BORDERSCAPE
ISSN : 3048-8931, Volume 01, No. 01, January-June, 2024, pp. 22-27

COORDINATED BORDER MANAGEMENT: NEED FOR MORE IMPROVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Because of its rapid economic growth over the course of the last several decades, India has been the centre of attention for people all around the globe. In light of the ongoing global financial crisis, the countries in the region need to take action to increase domestic demand and increase intraregional trade in order to keep the pace of growth going. In order to eliminate impediments that are in the way of business and transportation across the region, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which is the regional component of the United States, has been working in conjunction with its member states. In order to promote regional connectivity in a comprehensive manner, the European System for Cooperation and Assistance (ESCAP) has implemented a variety of initiatives to address institutional deficiencies and fill in infrastructure gaps. Controlling the borders in a coordinated manner is an essential component of the latter. The countries in the region are cooperating with one another to reduce the amount of time that is spent waiting at borders, which is a significant barrier to the efficient movement of goods within the region. It has been established through experience that there are a variety of approaches to coordinating border management, and that in order to prepare for some of the more effective approaches, rigorous planning is required. Customs, in particular, has to reevaluate both its autonomous role and, more importantly, its place within the team that is responsible for coordinated border control.

KEYWORDS*: CBM, Economic, Border, Cooperation.*

Introduction

A major physical feature or a natural boundary was not the basis for the partition of the Indian subcontinent into Pakistan and India; rather, the partition was based on the ethnic composition of the people living on the islands. As a consequence of the ethnic divide, there are a number of difficulties and strategic conflicts that have arisen. There were four wars that took place between the two countries throughout the course of time, and they also became victims of proxy battles. As a result of the following connection between smuggling across borders and terrorist infiltration, the border needed to be protected by specialist troops who were armed with fearsome ammunition and strict rules. As a result

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of the increased security along the border of the eastern front, notably with Bangladesh, the people who lived there saw changes in their day-to-day lives as well as their economic situation.

Despite the fact that international trade and travel across borders were made legal on a global scale, the South Asian peninsula remained one of the places with the least level of international connectedness. The separate approach to border management that was applied under various international agencies, such as the World Bank, included the establishment of distinct entities that provided assistance to border guarding personnel in order to ease cross-border movement without compromising security.

In contemporary culture, it is possible for people to move freely across international boundaries without any problems, even if doing so would result in inefficiencies and delays that are expensive. The most frustrating problems are caused by a lack of collaboration amongst the several government bodies that are responsible for the border. When there is a lack of coordination, it results in inefficient data sharing, redundant processes, and general inefficiency. This, in turn, leads to delays, a decrease in overall profitability, and the degradation of products.

Because of the current state of affairs, it is imperative that a nation implement steps that will improve the interoperability of its borders. In the context of border management, this kind of cooperation is often referred to as integrated border management (IBM) or coordinated border management (CBM). Despite the fact that there can be some slight differences between the two formulations, the ultimate objective of both of them is to improve the efficiency of commerce between countries. higher efficiency leads to higher production, increased dependability, and increased financial gain for all parties concerned. These benefits accrue to all parties involved.

In the context of CBM, any border guarding force is an essential component. Helping to prevent the smuggling of guns and narcotics, providing physical protection at the border, and making it simpler for persons and goods to get security clearances are all things that the Border Security Force (BSF) will do in order to support Customs and Immigration personnel. It is possible that the border patrol agency will need to enhance its technology for document verification and access control in order to do further checks on the security measures implemented. In order to better cooperate among the national agencies in India, there has been an agreement reached between the border guarding forces of Bangladesh (BGB) and India (BSF). The two nations issued a joint press statement in which they expressed their commitment to working together on Coordinated Border Management.

These agreements are important for the synchronization of other agencies, such as customs and immigration, as well as information exchange, which is necessary for more effective border management. Additional to the security and related coordination between the two border guarding forces, these agreements are also necessary for the synchronization of other agencies. The International Control site (ICP) in Attari is the only important CBM site on Pakistan's western borders. However, in terms of physical, security, and surveillance infrastructure, this ICP has emerged as a model for CBM that might be utilised elsewhere on Western borders. This is despite the fact that tensions between the two countries have an influence on the operation of the ICP.

In view of some best practices that have been implemented internationally, the following recommendations are proposed in order to improve CBM in India:

- In order to significantly enhance CBM, there is a need for political commitment on both the national and international levels.
- In order to facilitate the exchange of data between different agencies and the assignment of responsibilities for various security and management aspects, it is necessary to establish a robust legal foundation. Additionally, the selection of the "core" border agencies, such as the police and district administration, to be included in the initial programme, in addition to the Border Security Force (BSF), is also a consideration.

- It is necessary for the agencies to have a comprehensive understanding of one another and to come to a consensus about the common data that will be collected and the manner in which it will be provided to all of the participating agencies.
- It is possible that other departments may be added to CBM, despite the fact that the Department of Border Management is now in the lead when it comes to managing and coordinating with all necessary authorities in order to bring stakeholders together.

Mid-level managers ought to be involved in the process of developing and making decisions regarding the system. This is due to the fact that every border has its own set of circumstances and requirements, and it is necessary to obtain input from regional managers and border guard force commanders before making significant alterations to the physical and security aspects of the infrastructure.

In order to make the Common Border Management (CBM) system as effective as any other intuitive organisation of world standards, which is why border guarding professionals are vital, the government of India is working along with the governments of other nations. The units that are responsible for protecting the border need to be modernised, made more proactive in their adaptation to emerging technology, and included into the process of formulating policies within the context of CBM.

The Coordinated Border Management Approach of India

As a backup plan, the development of land routes has always received a very small amount of funding and effort. This is because India's wide coastline, which is where the bulk of its foreign commerce takes place, is peppered with various ports. Many of these ports are located along the coast. Now, however, things are starting to change as a result of the expansion of intraregional commerce, and land routes need to be constructed and constructed. India has made significant progress in this regard as a result of the establishment of the Land Port Authority of India (LPAI)18, whose mission is to oversee the construction of thirteen Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) along the nation's international borders with Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Myanmar.

This is a move that India has taken. The authority was founded by the Department of Border Management, which is included under the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India. In order to encourage business across international borders, preparations are now being made to provide these border crossings with all of the modern conveniences. The following are some of the amenities that will be available: immigration points, currency exchange warehouses and cold storage, hotels and restaurants, scanners, quarantine laboratories, customs processing, and parking facilities.

One of the responsibilities of the LPAI is to provide an institutional framework that allows various agencies to coordinate and ease the performance of a number of activities at the institutions of higher learning (ICPs). Near the border between India and Pakistan, the first Internet Control Point (ICP) went live towards the end of 2011. In order to ensure that these ICPs are functioning properly, it is essential to monitor their operational processes, as well as their institutional structure for interagency coordination and their engagement with peers in neighboring countries. All of these components ought to be replicated in other places if they are successful.

Cross-Border Trade Efforts in India

The World Customs Organisation defines coordinated border management (CBM) as an effort to build official regulations, procedures, and communication channels in order to achieve more effective and efficient regulatory operations. CBM is an acronym that stands for "coordinated border management." Both cross-border regulatory agencies that operate inside the same country and coherent regulatory institutions that operate across borders are included in this category. By working together, the trade nations have the potential to lower their wasteful resource use and improve their value.

Considering that Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Nepal are India's closest neighbours, and since these countries are significant to India's "Neighborhood First" and "Act East" goals, CBM is an essential component in the framework of the BBIN. Despite the fact that land ports only account for a relatively

small percentage of India's total commerce, they have a considerable influence on the diplomatic ties that the country maintains with its neighbours. Trade via land ports is essential for the development of confidence between parties.

It is beneficial to healthy relationships, helps in the process of restoring trust deficits, and stabilises boundaries by reducing friction. Border commerce is beneficial to both the economic growth of the local region and the broader development of the area. In addition, nations that are landlocked, such as Nepal and Bhutan, are solely reliant on India for their goods trade with third countries. There is even more reason to assume that national and international border control bodies should work together in order to more effectively manage commerce and travel movements in a way that is in accordance with compliance criteria. This is because of the limits that have been mentioned.

Figure 1 illustrates the several actions that India has done throughout the course of its history in order to encourage cooperation and commerce with its neighbours. For the purpose of streamlining immigration, customs, security quarantine, and other related operations, Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) have been installed at border crossings.

These ICPs are maintained by the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI). In addition to providing modern infrastructure like as weighbridges, parking spaces, warehouses, inspection sheds, and more in a single convenient location, these ICPs make it feasible for people and goods to cross the border without any interruptions.

Among the most important commercial hubs that connect India with Nepal, the Raxaul-Birunj border crossing in Nepal is one of the most important passageways. There is a substantial amount of strain on the capacity of the infrastructure due to the fact that this border crossing accounts for around forty percent of Nepal's imports, which include more than four billion dollars from India and more than three billion dollars from other areas. Despite this, the very crowded border crossing has been much more bearable ever since the Integrated Check-Post (ICP) was constructed at the border between Raxaul and Birgunj in the year 2018. The difference is seen even on Nepalese territory: the daily traffic has fallen from 800 trucks to 400 or 500, with the bulk of those automobiles now approaching the ICP via a bypass. This is a significant improvement.

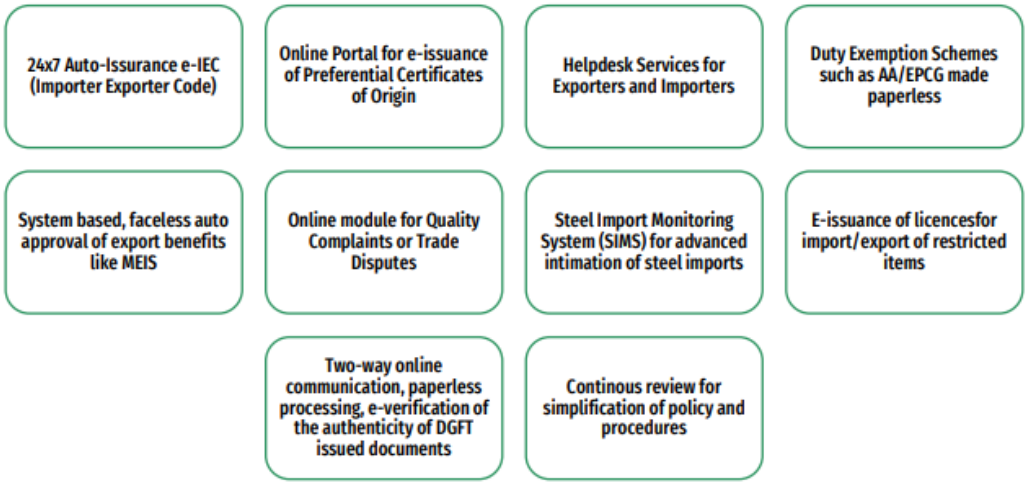

Figure 1: Actions India has Made to Promote Commerce

Application of CBM

It is possible to initiate cross-border agency cooperation via the use of bilateral agreements, memorandums of understanding, or policy statements; nevertheless, in order for the collaboration to be effective, there must be a solid legal framework between the countries that are participating. Both the

Greater Mekong Sub-Region Cross-border Transport Agreement (GMS CBTA) and the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Goods in Transit are examples of regional cross-border transport agreements that have contributed to the coordination of border management.

Implementation of CBM	
External Motivation	**Intrinsic Motivation**
External motivation can include the intent to implement a bilateral or multilateral agreement that may further include – Mutual Recognition Agreements, Free Trade Agreements, Regional Integration Agreements, and Multilateral Trade Agreements etc.	*Intrinsic motivation can include enhancing one's own competitiveness, infrastructure creation (border ports, seaports etc.), enhancing the quality of service or addressing security or regulatory bottlenecks.*

It is possible that one or both of the aforementioned internal and external motives, or both of them working together, might provide the required push to undertake coordinated border control. It is essential to keep in mind that the development of both of them is contingent upon the political will of higher institutional authorities. These authorities have the potential to serve as a catalyst for the efficient administration of borders by the Customs and other regulatory agencies.

Conclusion

It is evident that a wide range of ideas and methods are used in the field. In order to help those considering similar policies in other countries learn from the experiences of those already in place and to support those that are, this paper aimed to highlight some of the most successful coordinated border management strategies from the Asia-Pacific region. Regional connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region is vital due to the need to boost demand both within and across regions. Using the assistance of its member countries, ESCAP has tackled this issue from two angles. First of all, it has created an institutional framework to promote infrastructure investment via the Trans-Asian Railway, the Asian Highway, and the planned dry port arrangement. Second, it is tackling the non-physical impediments with a comprehensive strategy. The latter mostly depends on well-coordinated border security. The combined impact of these activities will support the growth in the Asia-Pacific region. They'll bring about the free flow of goods and people in the not-too-distant future, which will boost trade, create more jobs, and raise income. The World Customs Organization (WCO) Council came up with the concept of "Customs in the 21st Century" in 2008 with the intention of improving customs operations all over the world. One of the ten pillars that support this vision is an enhanced border management system (#10b to be specific). The World Customs Organization (WCO) is now suggesting coordinated border management as the third pillar of its SAFE Framework of Standards. This recommendation is being made in an attempt to better improve international supply chains. Through the consolidation of the Customs-to-Customs network and the Customs-to-Business connection, a single pillar would be established. According to the information presented in this article, a number of island nations located in Asia and the Pacific are working towards this target because they are aware of the significance of effective border management in reducing the amount of time required for travel.

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