
An Inquiry to the Problems and Prospects of Indo-Bangla Trade in Agartala Land Customs Station

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The objectives of this study are to report the perception of the respondents about the problems and prospects of cross border trade in Agartala Land Customs Station (LCS). A Schedule comprising 35 questions with personal interview has been used to collect the data with a sample size of 150 respondents consisting of 100 exporters-importers and 50 laborers from Agartala LCS using different non-probability sampling techniques. Different statistical tests like Factor Analysis, Descriptive Statistics, Student's t-test and Pearson's Chi-square test has been performed to assess the support for the hypotheses. Through factor analysis, five major factors are extracted. Based on such factors, Student's t-test and Chi-square test are carried out. The findings indicate that the Agartala LCS is a modern LCS having latest technologies but lacks basic amenities. Lack of sufficient place for loading-unloading and parking, traffic jam, delayed clearance of consignments, revenue losses during temporary suspension of trade due to political disturbances in Bangladesh, unprecedented conflict between BSF and laborers are the major problems. It suggests that the basic infrastructure needs to be improved; problems of parking and loading-unloading space, traffic jams, and high duties should be solved for accelerating the cross border trade and smooth functioning of LCS. The results indicate for the improvement of basic infrastructural facilities and for prompt amendment in some key policies affecting the bilateral trade.

Key Words: Border Security Force (BSF), Factor Analysis, Indo-Bangla trade, Land Customs Stations (LCS), Pearson's Chi-square test and Student's t-test.

JEL Classification: C83, C88, F1, F2, F10, F18, F40.

INTRODUCTION

India and Bangladesh have always shared strong cultural, linguistic and geographical ties. In their bilateral trade too, they have been natural markets for each other. However, there have been much concern related to this bilateral trade and initiatives have been taken time and again to increase this trade flow. India and Bangladesh offer natural markets for each other's export products. In their mutual trade, they enjoy the advantages of reduced transaction costs and quicker delivery due to geographical proximity, common language and a heritage of common physical infrastructures. A casual glance at the regional map will show that Bangladesh is India-locked while the North-East India (the so-called seven sisters and Sikkim) is Bangladesh-locked (Inoue et al., 2004). Mehta (2003) states that while Bangladesh does have good access to the sea, the North-East India has few realistic options to break out of its land-locked status. The principal features of India-Bangladesh trade relations are as follows: First, India is one of the most important sources of imports of Bangladesh, i. e. 1112 percent of Bangladesh's total imports (legal and official imports) originate in India. Secondly, there is a very large illegal trade; illegal imports are estimated to be almost as large as legal imports and illegal exports as small. Legal and illegal imports most probably tantamount to more than 20 percent of total imports of Bangladesh. Illegal trade is encouraged by an easy

access across long common borders; tariffs and non-tariff barriers, including cumbersome customs procedures for legal imports, make illegal trade attractive; the risk premiums and transaction costs of illegal trade seem to be outweighed by restrictions on and transaction costs of legal trade. In the globalized world, country borders ought to be arbitrary lines on the map. But Anderson & Van Wincoop, (2001) have shown that informal trade barriers still do exist and inhibit trade flows, particularly so in the developing countries. This can arise due to a host of factors such as, complex customs procedures, which sometimes are changing, capacity constraints given limited facilities and/or corruption at the border.

India's comparative advantage in the Bangladesh market started asserting itself and Indian exports registered unprecedented growth (Sikdar et al., 2006). Bhattacharyya (2004) states that, Indo-Bangla trade has been lopsided and tilted highly in favor of India over the years. In spite of several attempts made by both trading partners to reduce the trade gap, it remains a mirage. Indo-Bangla trade has been hovering at around USD 1 billion over the years, even after the conclusion of three rounds of Preferential Trading Arrangements (PTAs) under the aegis of South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA). Kabir (1988) has found that Bangladesh's export and import demands are exchange rate inelastic while income elasticity is greater than unity. Lawless (2013) shows that experience in geographically nearby markets increase the probability of entry into a market and reduce the probability of exit. Moreover, the volume of trade (once trading) is determined by variable costs which, in the context of international trade, will typically depend on distance.

The Land Custom Station (LCS) at the India-Bangladesh Border at Agartala has a large facility providing transit, customs and immigration and cargo handling services for goods and passengers traveling between Bangladesh and North-East India. The central architectural concept for the LCS centers on the idea of the Portal. Akhawara LCS is the second

biggest land port along the Bangladesh border after the Petra pole-Beanpole check post in West Bengal. It is one of the most important international trading land ports in eastern India, with an average of 200 Bangladeshi trucks loaded with goods entering Tripura every day. Customs and immigration facilities, weigh bridges, security and scanning equipment, currency exchange booths, internet facility, cargo process building, cargo inspection sheds, warehouse and cold storage, health and quarantine facilities, clearing agents, banks, scanners, closed circuit televisions, public address systems, isolation bay, parking, cafeteria, hotels and other public utilities are available in Agartala LCS. The principal items of export-import through Agartala LCS include rice, readymade garments (RMG), jute, tea, other agriculture products, livestock, fish, dry fish, cement, rod, forestry, beverages, biscuits, potato chips, wood and wood products, paper and paper products, leather, chemicals, non-metallic minerals, plastic and bamboo made products and so on. There has been a massive expansion of border trade between India and Bangladesh through Tripura. Our neighboring country exported goods worth INR 2450 million along Tripura frontiers in 2012-2013 (Statistical Survey, Govt. of Tripura). But after its inauguration in November, 2013 some of the major problems have crept out ranging from temporary suspension of trade to lack of parking space, insufficient space of loading-unloading, dumping ground and even the shortage of basic amenities for traders and laborers. This paper tries to address these pertinent issues and to find out the permanent solution.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relevant volume of empirical research on the Indo-Bangla trade conducted on the problems of LCS is very less in number although studies have been conducted on the other aspects of such trade. Some of the relevant literature on such dimensions has been studied and the findings are incorporated in this review of literature section chronologically for the construction of questions of the schedule-the

tool for data collection of the present research problem.

• Pre-2000 Studies

Maniruzzaman (1975) indicates that smuggling of raw jute to India since immediately after independence borders with India are visually open, the Bangladesh government's decision to withdraw ban on raw jute export to India on First January, 1972 provided a free hand to smugglers in illegal trading of not only raw jute but other goods as well. In addition to smuggling, following independence right through to the end of 1974 for these reasons a series of acts of sabotage took place in Bangladesh, most of which centered around jute mills and jute go downs (warehouses). Ahmed (1983) finds that fires in the jute ware-houses became a daily affair causing further reduction in the level of jute exports. Chaudhari (1995) has made an attempt to measure the extent of informal trade between the two countries. Bakht (1996) has considered the composition of cross-border illegal trade. Hossein & Rashid (1999) highlight the economic as well as political nature of the bilateral trade deficit problem. They conclude on the basis of Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) indices that the two countries are at a similar level of development. But the authors show that despite this observed structural similarity, the sharp devaluation of India's currency aided by various non-tariff barriers has caused a huge deficit for Bangladesh in their bilateral trade. In their opinion, this deficit is a matter of serious concern, as it creates a sense of deprivation in the mind of the smaller country and the consequent mistrust between the two countries imperils the goal of regional cooperation.

• Post 2000 Studies

Rahman (2000) observes that the issue of bilateral trade deficit is important for its political and economic implications and solicits cordial cooperation between the two countries for improvement of the situation. Eusufzai (2000) considers the India-Bangladesh trade deficit in the

context of trade between a small country and a large neighbor. He argues that the trade liberalization of Bangladesh and the persistence of non-tariff barriers by India heighten the possibility of an increasing trade deficit that may cause de-industrialization and increased unemployment in Bangladesh. On the basis of their primary survey; Taneja & Pohit (2000) conclude that Bangladesh has a deficit with regard to informal as well as formal trade. Roy and Chakraborty (2000) locate the comparative advantages of India vis-a-vis Bangladesh. In their paper, they have developed three linear programming models, which maximize foreign earnings of India and Bangladesh at given world prices subject to material balance and factor endowments of the economies. This is in the same line of thought as Ten Raa and Chakraborty's (1991). But although Roy & Chakraborty (2000) have made some humble attempts, a more comprehensive approach towards the analysis of the possibilities of bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh is still lacking. Taneja (2001) finds that most of the items that enter illegally from Bangladesh to India are of third country origin and traders use this channel to evade the high tariff and trade restrictions that are imposed on these goods by India. With India's liberalization of trade, these goods will enter India directly from the producer country and, as a result, Bangladesh's informal trade deficit is likely to increase further. Bangladesh and India have also substantial informal trade on account of the large porous border between the two countries. Sobhan (2002) reports that the small figure of Indian exports of other agriculture to Bangladesh as revealed by the actual or observed trade figures in contrast to the free trade figures can be explained in terms of the existence of a high tariff on Indian fruits and vegetables imposed by Bangladesh (at over 40 percent level). Similar such import restrictions are also applied to Livestock exported from India. Thus, with free trade, livestock exported from India to Bangladesh will obviously record a manifold increase. This is, however, desirable in view of the fact that currently 1.5 million Indian cattle per annum are informally imported into Bangladesh.

Sawyer & Sprinkle, (2004) document that the importance of intra-industry trade is increasing throughout the world and hence it is also relevant in the context of Bangladesh-India bilateral trade. The existence of a long common border between the two countries enhances the possibility of intra-industry trade between them. Furthermore, intra-industry trade does not require complete specialization in the production of a final good on the part of a country, so even a less developed country can take advantage of intra-industry trade to expand its export volume. One major factor contributing to the fall in raw jute export was the large scale. Rahman (2005) argues that the bilateral trade deficit is important from the viewpoint of regional integration of South Asian Countries. He shows that like trade in commodities, there is also a deficit in trade in services, particularly in education and health. Bangladesh and India have also substantial informal trade on account of the large porous border between the two countries. De & Bhattacharyya (2007) suggest that trade liberalization is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one. To achieve any substantial progress in bilateral and regional trade among the countries in South Asia, the utmost priority should be given to developing infrastructure facilities. Added to this, complementary policy reform in the transport sector, accompanied by improved procedural and operational efficiency, is essential to support trade liberalization in South Asia. Sengupta (2007) reports that, opening up of trade further by giving duty-free access to Bangladesh's exports is one important way of bringing about closer economic ties that could help in tackling other bilateral issues. The intensity of trade relationship between the South Asian countries with special emphasis on India is analyzed. Bun, Klaassen, & Tan (2007) show that an enormous increase in bilateral trade flows is not merely driven by economic growth of this region, but is in fact a consequence of its regional integration policy. Raghuramapatruni (2011) based on a Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) index, identifies potential commodity groups that could contribute toward enhancing regional trade flows in

South Asia. Hussein (2013) concludes that, though trade is an economic issue but it may also come under the influence of different approach to deal with Bangladesh. In all accounts India is one of the largest sources of Bangladesh's import while its export trade with India is a meager one. The Bangla-India trade is characterized by both formal and informal trade in an increasing rate. Rapid and significant import liberalization policy of Bangladesh has been responsible for sharp increase in Indian legal and illegal imports to Bangladesh. Ahmed (2013) finds that, it is not merely the volume and value of trade but also the composition of trade that is problematic. Bangladesh's exports to India are mostly primary products (raw jute, jute goods, fish, mineral distillates, and fruits are the top five exports), but its imports have a more diverse structure (cotton products, vehicles, machinery and appliances, electrical equipment, and organic chemicals). It is noteworthy that while more than 90 percent of Bangladesh's exports to other countries consist of manufactured products, its exports to India reflects a completely different picture. Basher (2013) indicates that no wonder that Bangladesh's export to India, although increasing over time, is still very meager. In fact, the low level of intra-regional trade is a unique phenomenon of South Asia, which coexists with increased integration of the region with rest of the world, and identified as the South Asian Conundrum. He adds that the economic structure of India is different from that of the other main export destinations of Bangladesh. As a result the kind of Bangladeshi products which are in demand in western countries differs from that which are in demand in India. Based on the labor intensity of country's merchandise and service export, Bangladesh can be characterized as a labor exporting country. Rashid (2013) documents that, although India has granted Bangladesh duty-free access to all items except tobacco and liquor; there exist several types of duties. Altogether it comes to around 15 percent and this discourages the Indian importers to buy goods from Bangladesh. Furthermore, Bangladeshi

exporters often face a serious problem because of the non-acceptance of test certificates issued by Bangladesh Laboratory for certain products like soap, jamdani saree, RMG and food products. In the absence of testing facilities in the locality, the samples are sent to far away laboratories (even to Chennai) and such lengthy process impedes growth of Bangladesh trade with India. Roy (2013) concludes that, no relationship of India with an immediate neighbor is as complex as it is with Bangladesh. In an era of globalization marked by a phenomenal growth of science and technology, Bangladesh and India cannot lag behind. Khan (2014) suggests that, there is an urgent need that more LCSs be established to facilitate smoother trade transactions. Basic infrastructure facilities like warehousing and storing facility, road connectivity etc. has to be properly developed. Proper banking facilities particularly letter of credit facilities have to be further strengthened. It is quintessential for improving trade ties that both India and Bangladesh that they should disassociate its trade ties from political logjam like boundary dispute in form of enclave's issues or water sharing issues. Most importantly the bilateral trade agreements which have been entered into between India and Bangladesh should be implemented in letter and spirit; and they should not be just paper tiger or rhetoric.

RESEARCH METHOD

This section attempts the rationality and scope of the present research, research objectives, research design, data collection and schedule design, sampling design, instrumentations and procedures are included in the discussion.

Period of Study: May-June, 2014.

Rationality, Scope and Impact of the Study

The present study attempts to add a new vista into the domain of existing literature of Indo-Bangla bilateral trade. The prior literature indicate that several studies like composition, volume, direction, impact of foreign trade policy, free trade and the like

has been carried out by the researchers worldwide but no such attempt so far been made about the problems and prospects of Indo-Bangla trade through Agartala LCS. It motivates the researcher to take this relevant problem to unearth the causes of problems of Agartala LCS and to suggest a robust permanent solution.

The purpose of this study is to report the problems causing frequent halt of cross border bilateral trade through Agartala LCS and their probable solution to all the stakeholders in general and importers-exporters, laborers and policy makers in particular. The study is confined with the respondents-importers-exporters and laborers to assess their perceptions about the problems and prospects of doing bilateral trade through Agartala LCS.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the present study include:

- To analyze the perception of the respondents about their problems in doing cross border trade in Agartala LCS.
- To suggest the ways of proper managing of trade.

Research Design

Exploratory research design is used in this present study to obtain insights into the different aspects of the problems of bilateral trade through Agartala LCS and strategies to resolve the same. Survey approach is used as it is suitable when a researcher is trying to obtain a broad and representative overview of a situation (Fisher, 2007). The choice of the suitable survey method depends on the context of the specific research and the advantages of the chosen method over the other options (Malhotra, 2010; McDaniel & Gates, 2010). Fixed alternative questions are used as it is easier for the respondents to answer and it enabled comparability of answers, facilitated coding, tabulation and interpretation of data (McDaniel & Gates, 2010; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2010). In order to minimize the risk of comprehension and ambiguity problems,

definitions of key question concepts are made available to the respondents especially it translated into Bengali to the laborers for their easy understanding; as suggested by Peytchev, et al. (2010).

Firstly, to carry out the study, all the importers-exporters and the laborers of Agartala LCS are assumed as the study population of which 100 importers-exporters and 50 laborers are selected with Roscoe's (1975) rule of thumb, which states that taking any sample between 30 and 500 is adequate; which is also recommended by Tabachnick & Fidell, (2013); MacCallum, et al., (1999). The sample has selected with the mix of different non-probability sampling techniques like Quota, Judgmental, Convenience and Snowball; as suggested by Green, Tull and Gerald (1999).

Secondly, In the light of the stated objectives of the present study and insights from prior studies, a schedule is developed with 45 items and a protocol interview has conducted with 15 potential respondents to carefully assess their understanding of the questions and doubts are clarified as per their query as suggested by Diamantopoulos et al. (1994). There after a pre-test with a small group of respondents (20) is conducted as suggested by Zikmund & Babin (2012) to check for clarity of questions, relevance and completeness. Protocol interview and pilot study is conducted to know whether the items and the underlying construct used are (1) important, (2) measurable and (3) feasible to accomplish. From the 45 items generated through literature survey, total 35 items are retained for the final survey. Results of the pilot survey also have given good indication of how the model could emerge in the larger study. Further, a little modification to the schedule content, format and wording is made based on the outcomes of the pre-test.

Finally, the eventual sampling is selected on the basis of Quota, Judgmental, Convenience and Snowball sampling. At this stage a base of 100 has been taken into consideration as it is very difficult to

know the exact number of exporters-importers and laborers. Further, it is difficult to collect data from each and every trader and laborers hence on the basis of 2:1 ratios between traders and laborers the study is carried out i.e. 100 traders and 50 laborers.

The data collected through questionnaire have been further processed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)-20. The statistical tools used for the purpose of data analysis are Factor Analysis, Student's t-test and Pearson's Chi-square test.

Measures

A close ended schedule with a 5 point Likert scales has been used for analyzing the perception of the respondents. The 5 point scales in the schedule ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) is used. According to Cooper (2000), this type of scale is considered to be an interval scale. The study has revealed that majority of the respondents are men (97 percent), in their middle age (42.50 percent), having education up to Madhyamik (57 percent), General (48 percent) and married (83 percent). Most of the respondents believe that the time for clearing shipment is delayed after LCS starts functioning (2.9691) while least number of respondents perceive that there should be more bank branches and ATMs (2.9597); further they believe that the amount of levy has increased in LCS (2.8255), Govt. of India promotes foreign trade (2.8054), the parking space is very small (2.6514), Agartala LCS is equipped with latest technology (2.5302), Govt. of Tripura is showing positive attitude to promote bilateral trade (2.4564), there is a shortage of basic amenities (2.4430), the loading unloading space is insufficient (2.3691), the conflict between BSF personnel and laborers should be resolved through negotiations (2.2966); and Bangladesh Government should promote trade (2.2953).

To measure the effectiveness of the schedule are tested for its reliability. The value of Cronbach's alpha is found to be 0.804. The value has found to be more than 0.6; hence, the schedule is valid to be used for the purpose of analysis, as the research is an exploratory one (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and

Tatham, 2005). The Bartlett's test of Sphericity (Pallant, 2005) relates to the significance of the study and thereby shows the validity and suitability of the responses collected for the problem being addressed through this study, as well as tests the presence of correlations among variables. A small value less than 0.05 of significance level (with Chi square value 1526.325) has been recommended suitable for the study (Kline, 1994). On the basis of the results it implies that the data-set is fit for conducting factor analysis. On the factors obtained through factor analysis the Student's t-test is applied to see if there is any difference in the opinion of men and women respondents on the factors so obtained.

Procedure, Tools and techniques used

For the purpose of data collection, a close ended schedule along with personal interview is used for the purpose of the study so as to get reliable response from them. The respondents are asked to fill up the questions carefully and doubts have clarified whenever requested. After successful completion of the process they were thanked for their cooperation. The data collected are then further processed using SPSS-20. Factor analysis, non-parametric tests mainly Student's t-test, Chi-square test has been used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is used in this study with the objective of identifying the underlying structure among the 38 variables in the analysis (Hair, et al., 2010). Between the two methods of EFA, viz. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Common Factor Analysis (CFA), the former method is identified as the suitable method for this study, as the primary objective is to identify theoretically meaningful underlying factors (Ho, 2006). Eigenvalues are used to determine the number of factors to be extracted. Since Eigenvalues of 1 or greater than 1 are considered to be significant (Ho, 2006), all other factors were discarded. The Eigen value or latent root is the sum of squared values of factor loadings relating to a factor (Krishna

swami & Ranganatham, 2007). Items on all factors, with factor loadings less than 0.30 are deleted from the analysis. According to Zilmer & Vuz (1995), communalities below 0.30 suggests that few variables are associated and thus a suitable factor model may not emerge. Therefore, such values need to be removed from the scale. In this study all the values in the communalities are above 0.50, thus indicating that the variables provide a sufficient explanation for the factor solution. Single item factors are also excluded from the analysis from the standpoint of parsimony (Lawson-Body, Willoughby & Logossah, 2010).

PCA method of factor analysis is used, resulting in a final instrument of 25 items representing five distinct factors. These five factors extracted through factor analysis, explains 85.114 percent of the variance evidenced in the quantitative data. This percentage of the variance is regarded as sufficient to represent the data (Pett, Lackey & Sullivan, 2003). Cronbach's alpha is used in this study to assess the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha, also referred to as the coefficient of reliability describes how closely related the items are as a group in defining the construct. Community shows the total amount of variance, the original variable shares with all the other variables included in this analysis. It is the squared multiple correlation of the variable as predicted from the factors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The individual factors with their corresponding factor loadings, together with Cronbach's alpha, communalities and the Eigenvalues are tabulated below.

Factor analysis is used to uncover the latent structure of a set of variables. It is used to determine the smallest number of factors that can best represent the problems faced by the respondents in Agartala LCS and strategies for their solution. Factor analysis has been chosen as a method for data reduction, since it is suitable for identifying correlations among variables in complex sets of data (More & Rowley, 2013).

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Table: 1 Govt.'s support in foreign trade

Items	Factor Loadings	Communalities
Govt. of India promotes foreign trade.	.859	.811
The attitude of Govt. of Tripura for bilateral trade is positive.	.839	.777
Bangladesh Govt. is committed to improve bilateral trade.	.813	.559
LCS Agartala is equipped with latest technology.	.782	.927

Factor 1 - Govt.'s support in foreign trade

Factor 1 is assigned the name of 'Govt.'s support in foreign trade' which explains 47.752 percent of the variables and includes four items with statistically significant factor loadings ranging from .782 to .859 and Cronbach's alpha .822.

Table: 2 Infrastructural Problems

Items	Factor Loadings	Communalities
The space for loading-unloading is not enough.	.770	.927
The traffic system in LCS area is traditional.	.762	.945
The Number of bank branches and ATMs are very few.	.754	.893
The time for clearing of shipment is delayed.	.681	.945
The LCS lacking basic facilities like canteen, drinking water and sanitation for laborers.	.636	.936
The parking space is very small	.589	.743

Factor 2 - Infrastructural Problems

Factor 2 is assigned the name of 'Infrastructural Problems' which explains 14.251 percent of the variables and includes six items with statistically significant factor loadings ranging from .589 to .770 and Cronbach's alpha .808.

Table: 3 Impacts of Unavoidable Issues

Items	Factor Loadings	Communalities
The trade frequently remains suspended due to political tension of Bangladesh.	.759	.915
The suspension of trade adversely impacts the state's revenue collection.	.711	.901
The BSF personnel sometimes involved in conflict with the laborers.	.675	.927
The amount of duty has increased after LCS starting functioning.	.630	.883
Due to lack of parking space the traffic jam in Akhaura road is a common phenomenon.	.586	.657

Factor 3 - Impacts of Unavoidable Issues

Factor 3 is assigned the name of 'Impacts of Unavoidable Issues' which explains 12.542 percent of the variables and includes five items with statistically significant factor loadings ranging from .542 to .759 and Cronbach's alpha .766.

Table: 4 Required Infrastructural Development

Items	Factor Loadings	Communalities
LCS authority should improve basic infrastructure.	.844	.715
Govt. should acquire more lands for dumping ground of imports and for parking.	.782	.884
More number of bank branches and ATMs should be opened.	.729	.548
There must be adequate provision for drinking water, canteen and modern sanitation system.	.677	.577
More number of warehouses should be constructed.	.615	.612

Factor 4 - Required Infrastructural Development

Factor 4 is assigned the name of 'Required Infrastructural Development' which explains 5.972 percent of the variables and includes five items with statistically significant factor loadings ranging from .615 to .844 and Cronbach's alpha .758.

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Table: 5 Required Policy changes

Items	Factor Loadings	Communalities
The duties should be reduced at LCS Agartala.	.840	.902
The traffic system should be modernized.	.822	.845
The labor unions should settle the conflicting issues with proper negotiations with the BSF.	.763	.798
The LCS formalities should be more rationalized.	.726	.713
All the documentation should be cleared through online.	.657	.659

Factor 5 - Required Policy changes

Factor 5 is assigned the name of 'Required Policy Changes' which explains 4.596 percent of the variables and includes five items with statistically significant factor loadings ranging from .657 to .840 and Cronbach's alpha .739.

From the Table 6, we get the Eigenvalues which are the variances of the factors that have been extracted by using PCA method. Five factors have been extracted for this study whose Eigen value is greater

than 1, as they explain nearly 85 percent about the total variables taken into account. The rotation sums of squared loadings shown in the table represent the distribution of the variance after the Varimax rotation. Varimax rotation is an orthogonal rotation which is commonly used, as it tries to maximize the variance of each of the factors in such a way that the total amount of variance accounted for is distributed over the five extracted factors.

PCA has been carried out in order to analyze the various components. PCA is a classical method. This linear transform has been widely used in data analysis and comparison. PCA is central to the study of multivariate data. PCA of a data matrix extracts the dominant pattern in the matrix in terms of a complementary set of score and loading plots. The PCA gives the following result:

A statistical analysis (t-test) has been applied to understand the perception of respondents on the basis of occupation towards factors affecting their experience of cross border trade in Agartala LCS and the strategies to manage the same efficiently. On the basis of the above five components, the five hypotheses have been generated for the study. The five null hypotheses for the study have been tested using SPSS.

Table: 6 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.938	47.752	47.752	11.938	47.752	47.752	7.591	30.364	30.364
2	3.563	14.251	62.003	3.563	14.251	62.003	5.220	20.882	51.245
3	3.136	12.542	74.546	3.136	12.542	74.546	4.803	19.221	70.457
4	1.493	5.972	80.518	1.493	5.972	80.518	2.433	9.733	80.190
5	1.149	4.596	85.114	1.149	4.596	85.114	1.231	4.924	85.114

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

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The null hypotheses are:

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference between the traders and laborers in their perception that Agartala LCS is technologically modern and governments promote bilateral trade.*

Where, N= Sample size, T= t-test value, d.f. =degrees of freedom, P= probability value. The Mean perception score of trader and laborer respondents is 0.81249. The impact of occupation towards the perception that Agartala LCS is technologically modern and governments promote bilateral trade factor is statistically not significant as (P= 0.074>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis H01 is accepted, i.e. there is no significant difference between trader and laborer respondents in their perception that Agartala LCS is technologically modern and governments promote bilateral trade.

H₀₂: *There is no significant difference between the traders and laborers in their perception that Agartala LCS suffers from a number of infrastructural problems.*

Where, N= Sample size, T = t-test value, d. f. = degrees of freedom, P = probability value. The Mean perception score of trader and laborer respondents is 0.04785. The impact of occupation towards the perception that Agartala LCS suffers from a number of infrastructural problems factor is statistically not significant as (P= 0.147>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis H02 is accepted, i.e. there is no significant difference between trader and laborer respondents in their perception that Agartala LCS suffers from a number of infrastructural problems.

H₀₃: *There is no significant difference between trader and laborer respondents in their perception that in Agartala LCS due to some unavoidable circumstances trade remain suspended which adversely affect the state's revenue collection.*

Where, N= Sample size, T = t-test value, d. f. = degrees of freedom, P = probability value. The Mean perception score of trader and laborer respondents is 0.03145. The impact of occupation towards the perception that due to some unavoidable

circumstances trade remain suspended which adversely affect the state's revenue collection factor is statistically not significant as (P= 0.192>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis H03 is accepted, i.e. there is no significant difference between trader and laborer respondents in their perception that in Agartala LCS due to some unavoidable circumstances trade remain suspended which adversely affect the state's revenue collection.

H₀₄: *There is no significant difference between trader and laborer respondents in their perception that in Agartala LCS the basic infrastructure should be developed.*

Where, N= Sample size, T = t-test value, d. f. = degrees of freedom, P = probability value. The Mean perception score of trader and laborer respondents is 0.14570. The impact of occupation towards the perception that in Agartala LCS the basic infrastructure should be developed factor is statistically not significant as (P= 0.161>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis H04 is accepted, i.e. there is no significant difference between the trader and laborer respondents in their perception that in Agartala LCS the basic infrastructure should be developed.

H₀₅: *There is no significant difference between trader and laborer respondents in their perception that Required Policy should be changed.*

Where, N= Sample size, T = t-test value, d. f. = degrees of freedom, P = probability value. The Mean perception score of trader and laborer respondents is 0.12486. The impact of occupation towards the perception that Required Policy should be changed factor is statistically not significant as (P= 0.155>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis H05 is accepted, i.e. there is no significant difference between trader and laborer respondents in their perception that Required Policy should be changed.

Pearson's Chi square test has been conducted to test the hypotheses generated under Part C of the schedule. A chi-square test for independence is applied when two categorical variables are

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generated from a single population. It is used to determine whether or not there is a significant association between two variables.

The hypothesis to be tested for Part C of the schedule is as follows:

- 1 H₀₁: There is no association in the perception of respondents towards the strategies of managing cross border trade in Agartala LCS.
- 2 H_{A1}: There is association in the perception of respondents towards the strategies of managing cross border trade in Agartala LCS.

Table: 7 Govt.'s support in foreign trade Factor

Occupation	N	Mean	T	d. f.	P
Traders	100	.81249	.931	102	.074
Laborers	50				

Table: 8 Infrastructural Problems Factor

Occupation	N	Mean	T	d. f.	P
Traders	100	.04785	.931	102	.147
Laborers	50				

Table: 9 Impacts of Unavoidable Issues Factor

Occupation	N	Mean	T	d. f.	P
Traders	100	.03145	.931	102	.192
Laborers	50				

Table: 10 Required Infrastructural Development Factor

Occupation	N	Mean	T	d. f.	P
Traders	100	.14570	.931	102	.161
Laborers	50				

Table: 11 Required Policy Changes Factor

Occupation	N	Mean	T	d. f.	P
Traders	100	.12486	.931	102	.155
Laborers	50				

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Table: 12 Chi-square Results (Refer to appendix, Part C of the Schedule)

Question No.	Pearson Chi-Square	Value	d. f.	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
1	Pearson Chi-Square	41.819	8	.000
2	Pearson Chi-Square	6.006	8	.647
3	Pearson Chi-Square	8.085	8	.425
4	Pearson Chi-Square	8.681	8	.370
5	Pearson Chi-Square	20.115	8	.010
6	Pearson Chi-Square	0.474	8	.812
7	Pearson Chi-Square	2.539	8	.960
8	Pearson Chi-Square	2.455	8	.964
9	Pearson Chi-Square	11.788	8	.161
10	Pearson Chi-Square	2.764	8	.948

At 5% level of significance, the following hypotheses are accepted:

(No significant relation (association) on the perception of respondents exist)

Q 2	Do you believe that the Govt. should acquire more lands for dumping ground of imports and for parking?
Q 3	Do you believe that the more number of bank branches and ATMs should be opened?
Q 4	Do you believe that the traffic system should be modernized?
Q 6	Do you believe that the LCS formalities should be more rationalized?
Q 7	Do you believe that the duties should be reduced at LCS Agartala?
Q 8	Do you believe that there must be adequate provision for drinking water, canteen and modern sanitation system? Q 9 Do you believe that the more number of warehouses should be constructed?
Q10	Do you believe that the all documentation should be cleared through online?

The following hypotheses are rejected:

(Significant relation (association) on the perception of respondents exist)

Q 1	Do you believe that the LCS authority should improve basic infrastructure?
Q 5	Do you believe that the labor unions should settle the conflicting issues with proper negotiations with the BSF?

A Chi-square test has performed and no relationship is established between the participants' occupation (independent variable) and 8 (out of 10) questions (dependent variable) asked about the strategies for managing cross border trade in Agartala LCS, $\chi^2(8, N=150)=0.05$, $p = [.647, .425, .370, .812, .960, .964, .161, .948]$. The Pearson Chi-square statistic tests whether

the two variables are independent or not. If the value is significantly high ($p < .05$), indicating that a variable have no significant effect on the other. In other words, the null hypotheses for 8 questions are correct i. e. there is no significant difference in the perception of the respondents on the basis of their occupation.

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Table 13 Summary Results of Factor Analysis

No.	Factors	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Govt.'s support in foreign trade	4	.822
2	Infrastructural Problems	6	.808
3	Impacts of Unavoidable Issues	5	.766
4	Required Infrastructural Development	5	.758
5	Required Policy Changes	5	.739

DISCUSSION

Exploratory factor analysis has identified five underlying constructs which explain the different dimensions of the problems of Agartala LCS and its suggestive solutions. High values for the factor loadings and the communalities indicate that the items extracted are statistically significant. Extraction of these internally consistent measures facilitates the calculating of composite variables that can be used in further analysis as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). EFA also facilitated data reduction for the study. Table 13 presents the summary of the factor analysis.

A statistical analysis (t-test) has been applied to understand the perception of respondents on the basis of occupation regarding the problems and their probable solution. The statistic tests whether the two variables are independent or not. Since all the values are significantly high ($p < .05$), indicating that these variables have no significant effect on the other. In other words, all the null hypotheses are accepted i.e. the perceptions of the respondents about the five identified factors are akin.

The results indicate that the respondents believe that Agartala LCS has the modern technology but it lacks basic amenities. The insufficient parking and loading-unloading space, delayed clearance of consignments, traffic jams and high duties levied on trucks creep up the problems. Further, that state government suffers revenue losses in the tune of one million per day whenever trade remain suspended due to internal or external disturbances.

The findings suggest, the respondents perceive that the improvement of basic infrastructure, setting up of more warehouses, provision for more land for dumping of goods and parking space and opening of more bank branches and ATMs should be prioritized; the duties levied presently should be slashed, formalities should be rationalized, modern traffic system and e-governance should be practiced; any form of conflicts with security personnel must be resolved through negotiations and should ensure its non-recurrence for uninterrupted bilateral trade in Agartala LCS.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the perception of some selected traders and laborers about the problems of conducting cross border trade in Agartala LCS and the strategies to reform the same. Cronbach's Alpha has used to test the coefficient of internal consistency of all the items. Since all the items found to be highly reliable for conduction of the study, factor analysis is used for data reduction procedure. Through factor analysis, five major factors were extracted. Based on such factors, Student's t-test and Chi-square test are carried out. All the five factors are found to be significant. PCA has been carried out in order to analyze the various components. On the basis of PCA five hypotheses has derived and null of these are tested and at 5 percent level of significance, the Student's t-test statistic is insignificant for all these factors. A Chi-square test is performed and no relationship has been established between the participants' perception on 8 questions asked out of 10 about the strategies for proper managing cross

border trade. Consistent with the prior reviews of literature and the findings of the data analysis suggest that in spite of having many unique features, Agartala LCS suffers from a number of lacunas which need to be changed to enhance the volume of bilateral trade. The Agartala LCS should sort out the problems relating to infrastructure deficiencies, the unprecedented disputes arise suddenly between BSF and laborers should be sort out with proper negotiations and LCS authority must take preventive measures to avoid its recurrence with changes in the policies.

The study has its limitations, as it has only been focused towards the problems faced by the importers-exporters and laborers as well as the strategies to win over the same but it could also been tested for other issues like bilateral trade's volume, composition, trends and contribution to foreign currency reserves and so on. The sample size of the study is considerably low on the ground of parsimony of cost and time constraints; and the sample has been selected using different non-probability sampling techniques, which themselves are not flawless. Again, the accuracy of the results depends up on the accuracy of the responses provided by the participants. The study is confined to importers/exporters and laborers working in Agartala LCS only but not to other stakeholders because of time and financial constraints. Again, the accuracy of the results depends up on the accuracy of the responses provided by the participants.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Hardly, there has been any empirical research conducted in Agartala or in other parts of Tripura on the problems and prospects of bilateral trade of LCS of Tripura. There lies a huge shortfall in the literature on this area in Tripura although studies have been conducted other parts of the country in different dimensions of cross border trade with Bangladesh but not on the issues related to LCS. This facilitates the need to expedite the research to address every related dimensions of this relevant issue of not only Tripura but also at a national arena of other LCS of

India by the Government as well as by the private sectors in order to have a fair understanding of the modus operandi and improvement of the operations of LCS to make it favorable for all the stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study extends the perception of the importers-exporters and laborers by examining a wide range of factors which affect the Indo-Bangla cross border trade through Agartala LCS. The results obtained from the study have got practical implications for the improvement of basic infrastructural facilities and for prompt amendment in some key policies affecting the bilateral trade. These findings indicate a number of issues which need to be addressed to increase the volume and composition of trade through Agartala LCS in the changing socio-economic environment.

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Appendix: Schedule

Note: The schedule has three sections, namely A, B and C. For each section the response style is mentioned in the beginning. You are requested to follow the response style and mark your response category accordingly.

Your cooperation is highly appreciable.

Section A
GENERAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

(The purpose of this Section is to collect the general information about the participants.
Put √ mark as applicable.)

1. Name of the Respondent:		
2. Date of birth:		
3. Contact number:		
4. E-mail address:		
5. Gender	Male	
	Female	
6. Marital Status:	Single	
	Married	
7. Age group:	18-25 years	
	26-35 years	
	36-45 years	
	46-65 years	
	66 and above	
8. Educational Qualification:	Under Matriculation	
	Matriculation	
	Higher Secondary	
	Graduate	
	Post graduate	
9. Religion:	Hinduism	
	Muslim	
	Christian	
	Buddhism	
	Jainism	
10. Caste:	General	
	Scheduled Cast	
	Scheduled Tribe	
	Other Backward Caste	

Section B

Opinion regarding experience of doing trade in Akhaura LCS

Please read each of the statements carefully and indicate your level of agreement and disagreement that you think is the best describing your opinion about your experience of doing cross border trade with Bangladesh through LCS Agartala. Indicate your response by putting appropriate number in 5 Likert scale. Please use the following scale for giving your response.

1. SA= Strongly Agree 2. Agree, 3. N=Neutral 4. D= Disagree, 5. SD= Strongly Disagree

Detail of the Statements	Score
1. The policy of Govt. of India to promote foreign trade is good.	
2. The Govt. of Tripura is positive to increase the volume of trade.	
3. The Bangladesh Govt. is committed to improve the bilateral trade.	
4. The Land Customs Station (LCS) Agartala is a modern check post having latest equipment.	
5. The space for loading - unloading is not enough.	
6. The amount of duty has increased after starting LCS in Akhaura.	
7. The time for clearing shipments has increased due to number of formalities.	
8. The LCS lacking basic facilities like canteen, drinking water and sanitation for laborers.	
9. The parking space is very small.	
10. The traffic system in LCS area is traditional.	
11. The Number of bank branches and ATMs are very few.	
12. The trade frequently remains suspended due to political tension of Bangladesh.	
13. The suspension of trade adversely impacts the state's revenue collection.	
14. The security personnel sometimes involved in conflict with the laborers.	
15. Due to lack of parking space the traffic jam in Akhaura road is a common picture.	

SECTION C

Strategies for Managing Cross Border Trade in Agartala LCS

Please read each of the statements carefully and indicate your level of agreement and disagreement that you think is the best describing your opinion about managing cross border trade. Indicate your response by putting appropriate number in 5 Likert scale. Please use the following scale for giving your response.

1. SA= Strongly Agree 2. Agree, 3. N=Neutral 4. D= Disagree, 5. SD= Strongly Disagree

Details of the Questions	Score
1. Do you believe that the LCS authority should improve basic infrastructure?	
2. Do you believe that the Govt. should acquire more lands for dumping ground of imports and for parking?	
3. Do you believe that the more number of bank branches and ATMs should be opened?	
4. Do you believe that the traffic system should be modernized?	
5. Do you believe that the labor unions should settle the conflicting issues with proper negotiations with the BSF?	
6. Do you believe that the LCS formalities should be more rationalized?	
7. Do you believe that the duties should be reduced at LCS Agartala?	
8. Do you believe that there must be adequate provision for drinking water, canteen and modern sanitation system?	
9. Do you believe that more number of warehouses should be constructed?	
10. Do you believe that all the documentation should be cleared through online?	

Signature:

Date: