.

**Artificial Intelligence Ethics in Security-** As AI takes a front seat in predictive analytics, ensuring these algorithms are ethically sourced and devoid of biases is essential. Fair and balanced AI can make predictions more accurate, avoiding unnecessary profiling and targeting.

**The Gender Lens in Security-** Gender isn't just about representation; it's about a unique lens of viewing challenges. Integrating feminine perspectives can unveil overlooked vulnerabilities and solutions in the counter-terrorism domain, making strategies more holistic.

In essence, navigating the evolving realm of global security efforts and counter-terrorism strategies demands both novelty and reverence for time-tested principles. By intertwining the two, we not only build robust defenses but also pave the way for a harmonized global community<sup>9</sup>.

## Conclusion

In the evolving landscape of modern terrorism, the potency of our counter-terrorism efforts hinges on embracing diverse leadership styles. This research underscores the profound synergy that arises when we merge 'feminine' and 'masculine' traits: where Chess Masters' strategic vision complements the Web-Weavers' innate ability to foster connections. Similarly, the unwavering fortitude of Steel-clad Warriors is enriched by the compassionate insights of Heart-led Healers. Such a melding of attributes not only reshapes our understanding but also bolsters our proactive stance against extremism. This approach transcends mere reactions, delving into the roots of extremism and championing global collaboration. Conclusion to the findings is the realization that a holistic, gender-inclusive strategy—melding timely interventions with forward-thinking strategies—is the cornerstone for a secure, inclusive, global future.

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