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AN ANALYSIS OF POST LIBERALIZATION TRENDS OF FOREIGN TRADE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Foreign Trade has been one of the most significant determinants of economic development in a country. The foreign trade of a country consists of inward and outward movement of goods and services, which results into outflow and inflow of foreign exchange from one country to another country. During present times, International trade is a vital part of development strategy and it can be an effective instrument of economic growth, employment generation and poverty alleviation in an economy. Indian foreign trade has come a long way in value terms from the time of gaining independence in 1947. The total value of India's merchandise exports increased from in 1950-51 to in 2014-15. Under the Central government's campaign "MAKE IN INDIA", new projects will be coming up in the future in our country. The study investigates the trends and pattern of India's foreign trade since 1991-2015.

KEYWORDS

India, post liberalization trends, foreign trade.

JEL CODES

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INTRODUCTION

India's foreign trade policy was highly restrictive and central to the growth strategy. It was a major factor in India's poor growth performance. After independence in 1947, India's primary task was to end disruptions caused by partition and the establishment of a new government. In 1950-51 period, when the First Five Year Plan (FFYP) was promulgated, consists largely of a listing of infrastructure and other government projects which were under way. Nowadays, role of foreign trade has increased manifold. At present, no country can remain in isolation from rest of world. Every country is exporting/importing goods, services and making different capital transactions with other countries. India's direction of foreign trade has exhibited a structural shift during the last decade. Trade volume and trade share of emerging and developing economies has increased while the share of conventional trading partners has showed a declining trend. India's merchandise exports reached a level of US \$ 312.61 billion during 2013-14 registering a growth of 4.06 percent as compared to a negative growth of 1.82 percent during the previous year. Despite the recent setback faced by India's export sector due to global slowdown, merchandise exports still recorded a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15.79 per cent from 2004-05 to 2013-14. The Trade deficit in 2013-14 was estimated at US \$ 137.46 billion which was lower than the deficit of US \$ 190.34 billion during 2012-13. A sharp rise in exports in May-July 2014 more than outweighed the deceleration characterizing subsequent months. Notwithstanding export growth roughly halving in Q2, the overall increase in exports in April- September 2014 was 6.5 per cent, up from 6.3 per cent in April-September 2013. Even though the overall export growth was a shade better in April-September 2014 than the corresponding period of 2013-14, it was concentrated in a few major sectors. Growth impulses mainly emanated from four sectors, viz., engineering goods, petroleum products, readymade garments and basic chemicals and pharmaceuticals which accounted for 58 per cent of the total value of exports. Other sectors, viz., gems and jewellery, electronic goods, oil meals and iron ore contributed negatively to export performance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the composition of India's foreign trade and balance of payment.
2. To assess the growth of Foreign Trade in India's in terms of exports and Imports.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is explanatory and descriptive in nature. It is based on secondary data collected from authenticated sources. The data has been compiled from economic survey of India and yearly economic report of India. The time period of study has been taken from 1991 to 2015.

ANALYSIS**1. Trends in India's Foreign Trade**

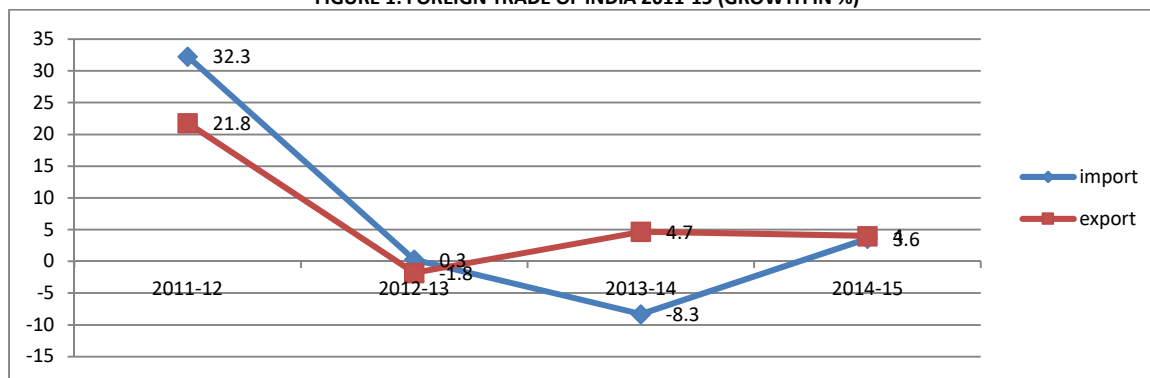
India's total merchandise trade increased from US\$ 467 billion in FY2010 to US\$ 757 billion in FY2015. Exports from India have increased at a CAGR of 11.6% from 179 billion in FY2010, to US\$ 310 billion in FY2015. India's Export to GDP ratio increased from 13.3% in FY2010 to 15.6% in FY2015. Foreign Trade Policy 2015-2020 aims at increasing India's merchandise and services exports to US\$ 900 billion by FY 2020. Table 1 shows the trends of India's foreign trade.

TABLE 1: TRENDS IN INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE

S. No.	Year	Exports	% Growth	Imports	% Growth	Trade
1	2004-2005	83,536	30.85	1,11,517	42.7	-27,981
2	2005-2006	1,03,091	23.41	1,49,166	33.76	-46,075
3	2006-2007	1,26,414	22.62	1,85,735	24.52	-59,321
4	2007-2008	1,63,132	29.05	2,51,654	35.49	-88,522
5	2008-2009	1,85,295	13.59	3,03,696	20.68	-1,18,401
6	2009-2010	1,78,751	-3.53	2,88,373	-5.05	-1,09,621
7	2010-2011	2,51,136	40.49	3,69,769	28.23	-1,18,633
8	2011-2012	3,05,964	21.83	4,89,319	32.33	-1,83,356
9	2012-2013	3,00,401	-1.82	4,90,737	0.29	-1,90,336
10	2013-14(P)	312,610	4.06	450,068	-8.29	-137,458

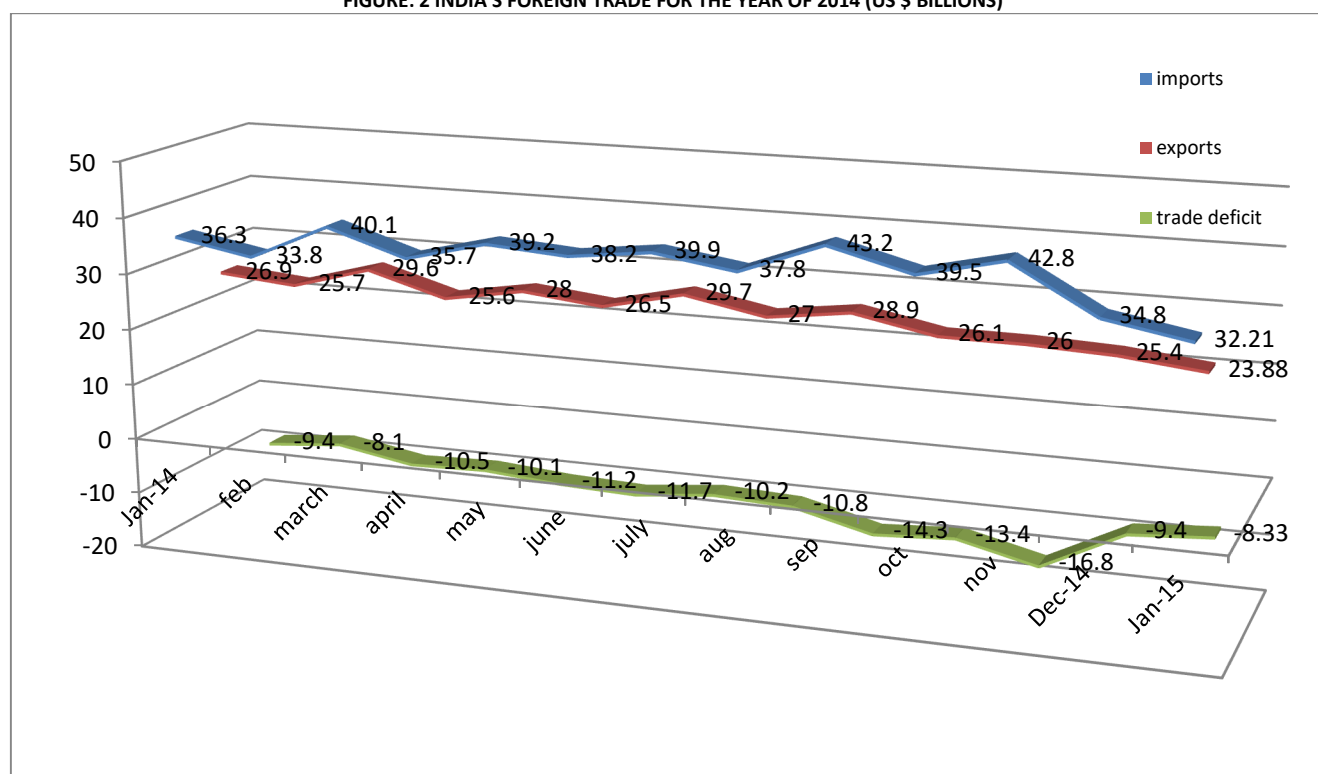
The below given Figure 1 & 2 shows the trends of India's foreign trade:

FIGURE 1: FOREIGN TRADE OF INDIA 2011-15 (GROWTH IN %)



Source: Economic Survey, 2015

FIGURE 2: INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE FOR THE YEAR OF 2014 (US \$ BILLIONS)



Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2015

2. Trends in Balance of Trade

Balance of trade is the difference in the value of total exports of visible material goods and the value of total imports of visible material goods. Our imports have continuously been more than our exports, resulting into unfavorable balance of trade. It is clear from table 2 that India's balance of trade has been continuously unfavorable.

TABLE 2: BALANCE OF TRADE (Rs. in Crores)

Year	Balance of Trade (Exports-Imports)
1990-91	(-) 10635
2001-01	(-) 27302
2007-08	(-) 356448
2008-09	(-) 547452
2010-11	(-) 540818
2011-12	(-) 879504
2012-13	(-) 1034843
2013-14	(-) 810423

Source: Economic Survey 2014-15; RBI Bulletin April, 2015.

3. Trends in Overall Balance of Payments

Overall balance of payments includes balance of payments on current account and capital account. Through, economic reforms of 1991, efforts were made to attract foreign investment. This resulted in more capital receipts and our overall balance of payments turned favorable. Trends in overall balance of payments are shown in table 3.

TABLE 3: OVERALL POSITION OF BALANCE OF PAYMENTS (Rs. in Crores)

Year	Balance of Payments on Current Account	Balance of Payments on Capital Account	Total Balance of Payments (Current + Capital Account)
1990-91	(-) 17366	(+) 12895	(-) 4471
2001-01	(-) 11431	(+) 39093	(+) 27662
2007-08	(+) 47952	(+) 96042	(+) 143994
2008-09	(-) 180626	(+) 244863	(+) 64237
2010-11	(-) 210100	(+) 269600	(+) 59500
2011-12	(-) 376000	(+) 307500	(-) 68500
2012-13	(-) 479600	(+) 500300	(+) 20700
2013-14	(-) 187750	(+) 283804	(+) 96054

Source: Economic Survey 2014-15; RBI Bulletin April, 2015.

Balance of payments on capital account is positive for the last many years and it has made the overall balance of payments positive and has helped to increase forex reserves of India. In 2011-12, overall balance of payments was negative, because of global recession resulting in slow growth in inflow of foreign investment and slow growth of exports. In year 2013-14, with the global economic recovery and expected future growth of Indian economy, balance of payments on capital account was favorable by Rs. 283804 crore. It has made the overall balance of payments positive. On March 27th, 2015, India's forex reserves were US \$ 341.38 billion.

4. Trends in Balance of Payments (Current Account)

India's balance of payments turned unfavorable in the post-independence era. During Second World War India's balance of payments remained favorable. During war time, India exported large quantity of goods to allied nations and imported very small quantity of goods from them. England owned India sterling equivalents to Rs. 1733 crores. But in post-partition period, India's imports far exceeded its exports.

TABLE 4: INDIA'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS (Current Account)

Plans	Balance of Payments on Current Account (Rs. in crore)	Plans	Balance of Payments on Current Account (Rs. in crore)
First Plan	(-) 42	Tenth Plan (2002-03)	(+) 19987
Second Plan	(-) 1725	(2003-04)	(+) 47952
Third Plan	(+) 1951	(2004-05)	(-) 12174
Fourth Plan	(-) 2015	(2005-06)	(-) 43737
Fifth Plan	(+) 3082	(2006-07)	(-) 45343
Sixth Plan	(-) 11384	Eleventh Plan (2007-08)	(-) 68914
Seventh Plan	(-) 38313	(2008-09)	(-) 131614
Eighth Plan	(-) 59832	(2009-10)	(-) 180626
Ninth Plan	(-) 62715	(2010-11)	(-) 210100
		(2011-12)	(-) 376000
		Twelfth Plan (2012-13)	(-) 479600
		(2013-14)	(-) 187750

Source: Statistical Outline of India, 2012-13; RBI Bulletin April, 2015.

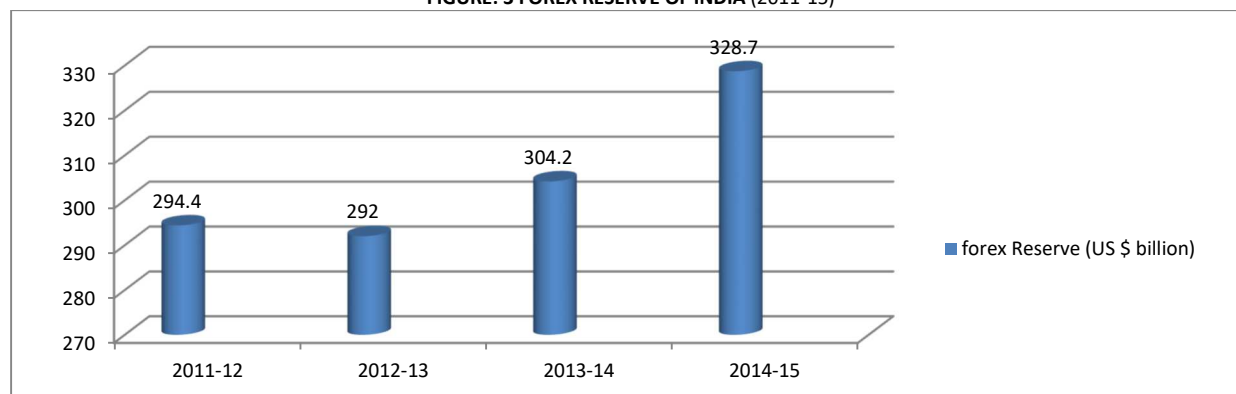
The deficit of balance of payments in each plan is shown in table 4. Deficit of India's balance of payments on current account during the pre-planning period i.e. 1947-1951 was of the order of Rs. 240 crore. In 1949, rupee was devalued but the situation didn't improve. During the first plan (1951-56), it was Rs. 42 crore only. But now in year of 2013-14, this deficit is Rs. 187750 crore.

5. Balance of Payments Crisis

In India, deficit of balance of payments has been rising continuously since 1980-81. For instance, in 1980-81 BOP on current accounts was adverse to the tune of Rs. 2214 crore and it rose in 1990-91 to Rs. 17367 crores. The current account deficit averaged to 2.4% of GDP during the period from 1980-81 to 1990-91. Withdrawal of non-residents deposits also adversely affected the foreign exchange. The gulf crises of 1991, led to an unprecedented crisis in the balance of payments. The immediate impact was the rise in the oil import bill. The remittances from Indian workers in the gulf area were declined. All these resulted in an unprecedented rise in BOP deficit. The foreign exchange reserves declined to the lowest level. Forex reserve was less than even 1 billion US dollars in 1991. In order to meet the payments of essential imports the government was forced to pledge gold reserves of RBI with UK. There was no other alternative before the government but to take loans from international financial institutions. These institutions granted loan on the condition that economic reforms in the form of liberalization, privatization and globalization are to be immediately implemented. This resulted in the emergence of new economic reforms. Consequently, now our overall BOP is in surplus.

The forex reserve is an important component of international finance. Increase in forex reserves of a nation is a healthy sign. These reserves work as safety net in the situation of domestic or global financial crisis. The trends in forex reserves are shown in figure 3.

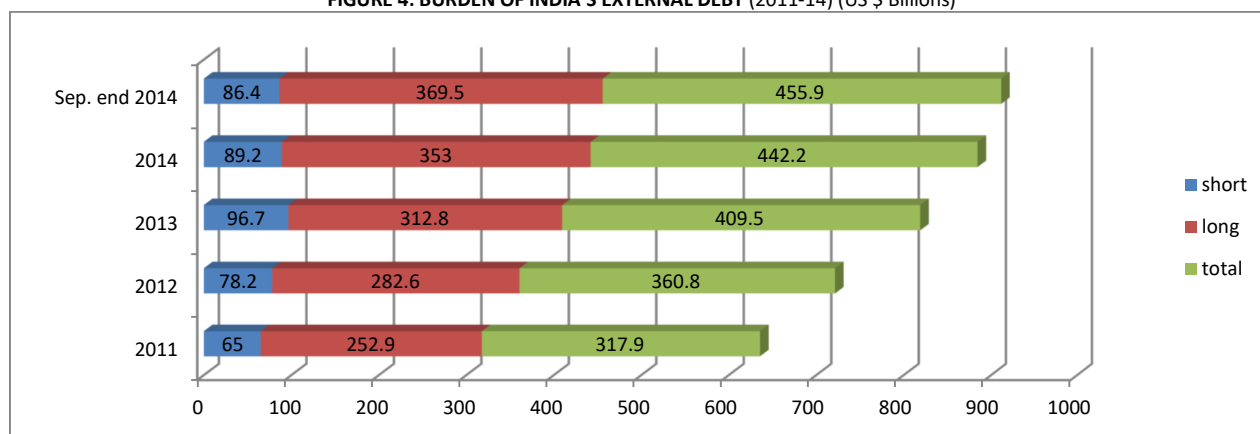
FIGURE: 3 FOREX RESERVE OF INDIA (2011-15)



Source: Economic Survey, 2015

External borrowings include loans from foreign governments, loans from international financial institutions, loans from foreign banks and deposits made by non-residents. The external borrowings of developing countries have increased over a period of time. The developing nations raise large amount of external borrowings to finance their development programs. The Burden of India's External Debt is shown in figure 4.

FIGURE 4: BURDEN OF INDIA'S EXTERNAL DEBT (2011-14) (US \$ Billions)



Source: Economic Survey, 2015

SUGGESTIONS TO CORRECT DISEQUILIBRIUM IN THE BOP

The main factor accounting for disequilibrium in balance of payments is the excess of imports over exports. Two measures are, therefore, called for to correct this disequilibrium. The exports should be promoted and imports be discouraged. For this, import substitution should also be resorted to. To cut down imports and encourage exports, it is essential that agricultural, industrial and mineral production be increased. Jute manufactured products; tea and coffee are important export items of India. Besides, government of India should enter into trade agreements with other countries, encourage foreign investment, develop attractive tourist places for foreigners in the country, impose restriction on non-essentials imports etc. The GOI should set up SEZs to boost exports from these areas. As crude oil is the largest item of our imports, so government should find out alternate sources of energy and should develop efficient mass transport system. It will help reduce the demand of crude oil in India. There must be also promotion of social awareness for less use of gold as status symbol.

CONCLUSION

The narrowing of India's trade deficit in April- September 2014 argued well for India's overall balance of payments. However, the deceleration in export growth in recent months has heightened downside risks in a difficult international trading environment. On the import side, further softening of international prices of key commodities may help contain the level of imports, although the rising gold imports may offset this advantage and turnout to be the key determinant of overall imports. Besides this, the upturn in non-oil non-gold imports since May 2014 may gather momentum as domestic activity gains attraction.

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