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The Spillover Impact of the US-China Trade War on India's Economy

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Abstract*: This paper discusses the impact of the US-China trade war on India. Since it had been a fierce event in the past few years, the trade war had become a popular topic. The economists and politicians had predicted and discussed how the war will develop between the two superpowers, however, the impact on specific countries still needs to be further discussed and clarified. To discuss further of this topic, first, the background was further understood from the research. Then by discussing both positive and negative effects with data and details, finally analyzing whether there are benefits for India or not from the trade war between the two superpowers. During writing this template we found out that whether the US-China trade war will have a positive or negative impact on India depends on whether India had chosen wise politics towards the change in the global. India seems to be a great substitute for China, but it still has a lot of restrictions on the way of development.*

Keywords: Demand & Supply, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Cost,Culture

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is going to discuss the impact of the US-China trade war on India. More details about the background will be discussed, then move on to the advantages and disadvantages of India. The US-China trade war is an ongoing economic conflict between China and the United States. Initiated and launched by Donald Trump in January 2018, the specific content is that the United States sets tariffs and other trade barriers on China. China's economy has been growing rapidly in the past decade and is the fastest-growing economy among developing countries. However, due to China's economic growth, China often faces opposition from the United States over several issues, and the trade friction between China and the United States is increasing. The trade conflict between the world's two largest economies has influenced not only China and the US but the rest of the world. As the third largest economy in Asia and an important member of the WTO, India has been deeply affected by the trade war between China and the United States. The content of the US-China trade war is: On April 4, 2018, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) published a list of suggestions on tariffs imposed on China. The list will impose a punitive tariff of 25% on 1,333 items (estimated at 50 billion USD) exported from China to the United States.

Importance of Trade Cycle

Even a country that is more efficient (has absolute advantage) in everything it makes would benefit from trade. Consider an example:

Country A: One hour of labor can produce either three kilograms of steel or two shirts. Country B: One hour of labor can produce either one kilogram of steel or one shirt.

Country A is more efficient in both products. Now suppose Country B offers to sell Country A two shirts in exchange for 2.5 kilograms of steel.

To produce these additional two shirts, Country B diverts two hours of work from producing (two kilograms) steel. Country A diverts one hour of work from producing (two) shirts. It uses that hour of work to instead produce three additional kilograms of steel.

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Recent research finds that episodes of trade opening are followed by adjustment not only across industries, but within them as well. The increase in competition coming from foreign firms puts pressure on profits, forcing less efficient firms
to contract and making room for more efficient firms. Expansion and new entry bring with them better technologies and new product varieties. Likely the most important is that trade enables greater selection across different types of goods (say refrigerators). This explains why there is a lot of intra-industry trade (for example, countries that export household refrigerators may import industrial coolers), which is something that the factor endowment approach does not encompass.

There are clear efficiency benefits from trade that results in more products—not only more of the same products, but greater product variety. For example, the United States imports four times as many varieties (such as different types of cars) as it did in the 1970s, while the number of countries supplying each good has doubled. An even greater benefit may be the more efficient investment spending that results from firms having access to a wider variety and quality of intermediate and capital inputs (think industrial optical lenses rather than cars).

By enhancing overall investment and facilitating innovation, trade can bring sustained higher growth.

Indeed, economic models used to assess the impact of trade typically neglect
influences involving technology transfer and pro-competitive forces such as the expansion of product varieties. That is because these influences are difficult to model, and results that do incorporate them are subject to greater uncertainty.

Where this has been done, however, researchers have concluded that the
benefits of trade reforms—such as reducing tariffs and other nontariff barriers to trade—are much larger than suggested by conventional models.

More Details about the US-China Trade War

Next, move on to a clearer analysis of the situation, exploring more about how those two superpowers make turmoil in the global market. As had been expressed in the introduction, the competition and conflict between China and
the United States have been rapidly increasing nowadays. The impact of a trade war between the superpowers may have implications that may impact the global, also might bring a negative impact on other economies. However, this
trade war might help India to tap the international market much easier than before if they can seize the opportunities well. According to data researched, in the first half of 2018, both US and China promoted about USD 50 billion in
tariffs on imports from each other. Later in September of the same year, this situation was accelerated in a worse way when the US imposed a 10% more
tariff to cover Chinese imports worth 200 billion USD, and China struck back by introducing an additional USD 60 billion in tariffs on imports from the US

One year later, in December 2019, the Situation became under control when both US and China agreed to stop introducing any new trade policies on each other and developed a reciprocal agreement to halt the trade war. However, this hadn't remained for long. Things did not happen successfully and stably just before the final talks were about to start between the two superpowers.

Authorities from China rejected to change anything in their company- subsidizing laws and persist that the American government lifts the current tariffs on Chinese imports. Becoming furious at such a proposal from the Chinese authorities, the American President eventually doubled the rate of
tariffs on China's imports from 10% to 20% on $200 billion worth of imports from China. In vengeance, China halted all American imports of farm products. In that case, unfortunately, the fierce war between the two of the most powerful economies continued.

The central bank in China had also decreased the currency of CNY above the reference rate of 7 CNY per USD, therefore, giving a hint about a raging war of currency between the US and China. However, afterward, both China and US found out that the results of this currency war would turn out to be damage and destruction for both nations. To reduce the loss and destruction that can be caused by the currency war, in January 2020, both America and China agreed to halt the war. However, misfortune never comes singly. At the end of 2019, a global pandemic had exploded – Covid-19 is again menacing the relationship and the situation of international trade between the two countries

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Demand and Supply Lead to Increase in Competitiveness

Referring to those data and background which had been previously discussed, one of the things we can tell is that the price of goods made in China will rise in the market of US, which infers, or also can be seen from the basic principle of economics: demand and supply. Demand means the number of goods that consumers have the willingness and ability to buy, and supply means the number of goods producers have the willingness and ability to sell. In most cases, price rises lead to quantity demand. Therefore, the competitiveness of goods from China decreases, and the US households turn to consume other substitutes. As mentioned previously, in case China's export goods' competitiveness declines in the US market due to a rise in tariffs, this is allowing other countries, such as India, to replace "Made in China" with "Made in India" in the US, capturing more portion of US market. Since the exports from China to the US is several times the exports of the US to China before the trade war (2007-2017), after the restrictions set by the US in the trade war towards China's goods were announced, there will be a shortfall caused by the unsatisfied demand. If India can realize and use this wonderful opportunity with caution and wisdom, making the right choice on policy, this will lead to a rise in aggregate demand in India, as the export of India had increased due to the replacement of goods, which means the total output of India will increase. From the study, India exported US$483 billion of goods and services (with services approximately 36% of the total) with a rank of 13th (among 133 countries).

India's exports have grown at an annual average of 1.6% while non-oil exports have grown at 2.8%, especially in the market of soybean, textiles, gems, and jewelry. Fortunately, by the statistics recorded at the end of 2019, the US-China trade war had brought India USD 755 million from additional exports, so the rising trend of economic growth and development is reasonable to be predicated to promote greatly. This also benefits the balance of payments of India by fulfilling the huge gap of deficit using exports, or even better, leading to a trade surplus.

The Finger–Kreininindex (FK), which is used to measure the similarities of export countries between countries, showed India is relatively capable to take the place of China. On the contrary, the figure is lower when it is measured between the US and India. Thus, this implies that India would find it harder to export to China those kinds of goods that the US used to export to China.

Therefore, India should choose to export more to the US instead of China to maximize the benefit, because it could take more advantages in the US market due to the similarities between its export scheme and the Chinese export scheme.

Fear and Concern of other Economies

Besides the huge markers like the Chinese and the US, those trading partners of China or US markets would also be influenced by the trade war. Observing the harsh battle between the US and China, foreign investment may be afraid to enter the Chinese market because US sanctions or blocking of certain firms or industries in China are likely to result in great economic loss, which means it's going to be quite unstable, making the investors to lack of confidence. This situation is the same for some US companies as well. Under this substantial risk, to prevent possible loss, investors have to seek and find an alternate market with high similarities to China. Therefore, there will be some room for compensation and compliments in other countries, which is a nice opportunity in the whole global market. In this way, India could also grab a bit of the market share of the US and China, penetrating other countries markets. If India could form a long-term trading relationship with the US to replace China, it can ensure it would gain a lot during a certain period.

How economic development gets affected by trade war:-

Furthermore, economic development always comes along with economic growth. When India encounters a surplus in international trade, not only the profits from selling products would benefit firms and individuals but also the taxation on export would benefit the government. The government gains revenue from the export and could make beneficial use of it. For example, it can invest in social welfare, such as lots of social benefits. Moreover, India can improve the infrastructure so that the overall production costs may be reduced at a national level: if infrastructure improves, such as roads and highways, the transportation costs will decrease and the time for transportation will also decrease, which means the product will be more efficient and cheaper. Also, it can help with the redistribution of income, which is also a macroeconomic aim of the government, transferring the wealth from the rich to the poor. Investing in public goods can also be an effective way to allocate the taxation collected, especially on education and healthcare, which can improve HDI (Human development index), a criterion that measures the standard of living of Indian households calculated from three aspects: life expectancy, education, and income. Indian households' living standards may also be developed by receiving more disposable income due to a decrease in unemployment, which means the average income might rise and they can buy more to develop their quality of life. All above are the most likely benefits that India could gain during this battle, but in reality, all of those need the Indian government's wise ideas and significant efforts to achieve so that it would not miss those good chances. India should make planning a precise, data-supported, logical research based strategic trade policy a priority, including the impact of participation in plurilateral trade agreements. The decisions India made toward the trade war will affect the results of India in the trade war, such as how to set the tariff from the US and China's imports to India. If India tries to add more proportion of tariffs on the import of those superpowers, it's not only making itself into this hot potato situation but also missing these opportunities for the country to develop.

Negative Effects:-

Trade wars can have profound negative effects on both India and other countries. For India, these conflicts often lead to an economic slowdown due to reduced demand for exports in key sectors like textiles and electronics.

Additionally, higher tariffs on imports can escalate production costs, affecting manufacturers and consumers alike. Supply chain disruptions are another significant issue, making it challenging for Indian companies to source essential components. On a global scale, trade wars can slow down economic growth, increase consumer prices, and create business uncertainty, which hampers investment and long-term planning. Countries heavily reliant on global supply chains may face delays and increased costs, further exacerbating the economic impact. Overall, trade wars introduce a level of instability that can hinder economic progress and development worldwide.

Costs: Inflation, Tariffs, and Declining Living Standard

Since the trade issues between the U.S. and China began, other countries such as India and Pakistan, are also affected. Every country has to get used to the frequently dynamic changes in economic and political aspects. Such changes could lead to shortages on the supply side and demand side. Prices of imported raw materials increase due to the tariff impositions, they likely drive up costs of production and eventually enforce consumers to pay a high price in the final good market, cost-push inflation may occur, lay-offs and unemployment, even recession could follow; prices of some final goods which could not be produced domestically also increase due to the tariff impositions, they could lead to a shortage in the market and reduce standards of living, social chaos could occur in some extreme cases. As a result, the increasing tax burden leads to soaring CPI and PPI. India has to pay about $241 million in taxes to the United States due to the tariffs on steel and aluminum, and the number of taxes is expected to rise continuously. As a response, India has increased its taxes rate on US exports and its local tax rate. India however is much dependent on US production. It is unlikely enables to balance of the added tariffs by the US. In addition, India might have to implement a contractionary monetary policy in some extreme cases. Enforcing appreciation in currency helps the country to offset the negative effect of tariffs in the short run; yet such intervention harms the economy badly at the same time by weakening the competitiveness of its exported goods and services, which contracts its aggregate demand. Ultimately it makes life more difficult for Indian consumers, whose GDP per capita is expected to drop under the radiation of a trade war.

Indian Government Pressures

India is faced with numerous challenges due to its bad loan position, which puts pressure on the government. The loans can be categorized into two parts:

foreign aid and domestic debt. India's external debt is at $620 billion. The rupee has depreciated, reaching a low point where, on some occasions, it was hovering around 79000 against the US dollar.

This coincided with Donald Trump's threat to impose a new round of tariffs on $200 billion worth of exports. This trend can be traced to the weakening of the US dollar, which would have a negative impact on India's trade deficit and lead to a chain reaction. When the price of imported goods rises, it also raises domestic product prices, leading to inflation.

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Persistent inflation will reduce demand and impact people's savings, thereby hurting the Indian economy as savings and investment are key factors for economic growth. As inflation rises, the Reserve Bank of India will raise interest rates and take necessary steps to control price rises. This would increase the country's overall borrowing costs and reduce aggregate demand. As the rupee depreciates, the external debt burden of governments and companies rapidly increases. All major stock market indices have suffered. During the US-China trade war, the Indian stock market fell due to cautious investor behavior. The BSE, Sensex, and NSE have experienced regular declines. Despite this, the Sensex is still trading below average at around 37,521. Additionally, the stock market plays a crucial role in fund financing. A downward trend in the stock market signals that investors are losing confidence in the market. Indian companies are facing challenges in financing through IPOs. Undervalued blue chips have to take steps to prevent hostile takeovers.

The current numbers and facts indicate that India and China cannot afford a breakdown in trade. The current bilateral relationship between the two nations is still seen as having great economic potential, despite the brief border war in 1962. Bilateral ties were soon revived and grew stronger, with China becoming one of India's biggest trading partners. China's mass manufacturing capabilities with cost-effectiveness have been crucial to India's trade and manufacturing sector, which relies on China to procure various supplies for its growing production needs.

The trade balance has favored China, causing concern in India. A closer look at the trade balance reveals a significant trade imbalance. While India imports $61.3 billion worth of Chinese products, it only manages to ship $10.2 billion worth of India-made items in return. This raises the question: Can the two countries afford a breakdown in trade?

An interesting fact is that Chinese exports to India consist of value-added products such as electronic equipment, mobile phones, plastics, and machinery, while India's exports to China primarily consist of raw materials like ores, cotton, and mineral fuels. This doesn't align with the 'Make in India' initiative.

Despite efforts to encourage import-substitution and achieve self-reliance in manufacturing domestically, many of India's key foreign exchange earning sectors are dependent on China for various components to produce export- worthy products. Should Indian exporters be cautious of a trade war with China?

William J. Antholis, Managing Director and CEO of the Miller Centre at the University of Virginia, summarizes the India-China trade relationship. "India and China complement each other's strengths and weaknesses," he says. Similar views are shared by Saakshi Kulkarni, Director of the India-China Business Council (ICBC), who states, "Given that China is India’s largest trading partner, a strong trade relation is in the interest of both nations." Dr. Zorawar Daulet Singh, Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, also believes that over the years, the two nations have developed 'a pattern of interdependence.' While this sounds positive, the question of which nation is more dependent on the other needs to be answered.

Advantage India?

Despite the many mutual benefits of Indo-Sino trade relations, the significant trade imbalance suggests that India is more reliant on China, while China may have more to lose than India. While China exports a substantial volume of finished goods to Indian consumers, India primarily exports raw materials to Chinese businesses. Finding a market as large as India for its consumer goods won't be an easy task for China, especially considering that many products are customized for Indian consumers and regulations. On the other hand, India may find it difficult to secure a market for $10 billion worth of commodities, as these goods are mainly intended for businesses.

This trade situation poses challenges for both countries, and a trade ban would undoubtedly hurt consumers and businesses in India. China's status as the world's factory makes it challenging for India to find an alternative sourcing destination that offers a diverse range of products at competitive prices. Experts argue that boycotting Chinese goods may be good political rhetoric, but it would not benefit India's manufacturing sector. According to Singh, boycotting Chinese goods is not feasible as it would be more economically damaging to India than to China. Atul Kumar Saxena, President of the Indian Importers Chamber of Commerce & Industry (IICCI), believes that replacing China as a sourcing destination would significantly increase costs for Indian importers in the short term.

India's significant import dependency on China is evident in the solar energy sector, particularly in the case of photosensitive semiconductor devices, where domestic manufacturing capabilities are inadequate. Narender Surana, MD of Surana Solar Ltd., warns that the cost of solar energy in India would rise by at least 75% if domestically made solar cells were used. He also cautions against imposing safeguard duties on solar modules, as protectionist measures could have disastrous consequences for India's long-term solar program. Overall, while China would suffer from reduced exports, Indian industry would face challenges in sourcing goods at competitive prices, bringing both countries back to a level playing field.

Impact of trade war:-

The global stage has witnessed a resurgence of trade tensions in recent years, leading to a series of trade conflicts between the United States and China. These disputes have had a global economic impact, including in India. As a significant player in the global trade system, India has felt the effects of increasing tariffs, quotas, and retaliatory actions, causing uncertainty and instability that disrupted supply chains and raised prices.

One immediate consequence of trade conflicts on India has been the inflation of prices of imported goods, affecting a wide range of products from electronics to raw materials. This rise in input expenses has contributed to higher domestic prices, worsening inflationary pressures. Additionally, the trade conflicts have disrupted global supply chains, resulting in delays in the delivery of goods and components, affecting Indian businesses that depend on timely imports for their production processes.

The impact of trade conflicts on India's exports has been mixed. While some sectors have benefited from the redirection of trade away from China, others have encountered challenges due to increased competition and retaliatory tariffs. The overall effect on India's export performance has been negative.

In addition to economic implications, the trade conflicts have also had political and strategic effects on India, compelling the country to navigate a careful balance between its strategic interests and its economic ties with both nations. India has aimed to maintain a neutral position in the trade conflict while seeking opportunities to enhance its economic partnerships with other countries.

In summary, the trade conflicts have significantly affected India's economy, disrupting supply chains, raising prices, and dampening investment. India's success in managing the complexities of the trade conflicts will depend on its ability to implement sound economic policies, diversify its trading partners, and invest in its domestic capabilities.

Objectives of The Study:-

Analysis published by The Wall Street Journal in October 2020 found the trade war did not achieve the primary objective of reviving American manufacturing nor did it result in the reshoring of factory production. Though the trade war led to higher employment in certain industries, tariffs led to a net loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs. The trade war reduced the United States trade deficit with China in 2019, but this trend reversed itself in 2020 with the trade deficit increasing back to its pre-trade war level, while the United States overall trade deficit has increased.

Despite the United States trade deficit with China declining sharply from the record high in 2018, during the Trump presidency, the overall deficit increased to the highest level since 2008 as American businesses shifted their imports to other countries to avoid the Trump tariffs. The deficit in goods increased 21% from 2016 to a record high. American exports notably farm goods – were also weakened by retaliatory actions from China, the European Union, and other countries. 28 Economist Stephen Roach writes that by replacing the Chinese portion of the United States trade gap with deficits from other nations that produce goods at higher cost, the diversion of trade to non-Chinese sources has resulted in the functional equivalent of a tax hike on United States companies and consumers.

An analysis published by Chad Bown of the Peterson Institute for International Economics found that if there had been no trade war initiated by Trump and if the US share of the Chinese market had just stayed consistent, then US exports to China would have been $119 billion bigger than what was actually recorded during Trump's administration during 2018 to 2021. Additionally, the trade war incurred further costs of $30 billion in taxpayer funds that Trump used to subsidise the country's farmers to compensate for their lost sales to China from 2018 to 2020. Bown concluded that Trump's trade policies were not worth it for US exporters and that they would have likely been better off without Trump's trade war.

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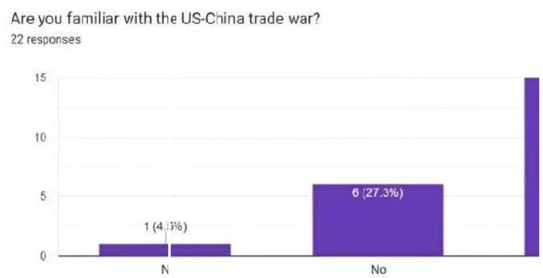
Research Methodology

Research methodology for studying the impact of trade war on the economic growth of India involves a structured approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This data is collected by a google form which was collected the data of age group of 18 to 31

The data is divided into two parts.

Primary Data



This report presents the findings of a survey conducted to assess public awareness of the US-China trade war. The survey involved 22 respondents who were asked the question: "Are you familiar with the US-China trade war?"

Key Findings

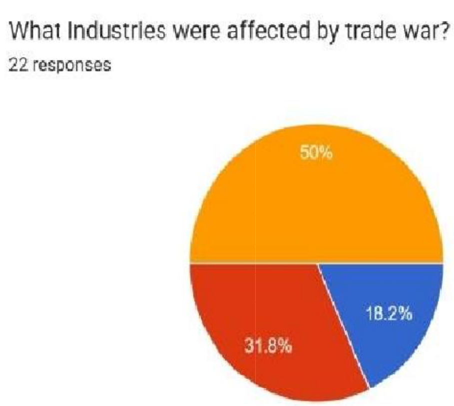
1. Majority Aware: A significant majority of respondents (68.2%) indicated that they are familiar with the US-China trade war.
2. Minority Unfamiliar: A smaller percentage (27.3%) expressed unfamiliarity with the trade war.
3. Non-Response: 1 respondent (4.5%) did not provide an answer.

Analysis

The data suggests that a substantial portion of the population is aware of the ongoing trade tensions between the United States and China. This awareness may be attributed to various factors, including media coverage, discussions among friends and family, and the potential economic implications of the trade war.

However, it is noteworthy that a considerable number of respondents (27.3%) are not familiar with the issue. This could be due to factors such as limited exposure to news, lack of interest in international affairs, or the complexity of the trade dispute.

Secondary Data



this secondary report analyzes survey data collected to understand the perceived impact of the US-China trade war on various industries. Respondents were asked, "What industries were affected by the trade war?"

Key Findings

1. Automotive Industry: The automotive industry was identified as the most significantly impacted sector, with 50% of respondents citing it.

This suggests that the trade war had a substantial influence on the automotive industry in the region.

2. Technology and Medical Equipment: The technology sector and the medical equipment and lithium-ion battery industry were also affected, according to 31.8% and 18.2% of respondents, respectively.

Analysis

The survey results highlight the perceived impact of the US-China trade war on key industries. The automotive industry, a major economic driver in the region, appears to have been particularly vulnerable to the trade tensions.

The technology and medical equipment sectors were also identified as affected. This suggests that the trade war had a broader impact beyond the automotive industry, potentially affecting supply chains, component costs, and market access for various products.

II. CONCLUSION

The US-China trade war, a complex economic and geopolitical conflict, unfolded over several years, significantly impacting global markets, supply chains, and international relations. This in-depth analysis examines the key factors that led to the trade war, its evolution, major developments, and the far-reaching consequences on both nations and the world economy.

The trade war can be traced back to several underlying factors. The United States expressed concerns about China's trade practices, including intellectual property theft, forced technology transfer, and unfair subsidies for Chinese industries. These concerns, coupled with a growing trade deficit with China, fueled protectionist sentiments within the United States.

The trade war was marked by several key developments and negotiations. One of the most significant events was the signing of the "Phase One" trade agreement between the United States and China in January 2020.

This agreement, while partial, provided some relief from escalating tensions and included commitments from China to increase purchases of US goods and services.

The US-China trade war was a complex and multifaceted conflict with far-reaching consequences. While the "Phase One" trade agreement provided some temporary relief, the underlying tensions between the two countries persisted. The trade war highlighted the challenges of managing economic interdependence in a rapidly changing global landscape.

As the world continues to navigate the complexities of the US-China relationship, it is essential to find sustainable solutions that promote fair trade, protect intellectual property, and address the underlying economic and geopolitical challenges. A cooperative approach that recognizes the mutual benefits of economic interdependence is crucial for the long-term health of the global economy.

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