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Xenophobia: Breaking Down Walls, Building Bridges

Introduction

Xenophobia is formally defined as extensive fear, hatred, aversion and animosity directed towards individuals who have their nationality from foreign countries, often manifesting as a deep-seated prejudice or hostility towards individuals perceived as outsiders due to their national identity or cultural background. In the present-day scenario, Xenophobia exists parallel with racism, as it involves fear or distrust towards individuals based on their nationality or perceived foreignness, rather than race. Throughout the 20th century, xenophobia underwent notable transformations due to the emergence of feelings of nationalism and the impact of the world wars. Financial instability and Political pressure served as catalysts for injustices to minority groups and immigrants, subjecting them to scapegoating. In Modern times, the phenomenon has cultivated on an extensive magnitude owing to globalisation and increased urban-rural migration across the globe, contributing to an increased xenophobic sentiment in certain regions. With major threats of cultural integration, national safety and fears regarding job competition, it has been involved in the form of adoption of anti-immigration rhetoric and policies in several nations.

Xenophobia and its negative impact on Refugee Crisis

"Refugees don't make our countries less safe but Xenophobia, Fear and Hate do" These famous lines by Ted Lieu still hold relevance in the current scenario and aptly define the relationship between Xenophobia and Refugee crisis. In the current context, the scenario of hatred and discrimination towards foreign citizens is extremely prevalent. In various regions across the world, concerning trends of xenophobia and discrimination have been observed. Instances of increasing hatred towards Asian communities in the United States, accompanied by discriminatory practices in job promotions, raise concerns. Likewise, in Europe, the rise of far-right movements and political parties promoting anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric poses challenges. Additionally, in the Middle East and certain Asian countries, noteworthy increments in hostility towards minority groups have been documented

All these instances reflect a clear picture of the increasing intolerance of people towards foreign citizens. The issue of xenophobia becomes considerably more intricate and concerning when considering its implications on humanity and humanitarian rights, particularly in the context of the refugee crisis. Every minute, an estimation of 20 people are displaced due to conflict, persecution or war. Out of 68.5 million forcibly displaced people, 25.4 million stand out to be refugees. In a situation of war, numerous concerns about refugee settlement are raised, talking about the humanitarian ground global agencies have always voted in favour of the rehabilitation of refugee groups in neighbouring countries, the refugee crisis involves a large number of people fleeing their home countries due to conflict, persecution, or other forms of violence. These individuals seek safety and protection in foreign lands, often arriving with little or no resources and in need of assistance to rebuild their lives. Xenophobia, on the other hand, refers to the fear or dislike of foreigners or people from different cultural backgrounds. It can manifest as prejudice, discrimination, or hostility towards individuals perceived as outsiders, including refugees. The negative impact of xenophobia on the refugee crisis is huge. When host communities have xenophobic attitudes and behaviour, it becomes challenging for refugees to integrate into their new surroundings. This lack of integration hampers their ability to access essential services, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Consequently, refugees face additional barriers in becoming self-sufficient and productive members of their host societies giving a rise of spark to tension between the host nationalist and rehabilitated refugees. Moreover, xenophobia can lead to social tensions and conflicts between refugees and host communities. It expands existing divisions and prevents the building of mutual understanding and cooperation, hindering efforts to foster peaceful coexistence resulting in frequent clashes between the host and refugees. Such clashes are extremely common across the globe and are responsible for creating indifferent opinions of people towards refugees.

Prevalence of Xenophobia across the globe

Greece has been one of the countries significantly affected by the refugee crisis due to its geographical location as a gateway to Europe for many refugees and migrants. The country's location on the eastern Mediterranean route has made it a primary entry point for people fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The large entry of refugees and migrants has placed immense strain on Greece's resources and infrastructure, creating challenges in providing adequate support and accommodation. As the number of arrivals increased, Greece faced difficulties in processing and managing the large numbers of asylum-seekers.

Reception centres, often overcrowded, struggled to provide suitable living conditions and basic services, leading to concerns about the well-being and dignity of refugees. In some instances, this strained environment has contributed to tensions between the local population and the refugee community. The presence of xenophobic sentiments has been visible in some political discourse, public protests, and incidents of violence directed towards refugees. These negative attitudes have further complicated efforts to address the refugee crisis and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. Addressing the refugee crisis effectively requires a compassionate and inclusive approach that values diversity and acknowledges the plight of forcibly displaced individuals. Overcoming xenophobia is crucial in creating an environment where refugees can rebuild their lives with dignity, contribute positively to host communities, and work towards a more sustainable and harmonious future.

Navigating the path beyond Xenophobia

In our interconnected world, where cultures merge and borders blend, the urgent call to surmount xenophobia is more important than ever. With our communities growing more diverse and interconnected, the emerging biases and discrimination threaten to dim the purity of humanity we collectively hold. To genuinely welcome the purity of our shared human voyage, it's imperative that we embark on a mission to directly address xenophobia. This endeavour, though demanding, holds the promise of a future where unity and belongingness triumph over division and unawareness. The necessity to counter xenophobia is not solely a moral concern but also a strategic essentiality, as we strive to build a peaceful world for the forthcoming generations. Although the path to counter Xenophobic sentiments won't be as easy path as it seems on paper, especially with countries that have multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious groups, gradual steps will ensure a sense of more inclusivity and belongingness across the globe. Tackling the situation of Xenophobia requires a comprehensive approach which requires the active participation of not only individuals but also individuals collectively representing societal groups, communities and government.Encouraging diversity begins in childhood, underscoring the need for educational institutions to adopt curricula that actively nurture a sense of inclusivity, belonging, and tolerance among all societal groups. It is crucial that schools not only emphasise teaching tolerance, but also instil a genuine enthusiasm for learning from diverse cultures, showing profound respect for them, and celebrating their contributions. By adopting this comprehensive educational approach, we can cultivate forthcoming generations that not only embrace disparities but also celebrate the contributions of cultures that enrich our global community. Significant importance lies in establishing a balanced sense of responsibility within the media landscape.

It is commonly observed that media often functions as a prominent catalyst, unfortunately contributing to conflicts among communities through means such as disseminating misinformation, broadcasting news with inherent biases, and propagating political agendas. It's important to keep an eye on this and address instances where the media reports unfairly or in a way that stirs up negative feelings towards others. This helps prevent prejudice and encourages a more positive conversation among different groups of people. Resetting refugees poses a significant challenge for governments, yet it equally carries a humanitarian obligation for nations to extend shelter to those displaced due to conflict or political turmoil. To mitigate potential conflicts between native citizens and settled refugees, governmental intervention is essential, ensuring a harmonious coexistence based on peace and unity. Implementing programs aimed at cultural integration and offering language proficiency training becomes indispensable in fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. Additionally, insights from government research in Norway reveal a noteworthy trend, immigrants frequently engage in entrepreneurial activities that diverge from the existing skill sets within the host country. This, in turn, can result in enhanced employment prospects over the long term, rather than a reduction of employment opportunities for local residents.

Concluding Remarks

Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness. The feeling of Xenophobia arises only because of human's tendency to look at differences among different communities but when we will start looking at it through a broader perspective we will realise that more than differences there is a bond of similarities which go unnoticed between these petty differences created because of political agendas, narrow mindset or media propaganda. In order to effect positive change, it is imperative that we cultivate an environment of openness and inclusivity. The act of embracing our disparities and harmonising our interactions holds the potential to create an environment where all individuals experience a profound sense of belonging. Thus, we can collectively endeavour to foster a heightened quality of existence for every inhabitant of our planet, irrespective of their geographical origin.

Chandrayaan 3: The Moon is not far anymore

Introduction

In an era defined by technological advancements and international collaboration, space exploration has emerged as one of the most captivating and unifying pursuits. Amid this cosmic journey, India's Chandrayaan-3 mission stands out as an illustration of innovation and cooperation, holding utmost importance not just for the nation but also on a global scale. Chandrayaan-3 is the third lunar exploration mission of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The three main components of Chandrayaan-3 are a lander, a rover, and a propulsion module. It was launched on July 14, 2023, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre Second Launch Pad in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, India. Chandrayaan-3 achieved a soft landing on the lunar South Pole region on August 23. The mission serves as a stepping stone to future interplanetary expeditions by ISRO.

The Chandrayaan Series

The Chandrayaan program, or the Indian Lunar Exploration Programme, is an ongoing series of outer space. July 5 ISRO linked the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft with the potent Launch Vehicle Mark-III (LVM3) at the space center, marking a significant accomplishment. Given that the LVM3 is the largest rocket ever produced in India, this accomplishment gains even more significance. missions by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) for the exploration of the Moon. The Chandrayaan program is a multiple-mission program. There have been three missions so far, with a total of two orbiters, landers, and rovers. The initial lander and rover, which were part of the Chandrayaan-2 mission, crashed on the surface, while the two orbiters were successful. The latest composite of the Chandrayaan-3 mission has landed on the southern pole of the moon, the rover has been deployed and will operate for 14 days.

• Chandrayaan-1, which was launched on October 22, 2008, was a huge triumph for ISRO because one of its payloads, the Moon Impact Probe, found water on the Moon. The Chandrayaan-1 mission carried out several other goals, such as mapping and atmospheric profiling of the Moon, in addition to finding water.

• The launch of Chandrayaan-2 occurred on July 22, 2019. On August 20, 2019, the spacecraft was successfully launched into lunar orbit, but the lander failed to touch down on the moon. The orbiter is in service and currently gathering scientific data. Its expected lifetime is seven years.

• Chandrayaan-3 was launched on July 14, 2023, and landed in the same area as Chandrayaan-2. The primary goals of the Chandrayaan-3 mission cover three key aspects. Firstly, it aims to demonstrate a successful and controlled landing on the lunar surface. Secondly, it intends to show the mobility of a rover on the Moon's terrain. Lastly, it aims to carry out scientific experiments directly on the lunar surface.

• The next mission will be the Lunar Polar Exploration Mission, or Chandrayaan-4, suggested to be launched in the time frame 2026-2028. India and Japan are collaborating on this expedition, but the exact objective has not yet been defined. It will be a lander-rover mission close to the lunar pole to do on-site sampling and analysis of gathered lunar material and demonstrate lunar night survival technology.

Chandrayaan 3

Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe soft landing and roving on the lunar south pole. Chandrayaan-3 consists of an indigenous lander module (LM) called Vikram, a propulsion module (PM), and a rover called Pragyan, to develop and demonstrate new technologies required for interplanetary missions. The propulsion module carries the lander and rover configurations until a 100 km lunar orbit. The propulsion module has a Spectropolarimetry of Habitable Planet Earth (SHAPE) payload to study the spectral and polarimetric measurements of Earth from the lunar orbit. The Lander will have the capability to soft land at a specified lunar site and deploy a rover, which will conduct in-situ chemical analysis of the lunar surface during its mobility. The Lander and the Rover have scientific payloads to conduct experiments on the lunar surface. The main function of the propulsion module is to carry the lander module from launch vehicle injection until the final lunar 100 km circular polar orbit and separate the lander module from the propulsion module. Apart from this, the Propulsion Module also has one scientific payload as an addition, which has been operated post-separation of the Lander Module.

The Lander boasts several advanced technologies, including Laser & RF-based Altimeters, Laser Doppler Velocimeter, Lander Horizontal Velocity Camera, and a Hazard Detection and Avoidance system with a dedicated camera and processing algorithm.

Importance

Significant integration: On July 5, ISRO integrated the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft with the potent Launch Vehicle Mark-III (LVM3) at the space center, marking a significant accomplishment. Given that the LVM3 is the largest rocket ever produced in India, this accomplishment gains even more significance.

Destination: In contrast to earlier landings, which were clustered around the lunar equator, Chandrayaan-3 stands out among other moon landings as the first mission to land on the moon's South Pole. The lunar south pole is a region renowned for its tough terrain and harshly cold temperatures. Until now, all previous lunar landings have been concentrated within the equatorial region, positioned just a few degrees north or south of the lunar equator. The NASA Surveyor 7 mission, which successfully landed on the moon on January 10, 1968, made the furthest incursion from the equator. This historic spacecraft found its resting place near the 40-degree south latitude. Israel rocketed in April 2019 and attempted a landing on the South Pole but crashed. China's Chang'e 4 made history in 2019 by becoming the first spacecraft to land on the far side of the moon, it did so close to the 45-degree south latitude.

Global curiosity: The ambitious mission of Chandrayaan-3 fits with a global trend of South Pole exploration. In light of the recent failure of Russia's Luna-25 spacecraft, which crashed into the moon on August 2 after spinning out of control, Chandrayaan-3's safe soft landing on the moon has greater global significance. Other important projects focused on this region are Japan's Moon Sniper, scheduled to launch on August 28, 2023, and NASA's Artemis III mission, which is scheduled to launch in 2025.

International Collaboration: Chandrayaan 3 serves as a platform for global collaboration and cooperation, with ISRO partnering with international space agencies to share expertise, resources, and data. This spirit of cooperation promises to improve our knowledge of the moon.

The ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) facility is used by India's space agency to communicate with its satellites and launch vehicles. It is located in Bengaluru's Peenya Industrial Area. However, Chandrayaan 3 will not always be able to interact with the base station in India, which is why ISRO requires assistance from other countries. This is a challenge faced by all spacefaring nations, which is why there are international agreements that allow space agencies to use the base stations of other countries for their missions. ISRO's Chandrayaan 3 mission is being supported by the base stations operated by the European Space Agency (ESA). ISRO will also make use of NASA's Deep Space Network (DSN) during the mission. Such international agreements and partnerships allow space agencies to save costs by sharing infrastructure. It also encourages international cooperation in the space domain.

Conclusion

Chandrayaan-3 is poised to usher in a new chapter in lunar exploration, with its global significance extending across scientific, technological, diplomatic, and inspirational domains. The world watched in admiration as India accomplished the feat of soft landing on the lunar south pole on August 23, 2023, becoming the first nation to do so. Chandrayaan-3's successful landing sends a powerful message to countries across the globe that the pursuit of science is a journey with infinite possibilities

Price Ceiling: Limiting Prices, Expanding Perspectives

Introduction

A price ceiling is a legal restriction placed on the maximum price a seller can charge for a specific product or service. Governments commonly implement these limits on essential goods such as food and energy, particularly when these items become excessively costly for the general public. Essentially, a price ceiling serves as a method of controlling prices. Even though it can have the advantage of keeping vital goods within reach for consumers, this advantage tends to be short-lived. Economists express reservations about the enduring efficacy and benefits of such price ceilings. When authorities in charge of regulations set a maximum price they view as appropriate, price ceilings come into play. All sellers are then obligated to sell their products at a price no higher than this specified value. The entire sales process, including how companies market their products, is carefully observed and managed. These regulatory bodies consistently evaluate the established price ceiling to confirm its ongoing suitability. They continuously examine how market supply and demand interact to decide whether adjustments to the price ceiling are required, whether upward or downward. For instance, if a sudden shortage of a particular product occurs, the regulators might determine that the existing price ceiling could harm producers or even compromise product quality. In such situations, they could choose to eliminate the price ceiling. Although price ceilings might seem to exclusively benefit consumers, they also have long-lasting consequences.

Certainly, in the short run, there's a potential for costs to decrease, which might lead to an upswing in demand. However, producers need to discover methods to counterbalance the restrictions imposed on prices and profits. This could involve managing supply, scaling down production or product quality, or introducing fees for previously included features. As a result, economists raise inquiries about how effectively price ceilings genuinely safeguard the most susceptible consumers from high expenses, or whether they provide any safeguard at all. A broader and more theoretical criticism of price ceilings relates to their generation of a deadweight loss within society. This phrase refers to an economic deficit that arises due to an inefficient distribution of resources, disturbing the equilibrium of a market and amplifying its overall inefficiency.

Significance of Price Ceiling

A price ceiling is a government-imposed limit on how high the price of a particular good or service can be charged by producers or sellers. It is typically set below the market equilibrium price, which is the price at which the quantity supplied equals the quantity demanded. Price ceilings are usually introduced to protect consumers, especially those with lower incomes, from excessively high prices for certain essential goods or services.

Price ceilings serve to inhibit sellers from capitalizing on consumers during periods of scarcity or emergencies, guaranteeing the affordability of vital necessities such as food, medicine, and housing. These ceilings contribute to equity by thwarting price gouging, where sellers exploit situations to impose exorbitant charges, particularly when consumers have limited alternatives. By maintaining prices below what they would be in normal market circumstances, price ceilings aid in ensuring that essential goods and services remain attainable to a broader spectrum of consumers, including those with lower incomes. Amid inflation or economic uncertainty, price ceilings can function to stabilize prices and prevent uncontrollable inflation within specific sectors. Price ceilings furnish a concrete means for governments to showcase their dedication to citizen welfare by proactively addressing concerns about affordability.

Governments majorly use price ceilings to respond to public pressure or maintain social order during times of crisis, demonstrating responsiveness to citizens' needs. Price ceilings can provide immediate relief by preventing sudden spikes in prices, easing the financial burden on households facing unexpected expenses. Price ceilings can enhance consumer confidence in the stability of essential goods' prices, contributing to economic stability and maintaining spending patterns. By limiting prices, price ceilings can prevent negative externalities such as social unrest or public outcry resulting from unaffordable prices.

Notable Instances of Government Price Ceiling Intervention:

There are several instances of government-enforced price ceilings, usually for goods that are considered necessary. The following are some common examples of price ceilings. Certain regions impose rent ceilings to safeguard tenants from rapidly escalating fees for housing accommodations. Such rent controls are frequently cited as a prime illustration of the inefficacy of price regulations in general, and specifically, price ceilings. In the late 1940s, rent controls were widely introduced across New York City and the entire state of New York.

Although it resulted in benefits for Tenants in the short run, ultimately, in the long run, the tenants were the same party who had to bear its brunt in the form of poor housing accommodations and regular accommodation changes. Consequently, the housing supply is less likely to expand in such cities, even during shortages. Following World War II, returning veterans were converging and starting families, leading to a significant scarcity of housing and a subsequent surge in apartment rental prices. Initially, the post-war rent control targeted particular building types. However, it persisted in a somewhat less restricted version known as rent stabilization, lasting until the 1970s.

Some governments may cap the prices of essential goods, such as food and fuel, to ensure access to these essential goods and prevent profiteering. For example, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the German government pledged to cap energy prices due to the shortage of Russian natural gas. Within the United States, there exists a compelling motivation for manufacturers of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals to elevate their prices, recognizing that the additional expenses are likely to be absorbed by taxpayers or insurance providers. To counteract the escalation of prices, President Biden has approved the Inflation Reduction Act, which encompasses limitations on the maximum prices negotiated for specific medications.

With the widespread adoption of Uber and similar ridesharing platforms, these services found the opportunity to impose significantly elevated charges during periods of high demand. This fluctuating pricing model raised apprehensions in India, prompting the Karnataka government to enforce specific price limits per kilometer for Uber and other rideshare companies. Over time, the government observed that despite heightened passenger interest in utilizing rideshare services, the availability of Uber rides decreased due to fewer drivers being incentivized, leading to extended wait times for passengers. The situation where Uber prices are lowered due to a price ceiling, but customers have to wait longer for rides because Uber drivers are not as motivated, raises doubts about whether this trade-off is really beneficial.

The significant advantage of a price ceiling is undoubtedly the limitation it imposes on costs for consumers. This maintains affordability and prevents price gouging or unfair exploitation by producers/suppliers. If the rampant price inflation stems from a temporary scarcity, price ceilings can alleviate the impact of elevated prices until supply normalizes. Moreover, price ceilings can invigorate demand and stimulate expenditure.

In the short run, price ceilings offer clear benefits. However, they can turn problematic if sustained excessively or set well below the market equilibrium price (where the quantity demanded equals the quantity supplied). In such cases, demand might surge, leading to supply shortages. Additionally, if the prices producers can charge significantly deviate from their production costs and operational expenses, adjustments will be necessary. This might entail compromising quality, increasing prices for other products, reducing production, or discontinuing offerings. In some instances, businesses might face closure if they are unable to achieve a reasonable profit on their goods and services.

Conclusion

A price ceiling, also referred to as a price cap, designates the uppermost threshold at which goods and services are permitted to be vented. It represents a kind of price regulation, stipulating the utmost amount that can be demanded for a particular item. Usually instituted by governmental bodies, this measure is aimed at aiding consumers when prices appear overly elevated or escalate uncontrollably. Price ceilings function to inhibit prices from surpassing a specific level, constituting a manifestation of price control. While they often confer immediate benefits to consumers, the enduring consequences of price ceilings are intricate. They possess the potential to adversely affect producers and, at times, even the very consumers they are intended to support, engendering shortages in supply and a deterioration in the caliber of products and services.

Navigating Afghanistan's Future in the Taliban Crisis

Introduction

Afghanistan: a nation at a crossroads, grappling with an uncertain future amidst the resurgence of the Taliban. The world watches on, holding its breath as this war-torn country navigates through turbulent times. The Taliban, once ousted from power, has made a stunning comeback over the years, leaving many wondering what lies ahead for Afghanistan and its people. In this article, we shall delve into the current state of affairs in Afghanistan and explore how the Taliban has evolved since their initial rise to power. Get ready to embark on a journey filled with insights and analysis – let's navigate Afghanistan's future together!

Mapping The Current Scenario

As we peer into the current state of the Taliban in Afghanistan, it is impossible to ignore their dramatic resurgence in recent years. This radical Islamist group, known for its strict interpretation of Sharia law, now exerts influence over significant portions of the country. Their grip on power has tightened, particularly following the withdrawal of international forces. The Taliban's strategy has evolved since their previous rule from 1996 to 2001. They have adapted to modern warfare tactics and capitalized on local grievances and weaknesses within Afghan governance structures. Taking advantage of rural poverty and disillusionment with corruption, they have managed to recruit fighters and establish control over key areas. With each passing day, fears grow that the hard-won progress made by Afghan women's rights activists may be eroded under Taliban rule. Reports emerge about restrictions on education for girls and limitations placed upon women's freedoms – a stark reminder of their oppressive past. Moreover, as violence escalates across Afghanistan, civilians continue to bear the brunt of this conflict. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan reported more than 5,000 civilian casualties in just six months in 2021 alone. The situation remains precarious as peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban falter amidst escalating violence. The future appears uncertain as Afghans grapple with an ever-present threat lurking at their doorsteps. Despite facing numerous challenges on multiple fronts, hope must not be abandoned for a brighter future where peace prevails over chaos.

Dynamic Transformation Over Time

The evolution of the Taliban has been a complex and multifaceted journey, shaped by various factors over time. Initially emerging in the early 1990s, the group quickly gained control over large parts of Afghanistan and implemented an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islamic law. In its early years, the Taliban regime was marked by harsh punishments, strict gender segregation, and limited access to education for women. The group's oppressive rule drew international criticism and led to its isolation on the global stage. However, since then, the Taliban has undergone significant changes. During this period, they adapted their tactics and adopted more sophisticated guerrilla warfare techniques. Over time, there have been indications that some factions within the Taliban have shown a willingness to engage in dialogue with other stakeholders. This culminated in recent negotiations between them and representatives of both Afghanistan's government and international powers. While it is essential to acknowledge these shifts within the group's approach, it is equally important not to overlook their continued adherence to fundamentalist ideologies or disregard concerns about human rights abuses under their rule. Understanding how the Taliban has changed over time requires a nuanced assessment of both positive developments and persistent challenges they present. By closely monitoring these changes while remaining cautious about potential pitfalls along Afghanistan's path forward lies our best chance at fostering stability for its people amidst this ongoing crisis.

Afganistan's Uncertain Tomorrow

The future of Afghanistan with the Taliban in power is uncertain and filled with challenges. The return of the militant group has raised concerns about human rights, women's freedoms, and political stability. Afghanistan was once known as a war-torn country, and now it faces an even more complex situation. Under Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001, Afghanistan experienced strict Islamic law and limited civil liberties. Women were particularly marginalized and denied education and employment opportunities. With the Taliban back in control, there are fears that history may repeat itself. Another concern is regional security. The presence of terror groups like Al-Qaeda within Afghanistan raises questions about how this might impact neighboring countries' stability. The international community should be vigilant in addressing these threats to prevent further destabilization in the region. Afghanistan also faces economic challenges amidst the Taliban crisis. International aid has been crucial for sustaining basic services like healthcare and education over the years but could potentially decrease due to political uncertainties under Taliban rule. This will undoubtedly have significant consequences for vulnerable populations who rely on such assistance.

Despite these obstacles, there is still hope for a brighter future in Afghanistan if certain conditions are met. The international community must engage diplomatically with the new Afghan leadership while holding them accountable for human rights violations or oppressive policies. Efforts should focus on supporting civil society organizations that champion democracy, women's empowerment, and human rights advocacy within Afghanistan. Encouraging dialogue between different ethnic factions can help foster peace-building processes at a grassroots level. Investing in economic development projects can also play a vital role by creating job opportunities and reducing poverty rates across the country—a key factor in preventing recruitment into extremist groups.

Conclusion: Navigating The Road Ahead

The international community has a crucial role to play in supporting Afghanistan during this challenging time. Providing humanitarian aid is essential to address the immediate needs of Afghan civilians. This includes ensuring access to food, clean water, and medical assistance. International organizations should work together to coordinate their efforts and ensure that aid reaches those who need it most. Diplomatic pressure should be exerted on the Taliban leadership to respect human rights and protect vulnerable groups such as women and minorities. The international community must make it clear that any violation of these rights will have consequences. Economic support is vital for Afghanistan's long-term stability. Donor countries can contribute by investing in infrastructure projects, creating job opportunities, and promoting trade partnerships. This will not only boost the country's economy but also provide hope for its people. Additionally, regional cooperation plays a significant role in shaping Afghanistan's future. Neighboring countries should collaborate with international actors to promote peace-building initiatives and prevent further destabilization of the region. Supporting civil society organizations within Afghanistan is crucial for building resilience against extremist ideologies. These organizations play an essential role in promoting education, empowering women, fostering interethnic dialogue, and advocating for democratic values. As Afghanistan navigates through the current crisis with the Taliban, uncertainty looms over its future. The resilience and determination of the Afghan people will play a pivotal role in shaping what lies ahead. While the Taliban has changed over time, there is still concern about their extreme ideology and potential impact on human rights.

Only by addressing root causes such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and lack of education can long-term stability be achieved. Investing in social programs that empower communities while promoting inclusivity will help create a foundation for lasting peace. Afghanistan's journey towards a brighter future may be fraught with challenges but it is not without hope. With steadfast determination from both internal and external actors alike, there is an opportunity to build a more inclusive society where all Afghans can flourish regardless of gender or ethnicity.

Freebies: A New Age-Winning Tool

Introduction

This article deals with the topical issue of freebies which is emerging as a new age-winning tool in Indian politics and administration. The author deliberately withheld the umbrella in suggesting the title of the article that denies both inspiration and legitimacy to freebies as indicators of good governance and the welfare state. This objective has been unfurled in the Preamble of the Constitution itself which ensures that the State will "secure to all its citizen's justice -social, economic and political". Articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution under Directive Principles of State Policy make it explicit when it provides in Article 38 that "State is to secure a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people … " It goes on:

(l)The state shall promote the welfare of the people in social, economic, and welfare spheres by securing and protecting to the best of the ability the people's interests.

(2) The state will specifically aim to reduce income disparities, i.e., inequalities in income not only amongst individuals but also amongst different groups residing in different areas. The chances for advancement should be given to all men and women equally.

Article 39 provides: "The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing

(a) All men and women have an entitlement to adequate means of livelihood

(b)the structured form of ownership and control of material resources of various communities to subserve the common good.

(c) The economic system should not function in such a way that results in the concentration and accumulation of wealth and means of production.

(d) Men and women get equal remuneration for equal work done.

(e) tender age of children, health and strength of workers should be subjected to abuse and exploitation and citizens should not be forced by economic necessity to enter into any opportunity unsuited to their age.

(f) Children are given facilities and are brought up in a wholesome environment in a healthy manner. They are to be given freedom and dignity and their childhood should be protected against exploitation and abandonment.

These two Articles provide a base for making a welfare state in the background. The situation in India at the time of the commencement of democracy was characterized by social inequality. This point was well made by the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India, B.R. Ambedkar. He meant that we, on the 26th of January 1950, are on the brink of entering a phase marked by conflicting situations. While our political sphere will uphold the concept of equal voting rights, our societal and economic realm will witness disparities. How much longer can we sustain this paradoxical existence? How much longer can we ignore the absence of fairness in our social and economic domains? Persisting in this manner will jeopardize our democratic political system. We must swiftly address this incongruity, or else those who bear the brunt of inequality will potentially undermine the very foundation of the political democracy that this Assembly has painstakingly constructed.".

'Freebies' and 'Subsidies' are sourced from the tenets of the Constitution in a manner that aligns with the intended principles and guidelines set forth within the legal framework. These provisions are appropriately extracted, upholding the spirit of the Constitution. On occasion, their extraction might also be deemed fitting, although not without careful consideration of their compatibility with constitutional principles.

Importantly, it is emphasized that the derivation of 'Freebies' and 'Subsidies' from constitutional provisions never crosses the boundaries of legality. Their acquisition and allocation adhere to the established laws and regulations, ensuring that the benefits provided to individuals or groups are within the permissible limits of the Constitution.

The dictionary defines freebies as "something that is given to you without you having to pay for it, especially as a way of attracting your support for or interest in something." It is best expressed in colloquial Hindi as

<div align="center">"फोकट का माल"</div>

As in today's scenario, freebies cover a wide range of goods and services and this system of giving freebies is prevalent in each state of the Indian Union. Free or subsidized goods and services range from "Amma's canteens" in Tamil Nadu to Nitish Kumar's bicycles in Bihar to items such as color TVs, cell phones, mixer-grinders, laptops, buffalos, cows, goats, mangalsutras for the brides to be and several others, During elections, the list never ends.

Ground Realities

As we look at India's 29 States and 7 Union territories, they are facing big troubles of imbalanced development, negative schooling and fitness infrastructure, unemployment, and numerous others. The author has selected five states namely Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, West Bengal, and Assam. The author chooses these states due to their capitals playing a pioneering role in the development of the state and also the entire region at times beyond. Freebies and subsidies have resulted in exponential growth in non-plan expenditure. For instance, Assam, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal have 222.25 billion, 612.35 billion, 114.79 billion, 438.98 billion, and 430.11 billion rupees as their non-plan expenditure respectively. Freebies and subsidies have also contributed to enormous increases in the debt of these states. As per Budget estimates of 2016, Assam, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal have 399.80 billion, 3793.60 billion, 1253.20 billion, 2352.60 billion, and 3088.00 billion rupees respectively as their total outstanding debt.

The per capita income of persons of the above-mentioned states in the same order is 78903, 129235, 99578, 128366, and 78903 rupees respectively. It can be noted that Assam and West Bengal have a per capita income that is below the national average of Rs 93,293. The situation is more alarming in Bihar where it is only Rs. 36,143. Along with this income disparity, there is widespread inequality in each of these five states. For example, in Assam, the Assamese caste Hindus are rich compared to the Bodos, the Assamese Muslims are compared to migrant Bengali Muslims, the Marwaris are compared to tea garden laborers, and so on. This is also true of the other four States in their ways.

It is necessary to differentiate freebies into merit goods, expenditure that brings economic benefits, such as the public distribution system, employment guarantee schemes, and states' support for education and health. On the other hand, free electricity, free water, waiving off pending utility bills, and farm loan waivers are sometimes regarded as freebies, which don't encourage thrift culture, and distort prices through cross-subsidization eating away private investment. Some freebies may benefit the poor if properly targeted with minimal leakages but must be judged in the light of fiscal costs. Moreover, electricity and water provisions are known to exponentially degrade the environment and deplete water tables.

For example, we find introduction of cable television as a freebie improves women's status, the introduction of cable television as an added benefit has been demonstrated to enhance the societal standing of women. This is manifested through women indicating decreased tolerance for spousal abuse, heightened personal autonomy, and a diminished preference for male children. Moreover, the implementation of cable television has been correlated with a rise in student enrollment rates.

Consequently, initiatives aimed at providing television access, exemplified by the ongoing extensive program in Tamil Nadu, exhibit a constructive influence on developmental endeavors.
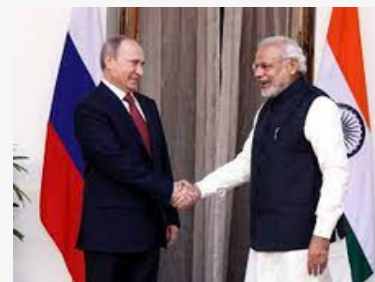
There are several ways through which cable television may affect women's status. For example, television may affect fertility by spreading awareness regarding family planning services or changing the perspective of the value of women's time. Another way is that television exposes rural households to urban lifestyles and behaviors that are miles apart from their lifestyle and that the households begin to emulate some of these, as suggested by many anthropological and ethnographic studies of television in India.

Conclusion

As we think about policy, however, it is worth noticing that the effects estimated in this article may be larger than what would be expected if the cable were introduced more widely. Although we have assumed that preexisting trends in attitudes do not drive the outcomes, we cannot rule out the possibility that the areas that have the biggest potential for change have been first exposed to televisions; those that are receptive to television may also be receptive to changing their gender attitudes. Thus, while the effect of cable is correctly estimated within this article, the effect of further introduction may be smaller, or slower. Nevertheless, given the magnitude of the effects estimated here, even much smaller effects of other merit freebies could have significant impacts in India.

Indian Foreign Policy "India's Way

Introduction

The end of the 20th century left the global landscape with the emergence of a solitary superpower. And as time passes, there are many changes in geopolitical situations and relations. At present in 2023, many countries are competing to gain power and influence all around the world. Enclosed herewith are delineated India's prevailing policies, positions, and the course of its ongoing transition. India's foreign relations have changed their shape in the 21st century, beginning with the year 2003, the nation began the Look East Policy (LEP), by developing ties with China, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand along with the ASEAN. Another significant transition was in 2008 after the Mumbai terror attack, by which the country realised to improve its strategic ties with the West for intelligence sharing and military purposes. The year 2014 marked a major political shift in the country, changing its foreign policy too. The Look East Policy (LEP) was replaced with the Act East Policy (AEP). The US, which was seen as unreliable and doubtful, became a defence and strategic partner. The ties with Europe stood up strong in the form of bilateral discussions, and commercial and defence trade. We shall now proceed to examine the principal subject matter of the article, which revolves around the discernible alteration in India's policy stance and the concept of multi-polarisation.

Objectives focused on the policy

The new political power in the country since 2014, looked at external affairs more critically and seemed to grab opportunities in the global forums of being the largest democracy in the world, highest in population, 5th in the economy and a giant leader in the Global South. The first and top priority among the objectives is the national interest of the country. The word "national interest" itself is a broad term, that includes territorial integrity and security, countering cross-border terrorism, ensuring global peace and safety, internal stability, protection of the environment against global warming and so on. The objectives of the policy are aimed at benefitting the development of India and inclusive growth, and to ensure the position of India in a way that our voice as a nation has a relevant importance in global forums and has significant influence in their decisions.

Ties with Giants

Firstly the United States, Indo-US relations had changed in different ways. One of the landmarks was then-President Barack Obama's visit as a Chief Guest on Republic Day in 2015, where an MOA was signed under which two sides agreed to use each other military bases for refuelling and logistics support. From there the partnership went on getting stronger. A stronger and clearer declaration was made which states India's "historic hesitations" are now coming to an end. Both nations found a common point between them to make a strong partnership, which is China. As the US does not want a communist nation to take over and emerge as a superpower, and India to control China's aggression. India's stance changed from appeasing China to countering China. Secondly, Russia, Even though the new partnership has been established, old and reliable partner Russia has never been left back. This is proved by India's abstinence from the Ukraine conflict in global forums and Russia's discount on petroleum amidst the crisis. Both countries mostly had defence trade, and combinedly developed Brahms missiles. And finally China, China stood as India's top importer country, against tension and fear in the border areas. Beijing's aggression in Ladakh regions and Arunachal Pradesh made India analyse its military competencies, which helped to decide on the modernisation and development of logistics in the Himalayan region. Even though trade was going on, the disrupting actions of China made Indian citizens angry which led "Ban China" products campaign multiple times. Dialogues between the two countries with various hierarchies took place more than 15 times, but the border issue is still unsolved. India's new diplomatic stance is clear that trade relations can't be improved further until and unless the border issue is solved.

Ties with Various Nations

The Neighbourhood First Policy has always been India's strategic concern. It is a committed member of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and also focused on BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation). The ties with Bhutan have improved significantly, where the Doklam conflict with China has been countered with India's military support proving both nations' mutual support. India's assistance in 2015 to Nepal was thought to enhance the ties, but later under China's influence, there was a change in Nepal's attitude, where it published maps that included India's villages. Srilanka, though it maintains non-alignment towards India and China, India sent a whopping $4 billion worth of humanitarian and financial aid. The government's new policy is focused on developing ties and building strong partnerships with various countries. It includes nations in the Middle East, where in 2021, the formation of the new group, I2U2: India, Israel, USA and UAE.

Further, India rejected the notion of not being a visible friend to Israel, and started close ties and defence deals with Israel, along with maintaining close ties with Arabs. The neutral position between these proved India's emergence of new policy and successful diplomacy. The new way of India countering cross-border attacks is a bit aggressive approach and shows a great difference from the Nehruvian approach of India's diplomacy earlier. Pakistan is the neighbouring country with which relations did not work quite well. In December 2014, the PM's surprise stopover in Pakistan during his return from Afghanistan was in the belief that such unforeseen and unexpected gestures by leaders can help to break long-standing political deadlocks. Though it helped to re-establish the diplomatic talks up to the Foreign Secretary level, could not able to continue long. In 2015 attack on the IAF base in Pathankot, Punjab; then again in the Indian Army Camp in Uri in J&K in 2016 which countered back through a surprise Surgical Strike. These attacks disrupted the thread of diplomatic dialogues between countries that were left. And under the Act East Policy ties with Japan have improved stronger, which resulted in large investments in India by Japan. Alongside these BRICS, laid India's partners in South America with Brazil and South Africa.

Diplomacy for development

Connectivity is a significant part of development, India initiated the Motor Vehicle Agreement for Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) which provides for a seamless movement of passenger and cargo vehicles within the countries as a step to connect through South Asia. India also undertook the development of Chabahar Port, a strategically inclined plan, to connect Iran and Afghanistan to Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. India being an economically interdependent nation, became more observant of markets in foreign aid for its potential. India in alliance with Australia, USA and Japan formed QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) not only to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region but also to solve humanitarian and economic issues and assist one another. During the Covid pandemic, India supplied vaccines to more than 100 countries, which is the highest by any other country in the world. India also invested around $3 billion in developing Afghanistan. India also paved the path for inclusive development, through the motto of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, The World is One Family.

<u>Concluding Remarks</u>

India showed a strong sense of diplomacy and foreign policy. India showed a new way of foreign affairs, creating a multi-polar world from being bipolar. Though it is an unstated change in diplomacy, it is comprehensible that India does not have any interest in intervening in other nations' internal issues, but also does not hesitate to counter any country's intervention in its internal issues. Kashmir issue is the best example, where it firmly mentioned it as an internal issue and the issue with Pakistan will be resolved bilaterally. And there is no other way to conclude than stating India's foreign minister's remarks in Raisina Dialogue, "It is better to engage with the world on who we are rather than try and please the world. India is confident about its identity and priorities, the world will engage with India in its terms". India is a nation whose policies and relations changed from an observer to a global representative and an emerging leader. This is new India's way, in the era of change.