Geo-Political & Economic Impact of Covid-19:

Emerging Challenges & Opportunities and Way Forward for India

<u>Special Panel Discussion with</u>

Mr Subhash Chandra Garg

Former Secretary (Economic Affairs)

Mr Navdeep Suri

Former Indian Ambassador to UAE

Mr Vijay Gokhale

Former Foreign Secretary

Mr Ajay Shankar

Former Secretary, DIPP

Mr Sidharth Birla

Past President, FICCI

Mr Peter Rimmele

Resident Representative to India, KAS

May 27, 2020

Outcome Report

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The Context

The Covid-19 outbreak which started as a health crisis soon turned into a major geopolitical and economic risk for the world at large. With the pandemic having spread rapidly to almost all leading countries including the US, the UK, important countries of Europe like Spain, Italy, France, Germany as well as prominent Asian economies like China and India, it is slowly but surely changing the global order.

It is anticipated that the post Covid-19 world will no longer be the same as it was before. There are experts who believe that the pandemic may trigger more nationalistic sentiments among economies with countries now expected to be more focused on becoming self-sufficient to avoid or at least minimize the consequences of global supply chain disruption that they have experienced in the wake of the pandemic.

While there are other experts who are of the opinion that a crisis of such great intensity could actually help in bringing countries together to develop globally coordinated strategies to combat such exigencies and promote global growth in the future.

As the situation is still evolving, and the future scenario remains largely unclear, it is worthwhile to understand the interplay of events correctly and identify the emerging challenges that must be addressed and opportunities that can suitably be capitalized for furthering the growth of India.

In this context, FICCI in partnership with the India Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) organized a webinar to have deliberations on the topic – 'Geo-Political & Economic Impact of Covid-19: Emerging Challenges & Opportunities and Way Forward for India'.

Programme Overview

FICCI-KAS Webinar on
'Geo-Political & Economic Impact of Covid-19:
Emerging Challenges & Opportunities and Way Forward for India'
Date - 27 May 2020
Time – 4.00 to 5.30 pm

Agenda

Time	Particulars
3.45 – 4.00 p.m.	Participants to join the webinar over the CISCO WebEx Platform
4.00 – 4.05 p.m.	Welcome by **Mr Sidharth Birla**, Past President, FICCI
4.05 – 4.10 p.m.	Introductory Remarks by **Mr Peter Rimmele,** Resident Representative to India, KAS
4.10 – 4.45 p.m.	Input Statements by distinguished panellists • **Shri Subhash Chandra Garg, Former Secretary (Economic Affairs)** • **Shri Navdeep Suri, Former Indian Ambassador to UAE** • **Shri Vijay Gokhale, Former Foreign Secretary** • **Shri Ajay Shankar, Former Secretary, DIPP**
4.45 – 5.25 p.m.	Question and Answers / Interaction with Participants
5.25 – 5.30 p.m.	Summing up and Vote of Thanks by **Ms Jyoti Vij**, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI

Session moderated by Ms Jyoti Vij, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI

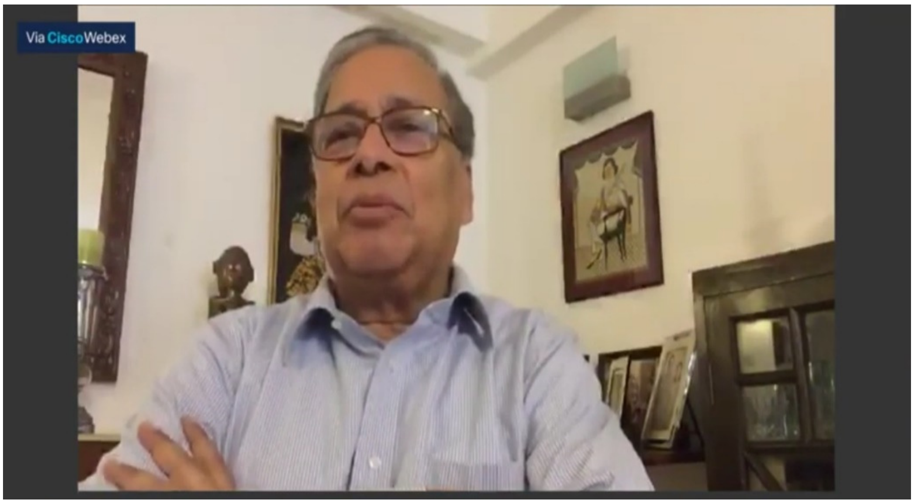
Glimpses

Mr Subhash Chandra Garg
Former Secretary (Economic Affairs), Government of India

Mr Navdeep Suri
Former Indian Ambassador to UAE

Mr Vijay Gokhale
Former Foreign Secretary

Glimpses



Mr Ajay Shankar
Former Secretary, DIPP, Government of India

Mr Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative to India, KAS

Ms Jyoti Vij, Dy Secretary General, FICCI

Mr Sidharth Birla, Past President, FICCI

Key Statements

"Geo-political competition may become intense, but given the linkages created over the years, a journey back to the pre-globalisation era seems difficult", **Mr Sidharth Birla, Past President, FICCI**

"International relations will change significantly, and India is bound to get impacted in more ways than one. It is critical for India to comprehend the essence of these changes, plan how to safeguard itself, and design suitable strategies to capitalize on emerging opportunities", **Mr Sidharth Birla, Past President, FICCI**

"We are facing an unprecedented challenge but with every challenge, there is an opportunity", **Mr Peter Rimmele Resident Representative to India, KAS**

"The impact of COVID-19 will be temporary", **Mr Subhash Chandra Garg, Former Secretary (Economic Affairs)**

"The skills of the workers returning from foreign countries like Gulf can be utilized in India", **Mr Navdeep Suri, Former Indian Ambassador to UAE**

"There is an opportunity in Green Finance. It should come at the top of the agenda as we speak of stimulus agenda globally", **Mr Navdeep Suri, Former Indian Ambassador to UAE**

Key Statements

"There is a huge opportunity for India to make a pitch for sovereign wealth funds and pension funds in other countries", **Mr Navdeep Suri, Former Indian Ambassador to UAE**

"Going forward, globally there is going to be a surge for reducing dependence on China in the global value chains", **Mr Ajay Shankar, Former Secretary, DIPP**

"Post-COVID normalcy, economic activity in India has the potential for rapid growth. We have to plan for it and it is achievable", **Mr Ajay Shankar, Former Secretary, DIPP**

"If we want GVCs to come to India, we need to create islands of infrastructure", **Shri Ajay Shankar, Former Secretary, DIPP**

"We need Industrial policy that looks at getting greater labor-intensive production in India", **Mr Ajay Shankar, Former Secretary, DIPP**

"While the FDI policy is good in India, the last mile connectivity that helps foreign companies to do business in India is missing. This is a golden opportunity to address this bureaucratic process", **Mr Vijay Gokhale, Former Foreign Secretary**

Key Takeaways

✓After the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent control measures adopted by countries, ***economies across the world have faced disruptions which has impacted their growth as well as economic well-being***.

✓The ***global economy is projected to contract in 2020*** and has already entered recession. The global economic growth will continue to remain under pressure in the near to medium-term until a solution to the Covid can evolve.

✓A ***significant lasting change in the geopolitical order can be seen as a consequence of the pandemic***. Many countries are looking at alternates to reduce their large dependence on China driven supply chains.

✓***International relations in future are certain to change significantly***, which will impact India. India must comprehend the essence of these changes and should design suitable strategies to capitalize on the emerging opportunities.

✓***Coronavirus pandemic has triggered a deep recession in Germany.*** A survey conducted by the DIHK – the association of German Chamber of Industry and Commerce – among the German companies, showed that four in five companies expect their revenues to shrink in 2020 and a quarter said business will fall by more than 50%. About 18% said they are threatened with insolvency.

✓DIHK has also projected that the ***German economy is likely to shrink by 4.2% this year*** and may grow by little over 5% next year.

✓The ***stimulus package of 750 billion euros*** approved by the German government to mitigate the impact of the pandemic ***would see Germany's debt to output ratio rise to 70% in 2020*** from around 60% before.

Key Takeaways

✓The ***fine network of supply chains and trade network is important for global economy.*** Going forward, ***economies should nationalize a recognizable size of strategic goods production***, especially to alleviate dependency on one country and make the national supply chains more stable and less prone to any kind of threats like the present one.

✓***India and Europe can provide much-needed counterweight to the growing Chinese power in the Indo-pacific region***. Together they could bring a new impetus to the international fight against terrorism that threatens their way of life.

✓The latest economic data available for India reveals that ***India's monthly GDP loss for the month of April was about 70-75%***, which ***translates to a loss of close to 5-6% of GDP for the entire year***.

✓***If the Indian economy contracts by about 10% this year, it will translate into an income loss of about 20 lakh crores*** for the nation as a whole which will impact everyone.

✓The ***tax revenues will go down by close to about 3-4 lakh crores this year*** and the government is increasing the borrowings which are scheduled to go up from 8 to 12 lakh crores.

✓Amongst the businesses, the ***biggest disruption has been caused to the small and medium scale enterprises.*** India has about 7.5 crores of MSMEs but the impact has been maximum on the smaller enterprises.

Key Takeaways

✓The 3 lakh crore package announced by the government addresses about 45 lakh MSMEs, with ***about 7 crore MSMEs not receiving any support***.

✓The ***effect of pandemic never lasts long*** as human tendency and the rationale of economy work towards bringing back economies into shape once people get over the initial scare. After the Spanish Flu, the global economy actually integrated and prospered much more.

✓The ***impact of the Covid-19 crisis would be temporary***. ***International trade will continue*** to take place though in terms of volume there could be a reduction as people may cut down on consumption.

✓The ***technology has and will enable delivery of services***. Though mode of delivering of services may change but the global integration which the technology has brought about is unlikely to go.

✓***Owing to the geopolitical tensions between China and America, some shift in production might take place***, but by and large the global trade will not decelerate for long.

✓***China will certainly remain a major engine of global economic growth if China is able to stabilize its economy***, maintains growth by stimulating domestic consumption and raising the quality of industry to the level of services. Much of industry that is currently invested in China would remain there as global supply chains would be dependent on China.

Key Takeaways

✓The ***strategic shift in the US policy is likely to bring greater competition between China and the United States***.

✓***India has an opportunity to leverage both the US and China for its economic benefit*** and should position itself accordingly.

✓***India's FDI policy is excellent but the last mile connectivity is lacking***. Therefore though India has an opportunity, until the bureaucratic problems are addressed, policy application alone is unlikely to make difference in India's position.

✓***India should think how quickly to re-strategise so that once normalcy returns, it can start growing at its full potential.***

✓Post the return of normalcy in economic activity, ***India has the potential to achieve rapid growth if it gets right policy instruments and gets its act together.***

✓***India needs an industrial policy which looks at labour intensive manufacturing into India,*** getting greater share of domestic market production in India.

✓***India needs to have sector specific policies which can attract domestic investment as well as foreign investment in labour intensive manufacturing***.

✓To bring global supply chains to India, it needs to create islands of infrastructural excellence.

Key Takeaways

✓***India also needs to re-engineer its regulatory regime***. To make the country business friendly, there is need to create predictability in the way the tax system works, bring greater certainty in the way environment and other clearances are given, etc.

✓***India*** also ***needs to pay attention to ways to reduce the cost of doing business*** in the country.

✓The ***re-engineering of the Indian economy should be in a direction where the growth is investment-led and is led by a transition to green economy***, where India can become one of the global leader in terms of movement towards being net carbon neutral.

✓***Sovereign wealth funds*** have taken a big hit in Europe and in the US because of their huge investments in the hospitality and retail sectors. These ***funds may look at other opportunities around the world.***

✓There is a ***huge opportunity for India as a country which can make a pitch to pension funds in Canada and Australia and to sovereign funds in the Gulf and in Norway.***

✓The ***government has started documenting skill profile of migrants who are returning from the Gulf,*** so that the information can be made available to the industry.

Welcome Remarks

Mr Sidharth Birla, Past President, FICCI extended a warm welcome to the distinguished panelists and all the participants who had joined the event.

In his opening remarks, Mr Birla highlighted that the entire world today is engaged in exploring new ways to control the Covid-19 pandemic. He shared that unfortunately, except for a few regions like South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, the rest economically developed countries like the US, the UK and to some extent Germany, France Italy, have not been able to fully address the disease as they would have wanted. Economies worldwide have faced disruptions which has impacted their growth as well as economic well-being, he said.

He underlined that slowdown of production in China has affected economic activity in almost all countries which source raw materials or products from China. Economic activities also came to a near halt in many countries due to their own shutdowns, but in a great difference from India, much of Industry kept on working in most of other countries. While citing India's experience in this regard, he said that in India the decision to initiate complete shutdown was taken keeping in view the country's peculiarities and demographics, and India in that respect has done well in containing the disease.

According to Mr Birla, almost all corona affected countries have experienced similar demand and supply scenarios over the past three months. He also pointed out that businesses are incurring huge losses and people are facing livelihood challenges. The global economy is projected to contract in 2020 and has already entered recession. He felt that the global economic growth will continue to remain under pressure in the near to medium-term until a solution to the Covid can evolve.

Welcome Remarks

He also cautioned that we may see significant lasting change in the geopolitical order as a consequence of the pandemic. Many countries have realized that they have a large dependence on China driven supply chains and they are keenly looking at alternates, more at the strategic level. India is urging global players to look at India as a future alternative supply base.

He shared that there is an apprehension that protectionism will gain momentum and larger domestic supply chains will become the order of the day across countries. However, he felt that while geopolitical competition may become intense given the linkages created over the years, a journey back to the pre-globalization era would be difficult.

However, he also mentioned that it is almost certain that there will be significant change in international relations, which will impact India in more ways than one. He reiterated the importance of comprehending the essence of these changes and the way global balance can change and that India should safeguard itself and design suitable strategies to capitalize on the emerging opportunities.

Mr Birla invited the eminent group of panelists having decades of experience in interpreting emerging geopolitical and economic trends and their implications for India, to share their views and suggestions and offer guidance on how the Indian industry can prepare to face these challenges.

Introductory Remarks

Mr. Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative to India, KAS

Mr. Rimmele in his opening statement said that Corona is dividing the world further and not uniting it more. We find ourselves in lockdown for now nearly three months into the reign of Covid-19 and so far, it does not look as if the virus is going to loosen its hold over humanity anytime soon. With infections on the rise, casualties mounting, we are primarily concerned with containing the threat by all means possible. The effects of the pandemic that we feel today are only the first harbingers of things to come. Like a shockwave, the pandemic has moved around the globe and upended old certainties. Our world has changed and will change even further and at a faster pace, as weeks, not months, leave alone years, go by.

He said that the discussion during the day's event will revolve around the geopolitical and economic impact of the pandemic as we know it or as far as we expect things to happen, but there could be surprises. The economic repercussions are already being felt around the globe, especially in the global South and also elsewhere. The trade-off between lives and livelihood has become a cruel reality all over the globe, and countries are torn between saving lives on one hand and kick-starting the economies on the other.

While sharing the international perspective, he mentioned about the state of German economy as well as the country's geopolitical aims and policy. He said that coronavirus pandemic is triggering a deep recession in Germany. A survey of German companies conducted by the DIHK – the association of German Chamber of Industry and Commerce – showed that four in five companies expect their revenues to shrink in 2020 and a quarter said business will fall by more than 50%. About 18% said they are threatened with insolvency. Several large companies like Adidas have already taken out massive government-backed loans.

Introductory Remarks

The country's flagship carrier Lufthansa is still in negotiations and has agreed for a government bailout package, but that would be waiting for EU permission.

He added that the research institute said that the economy probably shrank by 1.9% from January to March 2020. As Reuters previously reported, they say the German economy is likely to shrink by 4.2% this year and may grow by little over 5% next year. The institute says that an unprecedented stimulus package of 750 billion euros approved by the German government to mitigate the impact of the pandemic would see Germany' debt to output ratio rise to 70% this year from around 60% before. The Finance Minister vowed to provide additional stimulus after the pandemic. He said that the debt to output ratio could be as high as 75%.

Mr. Rimmele concluded that Germany will suffer immensely, and so will the world from the stoppages of international production and the breakdown of international supply chains. Germany is still the export nation and deeply embedded in these chains. Around the world, he said that we have witnessed political knee-jerk reaction towards more autonomy, also towards more protectionism and reducing reliance on foreign goods, semi-finished goods and raw materials. Mr. Jens Spahn, Germany's federal Health Minister has announced that one of the tenets of Germany's EU Council presidency will be to repatriate important pharmaceutical productions back to Europe.

He also shared that some in Germany have started to believe that the current international setup of global supply chains would remain unchanged for times to come. He pointed out that the global economy is unthinkable without the fine network of supply chains and trade network. The interdependency guarantees not only prosperity of the world economy, but a degree of international peace as well which we cannot risk.

Introductory Remarks

He feels that we should nationalize a recognizable size of strategic goods production, especially to alleviate dependency on one country alone, but at the same time we should try to make our supply chains more stable and less prone to any kind of threat like we have experienced now with fragile supply chains, and this can be called ‘gated globalization’.

While referring to China, Mr. Rimmele said that for decades, the western world had anticipated the peaceful rise of the dragon, but it still has been caught unprepared when China rose and turned aggressive. Though the US has been wary for a long time now, their warnings were not heeded in Europe, but the Chinese influence grew over the past decades.

He highlighted that Germany is not interested in conflict on the world stage. Its economy is based on export and it strives under the conditions of an open market. As such Chinese control of strategic trade routes and resources are becoming increasingly threatening as the communist power has started flexing its muscle politically particularly in the midst of the pandemic, while China and the US continue in their war of words.

He further added that in this newly polarizing world, it is especially important to broaden the field of potential partners. India and Germany share values and aims that should suffice to put the two countries in a closed or even closer working relationship than is already the case. Both countries believe in democracy, rule of law as well as a rule-based multilateral world order. Europe as well as India are interested in maintaining the multilateral order.

India and Europe would be able to provide a much-needed counterweight to the growing Chinese power in the Indo-pacific, maybe also together India and Europe could work to fill the inevitable vacuum in the regional security architecture left behind in the wake of the America's withdrawal from Afghanistan. Together they could bring a new impetus to the international fight against terrorism that threatens their way of life.

He summarized his remarks with a clarion call for renewed and more intense partnership between India and Europe. He said that both are facing unprecedented challenges, both politically and economically, but in challenges, there always lies opportunities to stand closer together and unite over commonalities against common threats.

Key Speeches

Mr Subhash Chandra Garg, Former Secretary (Economic Affairs)

Mr Subhash Garg shared his views on how the Covid-19 pandemic has been dealt with and its consequences and the kind of geopolitical implications that might be there for India.

He said that since there was lot of uncertainty and lack of knowledge about how Covid-19 was spreading and how it can be controlled, the options with which the government came up with was to virtually lockdown, trying to isolate each family from everyone else so that the spread of the virus does not get much traction and can be stopped. India opted for one of the most stringent lockdown, shuttering almost entire industry and services except for some essentials items.

Mr Garg mentioned that the data that has been made available in the month of May shows the kind of impact the lockdown created indicating how stringent the lockdown was. The data shows that the monthly GDP loss in April was about 70-75%, which means that India lost close to 5-6% of GDP for the entire year in the month of April alone if we consider that India produces about 8-9% of GDP in one month.

He also highlighted that India was slightly slowing down even before the Covid crisis. He mentioned that the data for 2019-20 would be released very soon and it is expected to deliver only about 4% growth in that year, which is one of the lowest growth for India in many decades.

Mr Garg mentioned that though the situation is getting a little better, the lockdown has impacted the growth in the month of May also and it is estimated that about 50% of the GDP could have been lost in the month of May as well.

Key Speeches

Given the systemic disruptions and the frictions which are still to be sorted out, Mr Garg suspects that India might lose about one-third of the GDP in the month of June as well. All these put together, India may incur a massive GDP loss of about 40-50% for the entire quarter, and maybe the Indian economy would contract between 5-10% for the entire 2020-21.

He further elaborated that if the economy contracts by about 10%, it will translate into an income loss of about 20 lakh crores for the nation as a whole and everyone will be impacted. The government has already recognized that the tax revenues will go down close to about 3-4 lakh crores and the borrowings will be increased which are scheduled to go up from 8 to 12 lakh crores.

While mentioning about the plight of workers including the migrants, he said that India has about 45 crore workers in the economy. So it is estimated that about 10 to 12 crore workers have lost their jobs due to the Covid crisis, and about 40% of them are migrants. So a little more than one crore migrants who moved from one state to another in the economy, represent only a fraction of the total migrants.

Amongst the businesses, the biggest problem or disruption has been caused to the small and medium scale enterprises, he mentioned. There are about 7 and half crores of MSMEs in the country and the impact has been maximum on the smaller enterprises. He said that the 3 lakh crore package that has been announced by the government addresses about 45 lakh MSMEs, and therefore about 7 crore MSMEs will not receive any support. This is the group which gets affected the most, he mentioned.

He summarised that this is a large problem and everyone is affected - workers, the businesses as well as the government.

Key Speeches

While describing the role of the Government in such situation, Mr Garg said that it is only the government which has the largest means to address such concerns, and the society confers this right to the government. The government can collect revenues in the form of taxes and if required it can borrow as well as print money. That is how the government's authority to meet or to provide as a last resort of assistance is recognized in the society.

This is the reason why the government came up with the stimulus package. But Mr Garg felt that the package is heavily loaded on the credit and liquidity side, and relatively very small component of fiscal support is there in it; about 1% of the 10% of GDP package or about 2 lakh crore of the 20 lakh crore package is the fiscal side. Given the huge income losses of the workers as well as of the businesses, this has been viewed as somewhat not adequate enough to address the situation.

Mr Garg feels that the way the lockdown conditions and the way the economy has been dealt with will have an impact on the spread of virus, but it will also have a greater impact on the three big constituents of the economy – workers, businesses and government.

He expects now the government to slowly unlock the lockdown and the economy. He is of the opinion that if a decision is taken where almost entire economy is unlocked by the end of June and, between June and July, if the whole economy starts working normally, the economic losses will be relatively less than what it is now. But if people remain too scared and remain conservative in their approach and the economy is kept under lockdown, the losses would be much higher.

Referring to the global dimensions of the pandemic, Mr Garg said that the global economy is integrated quite a lot. Every time a big epidemic has taken place, there is a tendency among people to draw into their own shells. But this phenomenon doesn't last very long, according to him. As soon as people get over the scare, human tendency and the rationale of economy work towards bringing back the economy into shape.

He cited the example of another pandemic - the Spanish Flu which was much bigger, where about five crore people lost their lives globally. The Spanish Flu, he mentioned, did not kill global trade and the global production. The economy actually integrated and prospered much more thereafter. So he believes that the impact of the Covid-19 crisis would be temporary - maybe six months, one year or two years, but will not last very long.

Talking about the global trade, he said that there are three types of products that are traded globally including services. One is the resources, and not every country is self-sufficient in every kind of resources. For example, India will never be able to produce adequate amount of oil which it requires and therefore will continue to import oil. The same thing applies to many other commodities, whether it is agricultural products, food, vegetables, natural resource etc. So according to him trade will have to continue. People may take decisions about cutting down on consumption, but that might reduce the volume of trade but it will not likely to go away completely.

The second thing which is of greatest importance now as compared to maybe 35-40 years ago is the great technological integration which has come about. Much of the global economy is now service driven. So the technology is what enables and will enable much more the delivery of services going forward.

Key Speeches

He mentioned that today Indian technology professionals travel to deliver technological services in the US or elsewhere in the world. As the technology has developed, it is now possible that most of those services can still be delivered remotely. So Mr Garg said that though lots of changes are taking place in the mode of delivering but the global integration which the technology has brought about is unlikely to go.

In reference to the global value chains where the industry comes in, he felt that the main argument is around the efficiency and cost reduction. He thinks that the world will be a poorer place if this efficiency gains are sacrificed and countries go into their shells. Mr Garg is of the view that owing to the geopolitical tensions between China and America, some shifting of production might take place, but by and large the global trade will not decelerate for long.

Mr Navdeep Suri, Former Indian Ambassador to UAE

Mr Navdeep Suri presented an overview of some of the geographies that he has worked in and about the geopolitical impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. He mentioned about the losses that the sovereign wealth funds have made in Europe and in the US because of their huge investments in the hospitality and retail sectors. He is of the opinion that these funds therefore may probably look at other opportunities around the world, and India should think of what it can do in this space.

Mr Suri shared that he has been looking forward to the easing up of India's regulatory framework to allow sovereign funds an easier access into India and he feels that the Indian economy needs this long-term capital. He highlighted that this year's budget has made a provision for certain sovereign funds to enable them to go beyond the 10% cap that was imposed earlier on them to prevent from investing excess funds in India.

He feels that there is a huge opportunity for India as a country that can make a pitch to pension funds in Canada and Australia and to sovereign funds in the Gulf and in Norway.

With respect to the migrants returning from the UAE, he mentioned that as per the suggestions made, the government has started documenting the skill profile of the migrants who are returning back from the Gulf, so that the information can be made available to the industry at a time when the industry is trying to cope with the departure of domestic migrants.

Key Speeches

Mr Vijay Gokhale, Former Foreign Secretary

Mr Vijay Gokhale in his remarks pointed out that certain trends were visible globally even before Covid-19 pandemic. The United States becoming less international and more domestic or more America centric; the rise of China and the beginnings of greater competition between the United States and China are some of these trends. There was also the beginning of a sense that both United States and Europe felt that there was a need to reduce dependency on China in global supply chains.

He also mentioned about the industrial trend towards Industry 4.0 or internet of things which meant that there was a lesser dependency on labour and greater dependency on automation. He expects the post Covid-19 world to continue these processes, which will remain uninterrupted. But the question would remain on how quickly these processes will move ahead.

He is of the view that if China is able to stabilize its economy and maintains growth by stimulating domestic consumption and raising its quality of industry to the level of services in high technology, it will certainly remain a major engine of global economic growth. In his view, much of the industry that is currently invested in China is expected to remain in China because global supply chains would still be dependent on China. One thing to be watched for is whether the current Chinese government can attain political stability and restore growth.

With respect to the US economy, he mentioned that if Donald Trump is elected in the US elections in November, there could be increased volatility and policy uncertainty and in case Joseph Biden is elected, then policy environment will be more predictable and the responses to China will be measured. But either way, he thinks that there is a strategic shift in the US policy and that is likely to bring greater competition between China and the United States.

In this context, India has to position itself by recognizing that with both the major countries China and the United States, it has certain concern areas. India is a major exporter to the United States and has trade surplus. With the re-election of Donald Trump or election of Joseph Biden, it is likely to lead to economic intrudes between the two countries. On the other hand, China is a more assertive country and it is more determined to play a larger role in the Indo-pacific region. So India will face some challenges in that area as well.

Nevertheless, Mr Gokhale is of the opinion that there is an opportunity to leverage both the countries for India's economic benefit.

He also shared his observation which he had formed when he was the ambassador to Germany. He thinks that while India's FDI policy is excellent but the last mile connectivity which helps foreign companies to do business in India is still lacking a lot in the country. He said that the German companies for instance find it much more difficult in India to register a business, to get land, water and other provisions, electricity connections, labour, or understanding taxation and legal issues.

He feels that the changing global scenario is a golden opportunity for India, but until these particular bureaucratic problems are addressed, no amount of policy application will make a difference in India's position.

He concluded by completely endorsing the views shared earlier by Mr Subash Garg and mentioned that he too thinks that the global dependency of resources and energy will continue, services and technology delivery too will continue, may be remotely and global supply chains will resume.

Key Speeches

Mr Ajay Shankar, Former Secretary, DIPP

Mr Ajay Shankar in his initial remarks mentioned that as of now nobody has any clear assessment of when the Indian economy or the global economy will recover from the present Covid crisis. He shared three dimensions about the global economy which will influence our thinking going forward.

In the first dimension, according to the view shared by the IMF Chief Economist, it may take as much as five years to get back to the pre Covid per capita income level. The other is that, in the foreseeable future, oil prices will remain low. The third global dimension which Mr Shankar thinks will stay and will gather momentum irrespective of what happens in the next 2-3 months, is the search for ways to reduce dependency on China as the center of global supply chains.

He is of the view that since no one has a clear idea about when India will come back to pre Covid levels, the country should think as to how quickly to re-strategise so that once normalcy returns, it can start growing at its full potential.

One positive factor for India according to him is the fact that the per capita income level in the country is presently very low and for the headroom, the growth is still very high. So if the nation strategises in terms of size and the potential for growth, both economic growth as well as for investment in infrastructure, Mr Shankar believes that post the return of normalcy in economic activity, India has the potential to achieve rapid growth if it gets right policy instruments and gets its act together.

He mentioned that the policy instruments should follow the policy objectives of the country. He explained this with the help of an example. He mentioned that China is India's largest trading partner in goods and all that is imported from China can be made in India. India however needs to think of policy instruments which are a little different from what were used is 1991 reforms keeping into consideration that globally there has been some retreat from globalisation.

He pointed out that China is still not the major provider of frontier technology capital goods to India. Countries from where these goods can be imported include Europe, Japan and with these countries India's trade is still modest. Therefore India needs an industrial policy which looks at labour intensive manufacturing into India and getting greater share of market production in India.

If this is done systematically, then Mr Shankar is of the view that India will be able to bring a part of the global supply chains into India. This is because India is a huge market and if the country gets a larger share of market production in labour intensive areas for instance like toys, etc. India will automatically be in a position to be part of the global supply chains.

But India does not have as yet, sector specific policies, which can attract domestic investment as well as foreign investment in labour intensive manufacturing. Mr Shankar feels that eventually India will need to do that because there is need to create jobs. If India wants to pursue this route and wants the global supply chains to come to India, then it will have to create islands of infrastructural excellence with expressway connectivity to the ports and the airports.

He said that India has succeeded in the IT space because it created IT parks where the infrastructure was at par with the infrastructure available elsewhere in the world, which enabled the sector to compete in the global market. But in manufacturing, India has not done that and hence it is time for India to decide to develop its manufacturing sector by investing public money. Once that is done, it will be easier to approach any company which has its supply chain presently in China. That would happen once we have in place infrastructure that appears attractive enough for companies to do business in India.

Key Speeches

He also urged that there is need to re-engineer India’s regulatory regime. He mentioned that to make India business friendly, there is need to create predictability in the way the tax system works, to bring greater certainty the way environment and other clearances are provided, and move towards third party certification, amongst others.

He mentioned that the current approach of getting states to compete with each other on the basis of being best in terms of ease of doing business has not been very useful. So we have to move away from that and re-engineer the regulatory regime instead. As India re-engineers its regulatory regime, the final thing that it has to pay attention to is how do bring down the cost of doing business in India. He mentioned that since that days when India had a closed economy, the country has unthinkingly increased the cost of doing business.

He shared an example to highlight this point. He said that diesel and petrol are the most highly taxed commodities in India and still they have not been put under the GST. They are a major cost component for all business and therefore ideally these items should be in the GST at the middle level. Similarly. India has built the national highways with toll roads with the toll burden being borne by the businesses. He is of the opinion that the toll burden should be placed on all consumers through levying taxes and not on business.

Therefore there is a need to have serious discussion in the country on how to reduce the cost of doing business, as this factor alone is completely undoing the notional advantage that India has over lower wages.

Though Mr Shankar is of the view that wage cost itself is partly undone by low productivity which is mainly because of the fact that workers' housings are not located close to factories and as they have to travel long distances, they often reach factories feeling tired. Also, Mr Shankar doe not think the country spends enough public money in providing relevant training to the workers which can bring them at par with the productivity level of that of the workers in China. Hence, he feels that there is need to rethink about many aspects and since there is enough time between now and the return of full economic activity post Covid, India should do that be ready to take off.

As a final point, Mr Shankar mentioned that there is need to think of re-engineering the Indian economy in a direction where its growth is investment led and the growth is led by a transition to green economy - an economy where India can become one of the global leaders in terms of movement towards net carbon neutral.

Interventions

Q1. Is China under pressure to push back or is China stronger post Covid and out to settle scores with its adversaries?

A. Mr Vijay Gokhale feels that, at this stage, China's principal focus is on its domestic economy. The country had a traumatic time controlling Covid and the recent statements and appearances of the leadership over the past one and a half months has been directed towards essentially reassuring the Chinese people that the situation will return rapidly to normalcy and that jobs, employment and incomes will be restored to the pre Covid levels. Mr Gokhale does not feel that certain activities which China has undertaken outside in the foreign policy realm, have any particular direct bearing to the situation domestically. The activities are normally assertive that China was doing in the pre Covid era as well. But at this stage, he thinks that China's principled effort is to stabilize its economy, and ensure that it moves towards a domestic consumption and production driven economy, so that it retains as much of the global supply chain as it can and that it scales up its technology and R&D to reach higher levels by 2025. This will make China a serious economic competitor to the United States in terms of technology and that is the focus of the country right now.

Interventions

Q2. What could be the probable job losses in the Gulf region and any possible impact of it on the remittances into India?

A. Mr Navdeep Suri is of the opinion that the job losses are real. He mentioned that in the third week of May, the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi and Consulate in Dubai stated that about 350,000 Indians expressed willingness to come back on the Vande Bharat flights, indicating the magnitude of the job losses. Besides the Covid crisis, the low oil prices have also triggered job losses in the Gulf region. Mr Suri mentioned that in Saudi Arabia for example, the budget of the business houses is made considering oil price of 90 dollars per barrel while in the Emirates about 65 dollars per barrel is considered. Therefore, when the oil price drops to 30, the budget projections go haywire.

He also mentioned that with the economic contraction in the Gulf region, there is going to be much higher pressure on localization of jobs. In Saudi Arabia a similar policy (58.28) was introduced two years back when there was exodus of tens of thousands of Indians from Saudi Arabia. The Omanis are presently pursuing such policy with a renewed vigor. The other countries have also announced similar plans and therefore he feels that India will have to be prepared to accept that certain jobs that were traditionally being performed by expatriates, will now be taken over by local people. He gave some instances of the changing scenario in these countries. He mentioned that in Saudi Arabia, the Saudis nationals are working in retail position and as receptionists in Hotels while Omanis are driving taxis, a scenario which was unthinkable even 5 years back.

So Mr Suri cautioned that India should be prepared to accept that the 9 million Indian population that lives in the Gulf will shrink and this will have an impact on India's remittances from the Gulf. At the same time, he said that discussion are going on regarding the initiative that has been started in UAE and now in Saudi Arabia about how India can move up the value chain in terms of skills.

Interventions

How Indians can go beyond the entry level positions of the blue collared workers and align our skill development programs with some of the vocational requirements that these countries in the Gulf are putting. He mentioned that a lot of work with NSDC in this regard has been done and the first batch of Indians with certificates in the construction and automotive trades has been sent to UAE and they have been chosen for Saudi Arabia.

Mr Suri thinks that there is a short-term disruption due to Covid crisis. However, in the longer term, if India wants to preserve its position as the preferred source of expatriates in the Gulf, it will have to move up the value chain a bit.

Interventions

Q3. Can India come out or recover the economic losses incurred due to Covid-19 crisis in this financial year?

A. Mr Garg said if India can generate a positive GDP again, that would be a recovery for the economy. He is of the opinion that India will not be able to recover the losses to the tune of about 20 to 30 lakh crores incurred or likely to be incurred in the first quarter of 2020-21. Hence the current year according to him will be a contraction year. Though he feels that India can try to recover it next year i.e. in 2021-22. But it will depend upon the kind of policies and the stimulus or fiscal package that will be introduced.

He mentioned about three main buckets in which the stimulus can be provided. One is the normal economy, which constitutes about 75-80% and is most susceptible. This part of the economy can be put back onto the normal course if India introduces right kind of package to bring the businesses into production mode again. There is another part of the economy, which is about 10-12% percent which according to him will suffer permanent damage. This includes industry or services in the transportation, entertainment, food, travel and similar activities. He feels that these industries or activities are unlikely to come back to any degree of normalcy even next year.

For the third segment of the economy, which is digitally driven and constitutes about 10-15%, there is opportunity to make up for the losses and even grow faster. If India can do better on that front, captures even the globally important services, then perhaps the country can make up the losses on the second bucket. If India pursues policies appropriately and have the right kind of package in place, the Indian economy can come back to normalcy in 2021-22, while growth may take a little longer.

Interventions

Q4. What is the possibility of India to get aligned with Japan and Germany as a way to hedge against the US-China trade war?

Q5: Which areas can India and Germany really focus on an immediate basis and how can the human resource support the German manufacturing post Covid?

A. Mr Gokhale is of the opinion that Germany is well invested in India. There are many cities of India, where German companies have presence. In general, German companies have a good impression of India. However, India needs to step up its capacity at handholding and capacity to deliver the last mile connectivity so as to entice German companies to look at India as a market. He feels that when a foreign investor comes to India, the foreign investor does not merely look at the Indian market, but its capacity to also export to a larger region around India, the Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, since many German companies are part of a supply chain, it is important for India to get into those supply chains. He therefore feels that the decision of not joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership discussions or the final agreement is a mistake. As part of the review, he hopes that India can reconsider this matter.

Referring to the large number of people returning from the Gulf, Shri Gokhale mentioned that this is the time when India should create a database of the skills and talents of these workers who are skilled or semi-skilled and have the exposure to new technologies. This can be done at the time of their arrival in India at the airports where they are being monitored as part of the regular Covid screening process. The database should be created so that the Indian industry could access the talent through a single point or single window.

Interventions

He is convinced that a worker belonging to states like Kerala, Telangana or Maharashtra returning from the Gulf, if faced with the prospect of having no job, is capable and willing to move to any other states like Hyderabad (AP) or Chennai (TN) if work is guaranteed to him. And therefore he thinks that if not capitalized on, India would be losing an opportunity in building this database.

He believes that this also is the time when India can consider to have 'one nation one labour card' similar to 'one nation one ration card' that the country has introduced. This will mark the beginning of creating a national database and national skilling training program. He mentioned that the strength of Germany lies not only in its entrepreneurship but in its remarkable skills programs as the country has built a National Labor Service. So India now has this opportunity to do likewise. He feels that this is a time for drastic reform and the idea is also a drastic one. But if India can have 'one nation one adhaar card', 'one nation one ration card', it can certainly have 'one nation one labour card'.

Interventions

Q6. Is India's aspiration to get companies to relocate from China a realistic one and what steps should be taken by India?

A. **Mr Garg** said that for ease of doing business and to bring real competitiveness, India needs to reduce the cost of doing business in the country. India also needs the right opportunity and ability to do business. Higher cost of power, land, labour etc. have made India uncompetitive. To highlight this point, Mr Garg shared that a study has documented that as a result of the trade war which is going on between China and America for the last two years, there has been about 6% shift in America's imports from China to other countries. However, hardly any share of this has come to India, while it went to countries like Vietnam and South Korea. So it is important that India gets its domestic competitiveness in industry in order. India needs some policy measures to get these things done.

Mr Shankar mentioned that India needs a wider debate on this matter, like whether the country wants production and jobs, maybe at a little higher cost to the consumer or the middle class. He mentioned some of the matters which need discussion. For instance, if electricity to Industry is provided at the right rate, the domestic consumer will have to pay more, or to bring GST of petrol and diesel to the middle level of GST, it would be essential to raise GST for many other things. So he feels that a granular discussion on these matters is needed which doesn't take place in the country. Similarly on regulation, detailed discussions do not take place in India, unlike in countries like Germany, where detailed work and discussion go on to arrive at a decision. Mr Shankar is of the opinion that such discussions should take place both at the State level as well as at the Central government level.

Mr Gokhale said that India can learn from the European and German experiences in particular. For instance, Germany decided to preserve its core industry, while consumers took a higher cost. Germany is now on the driver's seat, while the rest of Europe outsource to China and today their economies are hollow

Interventions

Mr Suri reiterated his earlier point that 'Landing Cards' have been prepared for people who are returning back from the Gulf, which captures their skill profiles. These cards are being given to NSDC to place into a central portal which reflect the occupation of the workers, number of years of their experience and their contact details. One the portal or the website is made, the industry will be able to benefit from the information on the workers who are coming back from other countries.

Mr Shankar mentioned that the National Skill Mission faces a huge challenge in finding skilled workers who could actually train people. So he also suggested that the workers coming back to India who are extremely talented should be used to train other workers to create world class workers.

Vote of Thanks

Ms. Jyoti Vij, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI

Ms. Jyoti Vij thanked all the panelists for sharing their valuable thoughts and suggestions. She mentioned that during the wonderful session of the day, some very good points have been discussed. It is now important that some of these suggestions are raised in discussions with the government. so that these can be really implemented

She thanked all the participants for joining and sparing their very valuable afternoon to be part of the event. She extended special thanks to the event partner KAS for always being there to support FICCI.

She concluded by thanking everybody for joining in and for a wonderful discussion.

Shri Subhash Chandra Garg
Former Secretary (Economic Affairs)
Government of India

Mr. Subhash Chandra Garg is a senior civil servant with considerable experience at the highest levels of Government in managing fiscal finances at the provincial and central government levels and promoting capital markets, private enterprise and international investment in India. He also served as India's Executive Director in the World Bank Group representing Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka as well. Recently, he has been appointed as Advisor to the Chief Minister of the State of Andhra Pradesh, a large state of India facing serious resource crunch, with the rank of a Cabinet Minister for assisting the State in resource management and mobilization.

Mr. Garg left the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) on 31st October 2019 after serving for more than 36 years. Mr. Garg served as Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India from 12th July, 2017 to 25th July, 2019, also acted as Finance Secretary of India for a period of five months. His innings in the IAS concluded with a stint as Secretary of the Ministry of Power.

Mr. Garg has graduate degrees in Commerce and Law from the University of Rajasthan, India. He is also a professionally qualified Cost and Management

Accountant and a Company Secretary. He had glorious academic record. He topped the Intermediate Examination of the Institute of the Cost and Management Accountants and the Final Examination of the Institute of the Companies Secretaries of India as well.

Mr. Garg joined the IAS in 1983 securing 4th position in the All India Examination and was allotted to Rajasthan Cadre. For first 15 years of service after probation, (1985-2000), he was in Rajasthan serving in different capacities as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, District Magistrate, Chief Executive of Rajasthan Oil Federation, Rajasthan Roadways and a couple of other public enterprises. He also served in different capacities in the Government of Rajasthan as Project Director of Jaipur Rural Development Agency, Director of Agriculture, Special Secretary of Education and Energy Departments. He also manned a number of positions under the Finance Departments during this period.

Mr. Garg has extensive experience in management of finances, both at the State and the Centre. He was Secretary Budget and Secretary Expenditure of the Government of Rajasthan. He was appointed the Head of the Finance Department, the Principal Secretary of Finance of the Government of Rajasthan at a very young age, from Indian standards, in 2008. He served at this position twice- second time in 2013-2014. Mr. Garg's tryst with the finances of the Centre started with his appointment as a Director in the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance in the year 2000 where, for a period of over 3 years, he handled the matters connected with the World Bank Group and the IMF. He got an excellent peek at the fiscal federal relations in India when he took over the responsibility of managing State Finances Division of the Department of Expenditure in the Ministry of Finance in September 2003. He also served as a Principal Consultant with India's leading public finance research institution- the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.

Mr. Garg was India's Executive Director in the World Bank Group for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka from November, 2014 to July, 2017. During this period, he served on the Board of Directors for the International Bank for Reconstruction & Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), collectively referred as the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). He made signal contribution in refashioning several financing policies of the World Bank, including offering of IDA products on variable rate basis and in hard currencies, besides the usual SDRs. He also played pivotal role in Forward Look discussions and negotiations which defined the 2030 vision for the World Bank Group. He also played a major role in building up case for IFC's unprecedented capital increase.

Mr. Garg was asked to come back a couple of months before his tenure in the World Bank Group was to complete, to take over the responsibility of the Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance. He assumed this responsibility in July 2017. During this period, he was instrumental in presenting three budgets, re-setting relationship with the Reserve Bank of India, authoring three major reports on payments and Fintech space- A report on the Payment and Settlement Act, another report on dealing with the phenomenon of Block Chain and Crypto-currencies and one report on Mainstreaming Fintech. Besides handling all important issues connected with currencies management, infrastructure development of the country and bilateral and regional investment treaties, Mr. Garg was instrumental in successfully concluding first transactions of privatizing six major airports of India in a record time. He was deeply involved in most economic policies issues, whether connected with disinvestment, privatisation or re-capitalisation of Banks.

Speaker Profiles

Mr. Garg represented Government of India in G-20, in several multi-lateral organizations and bilateral dialogue with EU and other major countries. In view of illness of Finance Minister, Mr. Arun Jaitley, Mr. Garg represented India at Ministerial level in several meetings of the Governors of the World Bank and IMF, G-20 Finance Ministers and other Multilateral Forum.

Mr Garg also served as the member of the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). In these two-key position, Mr. Garg played significant role in development of capital and financial markets. He was also instrumental in seeing through that the RBI surpluses are transferred to the Government.

He guided building the National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) as Secretary of the Department and also as its Director and Chairman for two years. He also served on the Board of the largest insurer of India- the LIC. He was also India's Governor on the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Alternate Governor for the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and New Development Bank (NDB) while serving as Secretary, Economic Affairs.

Presently, Mr. Garg involves him with public policy issues- trying to bring together the perspectives of macro-economists, businesses and policy makers by commenting and writing on topical issues of economic and financial policy. His blogs are available at subhashchandragarg.blogspot.com.

Mr. Garg had worked as Consultant of ADB on pension reforms during 2005-09.

Speaker Profiles

Shri Navdeep Suri
Former Indian Ambassador to UAE

Shri Navdeep Suri is Distinguished Fellow and Director, Centre for New Economic Diplomacy at the Observer Research Foundation. He has recently completed a distinguished 36-year career in the Indian Foreign Service, having served in India's diplomatic missions in Cairo, Damascus, Washington, Dar es Salaam and London and as India's Consul General in Johannesburg. He has also headed the West Africa and Public Diplomacy departments at the Ministry of External Affairs.

He was India's High Commissioner to Australia and Ambassador to Egypt and UAE. In a rare gesture, the President of UAE conferred on him the Order of Zayed II, the country's second-highest civilian award. His innovative use of social media in public diplomacy in 2010 also received extensive recognition and two prestigious awards.

Mr. Suri has learnt Arabic and French, has a Masters degree in Economics and has written on India's Africa policy, on Public Diplomacy and on the IT outsourcing industry. His English translations of his grandfather Nanak Singh's classic Punjabi novels have been published by Penguin as 'The Watchmaker' and by Harper Collins as 'A Life Incomplete' and 'Khooni Vaisakhi'.

Speaker Profiles

Shri Vijay Gokhale
Former Foreign Secretary
Government of India

Shri Vijay Gokhale joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1981. His previous diplomatic assignments include postings in Hong Kong, Hanoi, Beijing and New York.

He has also served as Deputy Secretary (Finance), Director (China & East Asia) and Joint Secretary (East Asia) during his stints at the Headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs.

He was High Commissioner of India to Malaysia from January 2010 to October 2013, Ambassador of India to the Federal Republic of Germany from October 2013 to January 2016, and Ambassador of India to the People's Republic of China from January 2016 to October 2017. He served as Secretary (ER) from October 2017 to January 2018.

Shri Vijay Gokhale was Foreign Secretary from January 2018 to January 2020.

Speaker Profiles

Shri Ajay Shankar
Former Secretary, DIPP
Government of India

Shri Ajay Shankar has had rich and varied experience in public service for over forty years, primarily in the fields of industry, the power sector and urban development.

He was a member of the premier Indian Administrative Service which he joined in 1973 and retired as Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion in the Government of India in December, 2009. He played a crucial role in putting together the stimulus packages at the time of the global economic crisis of 2008 which enabled the Indian economy to recover in a short time and again grow at over 8%. The plan for the ambitious Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project was developed under his stewardship. The FDI policy was further liberalized and rationalized. He was the Chairman of the National Productivity Council and of the Quality Council of India and gave greater momentum to their activities. He initiated the setting up of Invest India.

He served for a three year term, November 2011-2014, as Member Secretary of the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC), an advisory body comprising leading Captains of Industry, key Secretaries of Government and eminent Academics. Some of the major recommendations of NMCC have been taken up for implementation by the Government including the National Skill Mission, Facilitating Start-ups, Reform of Labour Laws and reducing the Regulatory burden on enterprises. Sector specific recommendations for breakthroughs in manufacturing in Electronics and IT Hardware, Defence Manufacturing, Civilian Aircraft, Shipbuilding, Electric Vehicles, Steel and Textiles were evolved.

As Joint Secretary and then Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Power he played a key role in enactment of the Electricity Act, 2003, and Rules and policies under it. This created a new liberal framework for the development of the power sector and was one of the major pieces of reform legislation at that time. He was also instrumental in promoting private sector participation in the Power Sector including the Ultra Mega Power Projects. He played a crucial role in the conceptualization and the launch of the national program for completing rural electrification which was launched in 2005 and under which over 1, 00,000 villages have been electrified.

As CEO, Greater NOIDA industrial Development Authority, he was responsible for the development of one of the most attractive Industrial townships and attracting considerable FDI to it. He was Secretary to the Lt. Governor of Delhi for over 5 years, and has also been Commissioner, Kanpur Division and Chairman of the Kanpur Development Authority and was closely involved with issues of urban planning, management and infrastructure development in these metros.

Before serving as Secretary (DIPP), he was Principal Adviser in the Planning Commission looking after Environment and Forests, Water and Sanitation as well as provision of Rural Infrastructure and contributed to the preparation of the Eleventh Five Year Plan in these areas.

He has been a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Centre in Washington D.C. USA. His articles on economic policy issues have been appearing in the national papers and he has also been addressing seminars and conferences on these issues.

Speaker Profiles

He has served on the Boards of major public sector companies such as IDBI, EXIM Bank, NTPC, NHPC, PFC and REC and has also served as an Independent Director on the Boards of HAL and Tata Global Beverages. He is presently serving as a non-executive Independent Director on the Boards of L&T and Invest India. He is also a Senior Adviser at IRADE.

He has been a member of the Committee on Reform of Public Sector Undertakings, Electricity Distribution, Resources for the Power Sector for the 10th Plan, restructuring of HAL. He was closely associated with the design of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission at the time of its launch.

He has recently served as the Chairman of (a) PPP Review Committee of the Railways and (b) Expert Committee set up by Government for Replacing Multiple Prior Permissions with a Regulatory Mechanism for improving Ease of Doing Business.

He has a Masters in Political Science from Allahabad University and a Masters in Economics from Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

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Speaker Profiles

Mr Peter Rimmele
Resident Representative
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Office, India

Peter Rimmele is currently the Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Office, India. He has a First Law Degree from Freiburg University, as well as a Second Law Degree from the Ministry of Justice Baden-Württemberg, Germany and a M.A. in Geography.

After working as, a jurist, judge and lecturer, he took public office as Ministerialrat, Head of Division at the State Ministry of the Interior in Saxony, Germany, from November 1991 on until 2000. There he first served in the Police and Security Department and later in the Local Government Department.

On behalf of the German Foreign Ministry he served in East Timor as Registrar General, Head of Civil Registry and Notary Services (UNTAET), and became later the principal Advisor for Governance Reform for GIZ (German International Cooperation) to the Ministry of Administrative Reform and the Anti-Corruption Commission of the Republic of Indonesia, where he served for 7 years. He then moved to Rwanda, also as Principal Advisor Good Governance/Justice Program. Earlier he was Resident Representative Lebanon, Director of Rule of Law Program Middle East North Africa, Konrad-Adenauer- Stiftung.

Speaker Profiles

Mr Sidharth Birla
Past President
FICCI

Full Name	:	SIDHARTH KUMAR BIRLA
Year of Birth	:	1957
Profession	:	Company Director & Entrepreneur
Current Employment	:	Chairman, Xpro India Limited (an established Polymers Processing and manufacturing company)
Work Experience	:	Director on various corporate bodies since 1977
Areas of Experience	:	Corporate Governance; Strategic Issues; Acquisitions & Divestments; Company Law; Corporate & Financial Structuring; Operating financial management and understanding of industrial/business operations; Private Equity fund – creation, structuring and documentation, etc.

Speaker Profiles

Qualifications & Education :

1. Master of Business Administration (MBA), 1980, IMD, Lausanne, Switzerland
2. Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) (Hons.) in Physics, 1976, Calcutta University
3. Owner-President Management Program (OPM 33), 2002, 03 & 04 - at Harvard Business School
4. Other Executive Education programs
   - Corp. Finance & Strategy Program 1989, Templeton College, Oxford Univ.
   - International Program for Board Members 2000, IMD, Lausanne

At Harvard Business School Boston USA

- What Change Demands of Us, 2001
- Making Corporate Boards More Effective (MCB), 2006
- Private Equity & Venture Capital (PEVC), 2008

Select background :

1. Past President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) (2014) - *(the leading national chamber of commerce in India)*
2. Served as Member of the 19th, 21st and 22nd Council of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, as a nominee of the Central Government
3. Member, Board of Governors, Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani.
4. Member of WPO, (a US-based international organization of chief executives, with local chapters globally)
5. Trustee on family founded educational & religious bodies
6. Alumnus of IMD and Harvard Business School.
7. Served as Director on the Board of International Trade Promotion Organization

   (nominee of Central Government 1999-2002)

Speaker Profiles

Ms. Jyoti Vij
Deputy Secretary General
FICCI

Jyoti Vij is currently Deputy Secretary General, FICCI. Ms.. Vij is a business economist by training with over two decades of experience with Industry Associations. Her main areas of specialization are Financial Sector, Corporate Laws, Corporate Governance and Economic Affairs. She has done several joint projects with World Bank, European Commission, IMF and other UN organizations.

She has also been on some important committees of RBI, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Corporate Affairs. She was part of the Rules Committee of Companies Act 2013 including that on CSR provision as FICCI representative. With her strong Industry and Government network, she has been instrumental in influencing several policy reforms.

About the Partners

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

Established in 1927, FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India. Its history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialization, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies.

A non-government, not-for-profit organisation, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry. From influencing policy to encouraging debate, engaging with policy makers and civil society, FICCI articulates the views and concerns of industry. It serves its members from the Indian private and public corporate sectors and multinational companies, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry across states, reaching out to over 2,50,000 companies.

FICCI provides a platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policy makers and the international business community. FICCI's vision is to be the thought leader for industry, its voice for policy change and its guardian for effective implementation.

About the Partners

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

Freedom, justice and solidarity are the basic principles underlying the work of the Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). The KAS is a political foundation, with a strong presence throughout Germany and all over the world. We cooperate with governmental institutions, political parties and civil society organisations building strong partnerships along the way. In particular, we seek to intensify political cooperation in the area of development cooperation at the national and international levels on the foundations of our objectives and values. Together with our partners, we contribute to the creation of an international order that enables every country to develop in freedom and under its own responsibility. The Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung has organized its program priorities in India into five working areas:

- Political Dialogue and cooperation
- Foreign and Security Policy including Energy Policy
- Economic policy and management
- Rule of Law
- Media and training programmes for students of journalism

In implementing its project and programmes the Foundation cooperates with Indian partner organisations such as think tanks, Government and Non-Governmental Institutions.